

A FLORENTINE PORTRAIT. By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

It was high time that a new life of St Philip Benizi, the most glorious of the Servite saints, should appear. In all its 726 years the Order of Our Lady's Sorrows has produced no greater figure than the doctor-turned-friar who became successively a lay-brother, a priest, the fifth General of the Order and almost an eighth Founder. He has always outshone the rest in the Order's list of saints. More has been written about him than about all the rest together. His picture has been painted by at least eight masters (including Perugino, Andrea del Sarto and Carlo Dolci), his memory has been kept alive both by an intense devotion within the Order and by hagiographers in an uninterrupted series. But the last serious life to appear in English was that of Father Soulier, O.S.M., published in 1885 and long out of print. Mr Wyndham Lewis had a task worthy of his skill, a challenge to his artistry in words and his knowledge of thirteenth-century Italy. He has succeeded admirably.

Historically he has based the work on Soulier, Pazzaglia and Rossi, the best authorities. His method, of course, is his own, as individual as Del Sarto's. He sees the plain and pious narratives of his sources in a background supplied by his own literary and historic insights, with a knowledge, in this line of perception, wider than theirs. He has, for instance, an insistent consciousness of Dante which runs through the book like a *leit motif* and gives a tone to the whole theme which previous biographers (even Pazzaglia) have missed.

The test of a biographer of St Philip is whether he has caught the blend of dynamic energy and personal sanctity which made him at one and the same time a true spiritual son of the self-effacing Founders and (obviously) their hero. Mr Wyndham Lewis passes this test with honours. His portrait catches the likeness and preserves the proportion. In composition and grouping, rarer virtues, he excels. Fascinating characters fill the background and surround the saint, but there is never any doubt that they are mere accessories. The great figure of a great Servant of Mary stands out, clear and inspiring. This is a permanent book.

V.M.N.

FROM APE TO ANGEL. By H. R. Hays. (Methuen; 36s.)

This book by an American author is indeed, as its publisher claims, the first popular introduction to social anthropology and if objections are raised to it by members of the British 'school' I hope that one of them will be inspired to write a better one.

It has become conventional in the last twenty years to distinguish between cultural (American) and social (English) anthropology. The

distinction corresponds broadly to the English interest in the analysis of social forms and the relations of social institutions as opposed to the greater interest in America in the action of society upon the individual and the ways in which he adapts himself to or reacts against the society in which he is born. Although there have been signs of late that this division of interest may soon have no such national reference, Mr Hays would have done well to have taken cognizance of it. In the nineteenth century and until the end of the 1914-18 war there were really only anthropologists. After the war, with Malinowski's insistence upon the functional method of analysis and Radcliffe-Brown's conversion to the French (Durkheimian) school of sociology, the English began to draw apart. Rich opportunities for field-work in the 1920's and 30's combined with a sense that social anthropology was to be a scientific discipline, produced a mass of detailed analyses of primitive societies unequalled anywhere else. This whole period Mr Hays dismisses in a page. He writes interestingly and anecdotally about the nineteenth century and the interests and controversies which engaged the anthropologists of the time. Towards the end of his book where he is concerned with developments, chiefly in theory, since the late war, he is again good and has been able to summarize remarkably and suitably for a book of this nature, the contributions of such writers as Levi-Strauss in France and Talcott Parsons in America. For these things the book is to be recommended.

Why does it seem so wrong-headed in Mr Hays to say, as he does, after listing all the senior anthropologists in England, that they have initiated no new trends, made no advance? The answer lies perhaps in what Mr Hays understands by theory. For him, it is clear, a theory is something devised by a theoretician, it is something recognizably different from practice. Talcott-Parsons, for example, is, and no one would be concerned to deny it, a theoretician whose contribution lies in his ability to meditate upon the nature of society and of man in society. There is a line of such theoreticians going back through the ages. But the strength and originality of English social anthropology lies in its reliance upon the implicit. Gestures may be made here and there to Durkheim or Radcliffe-Brown but the value of this or that particular field monograph lies in the significant selection and the significant arrangement of the facts as they are understood by one mind. Professor Evans-Pritchard (who was not, incidentally, a pupil of Radcliffe-Brown, who in turn was not Oxford trained) in his *Witchcraft Among the Azande* makes no claim that he is telling us about the nature of society, morality nor even witchcraft in general. Nevertheless we participate in his understanding of Zande life and come away with a wider comprehension of our own actual morality all the more subtle

for being implied only. Professor Gluckman's account of Barotse law is not over given to theoretical statements about primitive law: from his presentation of the facts a better understanding is derived which in turn enriches future accounts and analyses of other societies. There have in fact been remarkable changes and developments in English social anthropology over the last twenty-five years and they are advances in understanding and in ability to communicate. They are advances in theory if it is appreciated that for the social anthropologist theory and the refinement of theory is implicit in the very handling of his facts.

The book closes with a chapter which would have us look forward to a new world where anthropologists will sit in the councils of the nations to advise on folk-ways. I should prefer to think that if social anthropology can set itself any such moral end, that end is an educated world in which such fantasies of science fiction are not necessary.

For the rest, *Ape to Angel* is written in flat prose with a tendency to racy cliché, but it is gaily presented and well illustrated.

DAVID POCOCK

THE CONSECRATED URN. By Bernard Blackstone. (Longmans; 45s.)

Mr Blackstone's book is an ambitious one; it sets out to examine the ideas of growth and form as they manifested themselves in Keats's poems. 'Keats's poetry', he says, 'presents a constant pattern: the urn, the artefact, standing in the midst of a floral context.' For Mr Blackstone, the most illuminating approach to the poems is that which sees 'the power of the urn—form—spreading outwards into the processes of nature—growth'. He has admirably eschewed both the school of criticism which regards Keats's poems as merely a gifted deployment of sensuous imagery, and also that which views Keats as an unfulfilled poet who died before emotion had made any real contact with ideas in his verse. Mr Blackstone is primarily concerned with showing the development and complexity of Keats's philosophy—a philosophy which sprang *from* the poems themselves rather than plodded alongside them. As a jumping-off ground, Erasmus Darwin, another doctor-poet, is compared with Keats, but the comparison is made to indicate the differences between the two poets rather than the similarities. For Darwin, poetry was based on reason and subject to reason; it was neither a deep and hidden source of power in the poet's imagination nor a way of knowledge which transcended man's rational faculty. Darwin's beliefs were, therefore, at odds with those of Romantic poets such as Coleridge and Keats himself. It was for the Romantics to find again 'the true voice of feeling' and to recover the sense of 'the shaping spirit of imagination'. The purpose of Mr Blackstone's book is to present poetry as 'the expression of reality superior . . . to the