

Carnation and rose,
 The precious beyond all price
 Odour of your passing through the spinney
 And through the cornfields and gardens.

Air-Compressor is a satisfactory litany of nostalgic realism, and the *Sonnet*, on page 10, could be used for meditation.

Alice Meynell declared that 'those who have little to say clamour for much space in which to say it', and the author will have experienced the difficulty of sustaining a semi-dramatic sequence in the free style of some of the modern poets. Father Walker has a great deal to say in his two long pieces; he has a sound word-sense, a happy perception of spiritual values, and can create atmosphere.

But the shorter poems seem to strike a more authentic note, and we hope he will strike it again.

EDWIN ESSEX, O.P.

NOT ONE SPARROW. By E. Roberts. (Douglas Organ; 3s. 6d.)

Dust-cover blurbs can mislead by saying nothing in many words. These short stories do show human insight and literary elegance, but these attributes, being the minimum demanded of narrative prose, can cover many defects. These stories of 'spiritual adventure' (I suppose we are now committed to this use of the word spiritual when we mean supernatural or uncommon) range from telepathy to answered prayers, and they set out to show that there is something beyond the chemical composition that many of us mistake for creation. That is all excellent, and undoubtedly needs saying. All the more reason, therefore, why it should be said not only with literary elegance, whatever that might be, but with power and precision. Like any artist, a writer must respect both his medium and his object. The work of God will speak for itself if we portray it accurately and there should be no need for comment and interpretation. Many of these stories would be improved if the last didactic paragraph were omitted. At the same time, if God's work is to be allowed to speak for itself, it must be set before us in words that live. Otiose epithets ('poor little legs'), clichés ('the cup of her human happiness was fulfilled') and woolly substitutes, even when tempered by inverted commas, are all no more than half alive and dull the light by which we should see the Almighty's hand. These defects are all the more deplorable because of the importance of the subject. Nevertheless this writing is not without merit; it has flashes of life and sting ('We never know when we board a crowded bus that we may not be strap-hanging with a saint'), and with pruning could be good.

G. M.

SANCTITY WILL OUT. By Georges Bernanos; translated by R. Batchelor. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

Sanctity, it seems, can be bought at too high a price. Six shillings is certainly excessive for a pamphlet of fifty-odd pages, even when they are by M. Bernanos, and one would gladly sacrifice the deplor-

able Ingres picture of Joan of Arc at Rheims Cathedral, which adds 'tone' to this dear little book.

Joan is the authentic voice of Catholic France. She is condemned by the tribunal of the Church. She is a saint. How are these propositions reconciled? 'Our Church is the church of the saints. The whole vast machinery of wisdom, strength, supple discipline, glory and majesty, is of itself nothing unless it is animated by love.' With all his customary fire and eloquence (indifferently served, it is true, by his translator) Bernanos gives the answer. I. E.

BEHIND THAT WALL. An Introduction to some Classics of the Interior Life. By E. Allison Peers. (S.C.M. Press; 6s.)

From St Augustine to Thomas Traherne Professor Allison Peers leads the 'ordinary reader of books', for whom he is writing, with unflinching enthusiasm and unflinching discrimination. His purpose is a simple one: to give some idea of what the great Christian mystics had to say, and why they said it, so that they may become available to all who would seek to go 'behind that wall' where, in the words of the Canticle, 'my Beloved standeth'.

The form of most of these essays (originally given as broadcast talks) allows for little development or subtlety of argument. It is, frankly, a popular book, and it is to be warmly welcomed as such. Even so, one is constantly aware (as in the essays on St Bernard or St Teresa) of the rich store of learning on which these deceptively simple pages draw. It is no small achievement to give in a few pages an accurate account, together with illuminating quotations, of writers so various as St Ignatius Loyola and Henry Vaughan, of the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and St Francis of Sales. Professor Peers is able to do this because he sees so well the fundamental unity that joins all who have ever written of the spiritual life. Moreover he sees it not as a speculatively interesting idea, but as a truth and a vital one.

Behind That Wall will be especially valuable for the many people who appreciate the depth and joy of the great mystical writers, but have a sadly inadequate appreciation of their presuppositions. Professor Peers is a scholar who *believes* in the values of the writers his scholarship has done so much to reveal. And that is a great advantage. I. E.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE. By Catherine de Hueck. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

This discursive, generous, breathless book reflects the work of its author so faithfully that it far outweighs more solemn theses on the Mystical Body and its implications. For that work is simply the Christian one of reconciliation, of breaking down the walls of partition (and here especially that of colour) which divide the unity that our Lord came on earth to establish, and which his Church is