

NOTICES

THE UNITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL EXPERIENCE by Etienne Gilson (Sheed and Ward, 16s.) is once more available, and the new edition is a reminder of M. Gilson's achievement in general and of this book's importance in particular. Its aim is to show that 'the history of philosophy makes philosophical sense' and the survey has for its moral the conclusion that 'the great thing is not to achieve a system of the world as if being could be deduced from thought, but to relate reality, as we know it, to the permanent principles in whose light all the changing problems of science, of ethics and of art have to be solved'.

A BOOK OF SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION by Ludovicus Blosius, translated by Fr Bertrand Wilberforce, O.P., is the latest addition to the revived Orchard Series (Burns and Oates, 10s. 6d.). The translation has been revised, and a new introduction supplied, by a Benedictine of Stanbrook.

THE CURÉ D'ARS found in Abbé Francis Trochu a worthy biographer, but there was room for a shortened version of his classic 'life'. This has now been published by Burns and Oates (12s. 6d.), and, based on the same material and exact critical methods, it should stimulate fresh interest in the patron saint of the pastoral clergy.

SISTER CECILIA is the story of a Slovakian nun and of her thrilling escape from the Communist tyranny that overcame her country. Recorded by William Brinkley (Longmans, 12s. 6d.), this authentic account of persecution in our time provides a direct and endearing picture of what faith can endure.

CRACKS IN THE CLOISTER, by 'Brother Choleric' (Sheed and Ward, 8s. 6d.) is a collection of caricatures of religious life (presumably as lived by Benedictines of the English Congregation in the United States, with samples of what goes on in nuns' cloisters as well). The drawings are *New Yorker* rather than *Punch*, but they raise a question of taste of some importance. Fun and games are implicitly provided for in the 'recreation' that is a traditional feature of monastic life, but translated into the glaring world of printed books they can seem particularly ludicrous because their presuppositions can scarcely be explained. Domestic jokes are usually boring and this is a very boring book.

A NEW WAY OF THE CROSS, contemplated by Father M. Raymond, O.C.S., and illustrated by John Andrews (Clonmore and Reynolds, 10s. 6d.), is a new and dramatic treatment of a venerable theme. The drawings show the hands alone of Christ at the fourteen moments of his Passion, and their economy and strength are fittingly matched by a fresh and actual commentary.

THE FOUR GREAT HERESIES (Mowbray, 8s. 6d.) is a useful summary, by Dr Wand, Bishop of London, of the Nestorian, Eutychian, Apollinarian and Arian heresies. It is perhaps ungracious to want to draw a moral from Dr Wand's historical survey, but his opening statement, that 'heresy is bad theology', has very contemporary implications, and past history can indeed be a cautionary help for dealing with present difficulties.

THE PRAYERS OF FATHER VINCENT McNABB (Blackfriars Publications 6s. 6d.) is a beautifully produced anthology of meditations mostly taken from Father Vincent's published work. It should meet with a generous welcome and make his voice heard again to a new generation.

A VINCENT McNABB ANTHOLOGY, edited by Francis Edward Nugent (Blackfriars Publications, 13s. 6d.), is drawn from a great variety of sources and gives a valuable idea of the diversity of Fr Vincent's interests and gifts. It was perhaps that very diversity which prevented his ever becoming the authoritative scholar he might have been: his capacities were too widely engaged. But here gathered together are essays on theology and philosophy, biographical studies and poetry, retreat conferences and a letter: in fact a useful and faithful introduction to Fr Vincent as a writer who was only a writer because he was first of all a preacher and a priest.

A YEAR OF GRACE, 'passages chosen and arranged to express a mood about God and man', by Victor Gollancz was reviewed at length in BLACKFRIARS on its first appearance. It now appears as a Penguin Book (3s. 6d.) and its six hundred pages must make it the best value in books one can imagine. It is indeed a gracious anthology, and it should find many new friends.

REMEMBERED IN BLESSING (Sands, 4s. 6d.) is an account of the remarkable history of the Vaughans of Courtfield written by a Mill Hill Father (a member of the missionary congregation that has now bought Courtfield and has thus secured the Catholic continuity of a house to which English Catholicism owes so much).

HOPE OR DESPAIR, by A. M. Carré, O.P. (Harvill Press, 10s. 6d.) appears in an English translation by René Hague. This is an acute and sympathetically presented summary of the thomist theology of hope. It has its special meaning nowadays when despair has become so philosophically fashionable and Father Carré has the gift of making traditional truth seem new and especially relevant to our present needs.

THE MIND OF PIUS XII (Foulsham, 18s.) is an anthology, drawn from the encyclicals and addresses of the present Pope, by Robert C. Pollock. It is arranged according to subjects, e.g. 'The Social Question', 'The Modern State', 'Modern Education', 'Peace'. The extracts are usually very short, and it may be doubted whether so drastic a 'digest' does in fact give an adequate picture of the developed and careful argument of papal utterances on such important subjects.

THEY SPEAK BY SILENCES by A Carthusian (Longmans, 7s. 6d.) is a selection of thoughts and meditations, translated from the French by a Monk of Parkminster. It has the contemplative calm of Carthusian tradition, but contains much practical wisdom, as 'If only we realized how we complicate life, when in reality it is so simple. All our troubles come from this: that we do not know how to see God where he is. We seek him far away, and all the while he is quite close to us.'

THE WATERS (Assisi Press, Dublin; 3s. 6d.) is a collection of poems by Denys Blakelock, well known as a London actor and who now reveals himself as a sensitive recorder of spiritual themes. His poems are modest in their intentions and so succeed.

BLOSSOMING ROD (Hodder and Stoughton, 12s. 6d.) is a novel by Ann Stafford which attempts the difficult task of linking a modern theme to a historical setting (in this case that of the Carmelite friary at Aylesford). It shows much careful research and evokes the special quality of Carmelite legend—in its origins and in its effects.

THE ENGLISHNESS OF ENGLISH ART (B.B.C., 2s. 6d.) is an attractive collection of plates to illustrate the Reith Lectures broadcast by Nikolaus Pevsner during October and November this year. It includes a fascinating variety of material, ranging from illuminations in medieval psalters to plans for the Barbican rebuilding in the City of London.