

St John of the Cross might be astonished if, on returning to this earth for a passing visit, he were told to hold a court of all his admirers. Here on one side would be the sentimentalists who love his poetry for its sensuous beauty, disregarding its mystical meaning; with them would be the litterateurs, in astonishment and admiration at his style. There on the other side would be the sincere Protestant who finds little to jolt him in his convictions, such as he would find in St Teresa. And finally the Church which has given us all an assurance, declaring him to be a Doctor of the Universal Church.

Nevertheless, in spite of the Church's official sanction, St John of the Cross is not good for all, particularly the sentimental, the easily discouraged, the timorous souls, nor for the self-righteous, for these would get proud of out-doing everyone else in austerity. Even those who get enlightenment from him should put themselves under a guide and obedience, or all their activity, particularly their mortifications, will be self-will and almost worthless.

It is not things nor circumstances which must be renounced but self and selfishness in every form. This is absolutely necessary for all souls who would attain to any close union with God.

These notes and thoughts upon Professor Allison Peers's book, which are the fruit of some discussion with several persons, will prove to the reader of the review that at least one reader of the book was encouraged to return to St John—a pleasure which he had foregone for a variety of reasons for five years and that at least one reader has been made to think again.

COLUMBA CARY-ELWES, O.S.B.

MARGARET CLITHEROW. By Margaret T. Monro. (Burns Oates; 4s. 6d.)

It must seem ungracious to cavil at any book on this loveliest of martyrs, for surely none could be superfluous. This work, however, does not appear to be a happy addition to what has already been written about her. Its best feature is that it faithfully follows the great authorities, Fr Mush, her confessor, and Fr Morris, S.J. (Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers, III.) Its worst features are a certain cheapness of style and vagueness of aim. Margaret would not have enjoyed facetiousness or slang. It is false to her spirit to associate it with her. (See pp. vii, x, 4, 6, 12, 19, 22, 37, 41.) She would not have thought it quite loyal to point innuendoes at her husband, when she had pronounced on him in the clear-sighted days before her death. Then, if the purpose of the book be to modernise the previous conceptions of Margaret, they do not need it and only suffer by it. If the writer means to popularise the martyr, she does not need that either, for she has never been forgotten or neglected. York Catholics have but recently purchased the house in the Shambles which once was hers; the relic in the Bar Convent has always been venerated. What a new book could

do for her, that is, set her out gently and at leisure, this has not done. The C.T.S. pamphlet covers the exact same ground with greater acceptability. It seems a pity to make a book that is neither great nor small about a saint who can stand by herself in our minds, though no doubt this is a readable book. There is one misprint, 'eagerness,' p. 12. The dust-cover is attractive, but not the 'blurb'.

M. M. MERRICK.

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR. By Dr George A. Little. (Dublin. Gill; 10s.)

Imagination and enthusiasm working on a mass of data gathered mainly from secondary sources, in a frankly partisan spirit, with the utmost possible use of probabilities to strengthen the case, have produced an entertaining book. It is at times trying in its pedantry, which even has to write *Laudes* for Lauds; and although it does not go so far as to attempt to show the probability of the Saint's famous meeting with Judas on his ice-floe, it strains our credulity a little when it asks us to accept the landing on the whale. 'To lessen the alleged absurdity of this occurrence,' Dr Little tells us of a similar adventure which befell, so he is informed, four Kerry men forty years ago! His handling of other incidents is happier, if not always convincing, and a rather rhapsodic prose sometimes achieves passages of notable description. There is much sound matter, especially where the author draws on such works as Dr Ryan's *Irish Monasticism*. All who like romantic history will enjoy this account of St Brendan with its lively reconstruction of the story of his perilous voyages.

A. R.

ALL MY DAYS FOR GOD. From the spiritual writings of St Alphonsus. Edited by J. B. Coyle, C.S.S.R. (Gill, Dublin; 6s. 6d.)

This is the first of four volumes designed to cover every day in the year with 'reflections and affections from the spiritual writings of St Alphonsus.' It does in fact provide a set meditation for each day from Advent to Sexagesima.

N. P.

LA PRIERE CHRETIENNE. Par Bede Frost. Traduit par l'Abbé Alfred Martin (Cerf: n.p.)

The editor of this translation writes: 'The author of *La Prière Chrétienne* belongs to the Anglican Church. The Catholic who is surprised to see a Catholic publisher bringing out a work of Anglican spirituality is asked simply to read this little book to the end fortified by its *imprimatur*. Therein he will find nothing but the old ideas of the Catholic Church, the Catholic meaning of prayer—but retold with a very wholesome and savoury accent'.