

Ignatius was thrifty with his words and was never swayed by sentiment alone. But it is precisely for this reason that his letters are valuable. Every word is chosen with care, expressing the real depths of the man and not any superficial effusion of the moment.

The result is a living portrait of Ignatius. With royalty he is courteous, dignified and diplomatic, but never servile or ingratiating. Even when compelled to admit a royal princess to simple vows in the Society of Jesus (the unique 'Jesuitess'), he knows how to make the best of an embarrassing situation. Confronted with over-enthusiastic piety he can be firm and even immovable without being harsh, for he is never oblivious of the sensibilities of those to whom he writes. Here is an Ignatius who is full of sincere compassion for the difficulties and trials of his spiritual daughters, but who is never afraid of leading them gently and wisely to face up to their problems with honesty and courage. An Ignatius who can be tender without sentimentality; who attracts women but maintains always a certain aloofness which is as spiritually beneficial to his spiritual daughters as it is to himself.

But the book is not only valuable for the light it throws on the character of Ignatius. It is also a study of the principles and methods of a master of the art of spiritual direction, and, as such, is an important contribution to ascetical theology. Fr Rahner uncovers these principles throughout the book, and especially in his introduction, which is a study of Ignatius as a spiritual director of women by one who is an authority on Ignatius and Ignatian spirituality. Ignatius' attitude towards women shows a profound knowledge of their psychology and it is interesting to see how his understanding deepened as he progressed spiritually. A comparison between the early letters of his pilgrim days and later ones reveals this progress clearly. Ignatius was a man of his times and his limitations are those of his age, but the principles upon which he worked are enduring even if the practical applications are no longer the same. Ignatius' own suppleness in dealing with individual cases reveals how he was able to adapt himself without sacrificing principles. The fourth section of the book which deals expressly with the question of spiritual direction merits careful study.

An exhaustive index and abundant notes, which, happily, do not distract from the text, and aptly chosen illustrations complete the presentation. The translators are to be complimented on their work which does justice to Fr Rahner's fine German.

WILLIAM YEOMANS, S.J.

A ROCKING-HORSE CATHOLIC. By Caryll Houselander. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Caryll Houselander's intention in writing this partial autobiography

was to give an account of the journeyings of her soul from her earliest infancy to the time when, returning to the full practice of the faith, she found safe anchorage and full spiritual employment. She would not have thought of her life as having any special interest except in so far as she was a kind of personification, as everybody should be, of the love of Christ, in and through his mystical body, for all mankind.

She was not an ordinary person; her extraordinariness was literary, artistic, spiritual and psychic. This account of her life illustrates all four, the first three on every page and the fourth in her account of three extraordinary experiences, though these are so spiritual that one might be excused for calling them visions. She had one constant, conscious purpose, which was spiritual, and three constant, half-conscious impulses. Her one desire was to convey to all who would listen the knowledge and love of Christ and of all men in him. This book is the story of how she herself learned that knowledge and love; the facts narrated and the characters portrayed are chosen for their relevance to that one same theme, universal love in the mystical body of Christ.

Baptized at the age of six (though the baptism performed a few hours after she was born, by a non-Catholic uncle, was most probably valid), she lived rather intensely through an early education of which the chief value was that it provided material for an entirely personal development. Later she was shocked into a state of passionate resentment by what seemed to her (and sometimes was, no doubt) the uncharitableness of Catholics; she then (to quote her own words) tried hard but unsuccessfully to leave the Church; she tried everything, from the Salvation Army to Buddhism. After a period of estrangement, during which she was outwardly lapsed but always in her heart at home, she came back. That is the whole story, in this book. There was much more to the life of Caryll Houselander but it will have to await the biography which Messrs Sheed and Ward are no doubt planning. This present book, Caryll's own version of the main drift of her life, will always remain a key to the interpretation of whatever else is written about her.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

#### LE RÔLE DE LA RELIGIEUSE D'AUJOURD'HUI. (Cerf.)

This particular collection of papers is the product of the third, French, national congress of priests who have charge of religious sisters, a congress initiated by the episcopal commission for religious, and organized by Fr Plé, O.P. The sub-title is *Problèmes de la Religieuse d'aujourd'hui* and the theme is the part played by Sisters in the present-day Church. Vows are not taken for personal sanctification alone, but love of God is bound up integrally with love of neighbour, and therefore religious must be apostolic. Surely this is the eternal question