

And how practical they are. St Alphonsus, commenting on the possessive attachment certain people have for a particular confessor or director, writes: 'Tell me, to sanctify yourself is Father N. or is God necessary to you?'

The wisdom of the saints stands out so clearly from these pages, and their prudence and charity. Here are models for those who aspire to be directors of souls; and advice that is suitable for all who want to love God more—men and women, religious and lay-people. Particularly we hope that this book may be bought for every convent library so that it may encourage those who read it to go to the writings of the saints and learn direct from them. There is the wisdom of the Church enshrined.

B. D. B.

*SAINTS BEYOND THE WHITE CLIFFS.* By Margaret Gibbs. (Hollis and Carter; 10s. 6d.)

A perfect book for children of any age, and for grown-ups too. Each of these thirteen 'stories of the English saints' grips one. The illustrations are good, the print is good, and above all the writing is good; simple, alive, direct.

We have first of all St George, Patron of England. All that most English children can tell one about St George is that 'he-was-born-at-Cappadocia-of-Christian-parents' (all in one breath) and that 'he killed a dragon and rescued a beautiful lady'. This book gives us quite shortly the life of the real St George. The legends which grew about him after his death are mentioned in another section. The children who have this book will know St George as the soldier saint who was brave enough to suffer and to die rather than give up his faith.

Margaret Gibbs does not make her saints talk in a would-be mediæval English, which has too often bored children of past generations. The people in this book speak in the way that is used and understood by children. That in itself brings the saints nearer to them; they can be friends with people who speak their own language. Then the narrative is interesting. It is not told as a series of events or 'wonders'. Each of these little 'lives' reads as a consecutive story, lacking neither adventure nor thrill. But above all, their charm lies in the way the author has somehow conveyed a sense of holiness in each saint. This is sometimes lacking in the modern lives of saints written for children. There is the story of the young peasant, St Godric, who became a pedlar and made money, and later became a sailor and made more money. Later still he took to travelling far distances on foot as a pilgrim. But he could never settle. It always seemed that 'he must go—where, he could not tell. He must do—what he did not know. Only he knew that the rest of his life must be for God alone'. Just a few words, but it needs no more to sow a seed.

Then there is St Frideswide. She knows when quite young what she must do. Her mother tells her not to be silly. So Frideswide gives

her reasons quite simply, 'I want to serve God, and to help all the poor and unhappy people I can. That is why I must be a nun'. She becomes a nun, but is not left altogether at peace in her convent. The end of the story is charming; 'When Frideswide was dying she saw in a vision her friends St Catherine and St Cecilia, "It's quite all right, my dear", they told her, "we shall be here to meet you when you come".'

The book is full of humour. Holiness and humour often go together.  
FLORENS ROCH.

A RETREAT WITH ST THERÈSE. By Père Liagre, C.S.S.P. (Sicut Parvuli Handbook I, Douglas Organ; 4s.)

This book is the first of a series whose aim is to make known the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood taught by St Thérèse of Lisieux and so much underlined by recent popes.

In so short a compass the author can do no more than consider certain aspects of the saint's life: her humility, her patience under suffering; in other words her doctrine in action. The first two of the twelve conferences give us the key to her life. Thérèse believed herself to be infinitely loved by Compassionate Love Itself (and here the operative word is 'compassionate'). She had not to look for lovable qualities in herself to know that God loved her. On the contrary, she gloried in her infirmities. For was not her littleness the greatest claim of all on God's love? From this realisation of God's love came her own thirst to repay him by all the means at her disposal.

The remaining conferences show us God and Thérèse ministering to each other's thirst. 'The cry of the dying Jesus, "I thirst", goes on echoing in the depths of my heart, kindling within it new fires of zeal. I would give my Beloved to drink. . . .

This is a valuable little book, repaying meditative reading. It is perhaps a little repetitive in parts, and there is a tendency to enumerate points which renders its style at times didactic and stilted.

ADRIAN DOWLING, O.P.

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## EXTRACTS

EPHEMERIDES CARMELITICAE (Libreria Fiorentina, Florence) promises to provide studies, reviews and texts illustrative of the Carmelite tradition in theology. The first number, of over 200 excellently printed pages, has a most useful bibliography of St John of the Cross (1891-1940: editions, translations, commentaries) by P. Juan de Jesus Maria, O.C.D., an article on the 'Natural Desire of the Vision of God and its apologetic value according to St Thomas', a study of Francisco de Vitoria, and—most notably—the first part of a detailed consideration of 'The problem of unitive contemplation' based on