

case of Claverton)—must be called by a name which conceals her office. Only Claverton's daughter, Monica, insists on being addressed by her genuine name for she alone is single or pure, in the sense of being an integer. Her fiancé, Charles Hemington, also has no *alias* as yet, as yet no identity to renounce—but he is following his future father-in-law into politics, we are told, and the time may come.

The Elder Statesman is an allegory as befits an author who is a student of Dante. In addition to its literal and anagogical meanings it has others. One level of the play invites speculation. Who, for instance, was the old man, proved later to have been dead already, whom young Dick Ferry, driving fast and with a couple of girls on the back seat, ran over? Was he perhaps the 'worn out poetical fashion', for whose death the writer of 'Prufrock' need really have felt no guilt, or taken no credit, since it was already dead? And what about his companion on that journey, Culverwell? Is he an eminent senior poet in another land? And has Maisie Mountjoy no relation to an essay on a celebrated star of the bygone music-hall, or to certain dramatic 'fragments' which are perhaps more dramatic than anything the author has since written? It is not difficult to find, in the world of letters, an analogue to Michael—one who renounces the source of his own being.

If *The Elder Statesman*, despite its achievement, leaves us with a sense of dissatisfaction, perhaps this dissatisfaction is best explained by Mr Robert Speaight in an article, 'Interpreting Becket and Other Parts', included in the Symposium for T. S. Eliot's seventieth birthday. He regrets that Mr Eliot, after *Murder in the Cathedral*, aimed at success in the commercial theatre of the West End, a theatre which demands of verse that it ruthlessly disguise itself as prose. It was a critical choice of Mr Eliot's. The language which it is possible for upper-middle class Englishmen to utter in the frame of a drawing-room is a thin and limited English. Working to other conventions, or creating them, imagining dramatic characters in an environment freer or less naturalistic than that of a typical West End stage set, and with other languages—or forms of English—at hand, with their resources awaiting exploration and exploitation, what might not have been achieved? But the question implies criticism not of simply one author, or of the whole West End theatre, but of a whole society.

REVIEWS

THE LIFE OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS. Biographical documents translated and edited with an introduction. By Kenelm Foster, O.P. (Longmans; 30s.)

The life of St Thomas Aquinas is known to us principally by three

documents drawn up about 1315-20 in the years prior to his canonization, or some forty years after his death. They are: 1. the *Vita S. Thomae* by William of Tocco; 2. fifteen chapters of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Tolomeo of Lucca; and 3. the acts of the first process of his canonization held at Naples in 1319. (The second process at Fossanova two years later was concerned only with his miracles after death). Fr Foster gives us a translation of the two last documents, but for William of Tocco, a laborious and prolix writer, he wisely substitutes the *Legenda S. Thomae* of Bernard Gui, which is scarcely more than a literary edition of Tocco, written in a style more concise and lively, and more in harmony with modern tastes. A carefully written and accurate introduction places these documents in their environment and defines their historical value. For all their medieval savour, heightened sometimes by a note of the miraculous (which does not however detract from their authenticity), these ancient conscientious chroniclers succeed in depicting, by many a subtle touch of the brush, a credible and convincing portrait of a real human being. Indeed, it is a portrait that will astonish those who know St Thomas only by his works and tend to consider him 'as some oracular master of all the answers'. Fr Foster has placed us in his debt by making accessible all these old records, hitherto known only to the specialist.

The translation is as sensitive as it is charming, a happy marriage of fidelity and simple elegance. At times something like a jolt is given to the Latin text, but never, we think, beyond the legitimate bounds. As an example of this legitimate licence we note, in a chapter of Bernard Gui, the story of the saint's celebrated distraction at the royal table of St Louis. The translator makes him say: 'Reginald, get up and write!'. Gui does not in fact name Reginald, but as he says that St Thomas called his socius by his name, it is surely reasonable to suppose that he was talking to Reginald of Priverno.

This book will be of interest to every intelligent reader, but the lavish notes and the carefully controlled erudition will render it of service equally to the specialist. The latter will be grateful for the very full index of names, for this is the only one there is. The index promised in 1937 by Père Laurent, editor of the *Fontes vitae S. Thomae*, has never seen the light. Nor will it surprise anyone that Fr Foster, an authority on medieval Italian literature, should consecrate a note in an appendix to the Italian sonnet attributed to St Thomas. Those concerned with establishing a list of the authentic writings of the Saint cannot afford to ignore the judgment of one so qualified to speak.

Each of the three documents translated contains a list of St Thomas's writings, but Fr Foster gives only that of Tolomeo of Lucca. We should have preferred the list contributed by Bartholomew of Capua when he

gave evidence in the process of canonization. It is not only more complete (as indeed Fr Foster testifies), but it is not disfigured by the *apocrypha* given by Tolomeo. Tolomeo not only lists *De fato*, which is by St Albert, but he is the first to mention a group of philosophical *opuscula* of very doubtful authenticity. But there is a more serious defect. Fr Foster was condemned to use, *faute de mieux*, the Muratori edition of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which leaves much to be desired. Particularly numerous are the errors that have crept into the section concerning the works of St Thomas, and the translation unhappily conserves them all. Thus St Thomas is saddled with such palpable absurdities as *De infantibus* and *De natura materiae accusantis*. Père Mandonnet had long ago corrected this list (*Des écrits authentiques de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, Fribourg, 1910, p. 62), and we might surely expect Fr Foster to enter a *caveat* and to refer the reader to Mandonnet. A critical edition of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is in preparation for the *Monumenta Germaniae historica*; meanwhile it may be useful to correct the list, as given on p. 138, with the help of the Latin MSS. 5125 and 5125A in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris:

De instantibus: which begins 'Quoniam omnem durationem'.

De verbo, quid sit: which begins 'Quoniam circa naturam verbi'.

De principio individuationis: which begins 'Quoniam duae sunt potentiae cognoscitivae'.

De genere: beginning 'Quoniam omnis creatura'.

De natura accidentis: which begins 'Quoniam omnis cognitio humana'.

De natura materiae. . . .

VINCENT SHOONER, O.P.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Andrés Fernández, S.J. Translated by Paul Barrett, O.F.M.CAP. (The Newman Press; \$12.50.)

Before us lies a handsome 800-page Life of Christ in Baskerville type on glossy paper. The result is a heavy book which is best read at a desk. The glossy paper is for the many illustrations, some of which are striking and original, but many are far too dark, so we miss any impression of the brilliant light of Palestine; and some are simply poor photographs.

So much for the externals. When we study plan and structure we notice that the whole Life is in twenty-nine sections (the word Chapter does not occur), each of which is subdivided into anything from two to fifteen un-numbered sub-sections. Three of these provide condensed and needful information on the geography of Palestine, on the historical background, and on characteristics and chronology of the Gospels. Sections 4-6 cover the infancy of Christ; the entire remainder has the title 'The Public Life', without further divisions.