

battle altogether. In the last resort, it is the strength of faith which will determined survival, and there, though every observer may make his own guess, no one can accurately know. Prognosis is uncertain; at most we shall watch the succession of events without surprise.

OBITER

BLACKFRIARS SCHOOL. This year Blackfriars School, the school of the English Dominicans, celebrates the three hundredth anniversary of its foundation. It was among the first English schools to be founded on the continent after the Reformation for the education of the children of recusant Catholics. Cardinal Allen's school at Douay which was primarily for training priests opened in 1597, the Jesuit College at St Omers, now Stonyhurst, in 1592, and St Gregory's, Douay, now Downside, in 1622.

Father Thomas (later, Cardinal) Howard, nephew of the Thomas Howard who became Duke of Norfolk when the title was restored in 1660, had become a Dominican in June 1645, three months before his sixteenth birthday. From the first he had set his heart on the restoration of the English Dominicans as a step towards the conversion of England, and he had only been in the Order five years when he seized the opportunity of his appointment to preach the Latin oration at the General Chapter of the Order to tell his brethren of the sorry plight of England. At that date, 1650, there were only six Dominicans at work in England, no recruits were coming and there was no house of training to receive them. Father Thomas realized, as the English Benedictines who had taken refuge on the Continent also realized, that the English religious life would only be restored and recruits would come if houses were founded abroad. With that end in view he set to work and eventually with the help of the Belgian Dominicans obtained a house in Bornhem, twelve miles from Antwerp and twenty-one from Brussels, where in April 1658 regular Dominican life was started with a community of six under Father Thomas as Prior.

Father Thomas however would not be satisfied until there was adequate means of attracting to and training young men for the English Dominican Province, and so in the summer of 1659 he determined to establish a secular college, to afford additional means for the education of English Catholics in all branches of scholastic and polite

learning, from which the penal laws of England rigidly excluded them in their native land'. Details about the first years of the school are very scanty. Not all the community shared Father Thomas's enthusiasm for the school and its existence was in peril and indeed for a few years it ceased to function. However, Thomas Howard's tradition survived and blossomed into the great Bornhem school of 1703-1794, the second largest on the continent, under headmasters like Father Francis Underwood, Father Ambrose Gage and Father Lewis Brittain.

In 1794 the French Revolution caused the Dominicans to leave Flanders and they took refuge with their school at Carshalton, Surrey, in the house which is now occupied by the convent of the Daughters of the Cross. During this period the names Eyston, Stonor, Vanzeller, Mostyn appear frequently in the register; it was still the second largest of the English Catholic schools, and when Carshalton was closed its numbers must have been exceeded only by Stonyhurst. When Father Ambrose Woods, who had been headmaster at Carshalton, became Provincial in 1822 he made his residence at Hinckley and concentrated the energies of the Province there and took the school there also in 1825. Father Ambrose himself governed the school for many years. The records during the first thirty years at Hinckley show a remarkable feature: the names of all but fifteen of the boys of that period are lost, yet among those fifteen are five of the most influential Dominican names of the last century: Father Dominic Aylward, poet, historian, preacher, diplomat and administrator, a man who became headmaster of the school, Provincial of England, representative of the religious orders at the Synod of Westminster; Father Lewis Weldon, whose name is still revered in Newcastle; Father Henry Bartlett, who was novice master for over thirty years and may have done more than any other single man to shape the contemporary English Dominican; Father Raymund Palmer, the pioneer historian; and Father Antoninus Williams, who sponsored some of the greatest building programmes of the period.

At the end of the century the school was an apostolic school, for candidates to the Dominican Order, but when in 1898 a move was made to Hawkesyard, the house given to the Dominicans by Josiah Spode, there came the beginning of the modern era. Although during the next twenty-six years more boys than ever became Dominicans, at the same time the school was growing and there was an increasing demand from Catholic parents for their boys to be educated by Dominicans. Because of this Father Bede Jarrett together with Father Jerome Rigby decided to look for larger premises which were found in 1924 at Laxton Hall, the present home of Blackfriars School. In

September 1924 forty-eight boys were present for the first term in the new school. Thirty-five years later there are a hundred at Blackfriars Laxton and a hundred and two at Blackfriars Llanarth, the junior department which was opened in 1948 through the generosity of the Hon. Mrs Walter Roche.

Despite the changes of home there runs a strong continuous tradition through the three hundred years of the life of Blackfriars School. It was there in the vision of Cardinal Howard who saw the school as an integral part of the Catholic apostolate. He believed a schoolmaster's horizon was not bounded by Latin and Greek. Education is part of the apostolate because it is not merely the imparting of knowledge but the building up of character and personality in Christ. So the chapel is the heart of the school and daily Mass and Compline said by priests and boys together are more important than classes and games. If teaching is part of the apostolate the school is part of the Church. So the Dominican teacher believes that his mission field is not only inhabited by small boys in search of or resisting knowledge, but their parents and brothers and sisters and later on their wives and families. From time to time broken marriages are mended through the children's Catholic school, and old boys and their wives continue for many years to bring their religious problems to the priest who first taught them algebra.

It will only be natural that when Blackfriars School makes its official act of thanksgiving for three hundred years of life at Whitsuntide it will do so in company with parents and old boys and friends.

G.A.M.

TWO BRITISH FILMS. For a long time it has been a matter for exasperation that, while almost every other country seemed able to make films which showed real people living real lives, the British film industry alone obstinately persevered in the production of pictures which bore little or no relation to post-war life in this country at all. Admirable directors and excellent actors have been bogged down, over and over again, by weakness of script and lack of enterprise and courage in the choice of theme. In the place of Italian neo-realism and American social criticism we have had to make do with what the Goons would call 'English-type' films. But about eighteen months ago things began to change.

Hopes which brightened with *Manuela* were consolidated with *The Woman in a Dressing Gown* and positively burgeoned with *The Man Upstairs*: and now we have *Room at the Top*, which at long last is something which one can call realism and not blush to do so. Here we have a hero who does a routine job in a provincial city, is racked by

the emotions of an adult, and is driven by ignoble ambitions to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage which revolts him when he has it. John Braine's Joe Lampton tells his story in the first person, and the film gains by the detachment with which we are forced to watch and judge Laurence Harvey's ruthless drive to reach the top. The director, Jack Clayton, impels us into explicit moral assessment, and the enrichment is considerable. The men Joe works with, the girls in the office who would like to get off with him, his indomitable aunt, even the silly besotted little rich girl he seduces and finally marries as the crown of his success, are all, in the last analysis, better people than he. This microcosm of provincial life is solid and sordid; decent people everywhere get involved in the jungle warfare of cold schemers who do not care how they win; the only wonder is that we have had to wait so long to see it accurately presented on our screens.

But the core of the film, as it was of the novel, is the relationship between Joe and Alice. Alice—married, unhappy, no longer very young—takes Joe as she has taken other young men before him, to assuage the hurt of her husband's deliberate unkindness, but almost to their astonishment the affair deepens into a true if hopeless love. It had seemed a gratuitous exploitation of the reputation Simone Signoret had built up in the French cinema to cast her in this part, originally as Yorkshire as the rest, but in the event it proved a stroke of genius. The integrity, the maturity, the sheer intelligence of this performance is something to marvel at; and swept along by her generous virtuosity the love-scenes achieve an emotional authenticity that is, I think, unique in British cinema. What is more, her essentially moral condemnation of Joe's betrayal of himself—and her—is given an increased authority by the honesty not only of the part but of the playing of it.

This is a deeply moving film, wonderfully well directed, and full of performances—Donald Wolfitt, Hermione Baddeley, Donald Houston—conceived and played in depth. It is confident, relaxed, and does, I am convinced, precisely what it was meant to do: and the fact that it is shocking is a part of that purpose. It is the complete justification of the 'X' certificate as it was visualized—a serious film but not in any way for children.

To turn from *Room at the Top* to *The Horse's Mouth*, directed by Ronald Neame, scripted and acted by Alec Guinness, in discreet Technicolor with a mocking score based on Prokofieff and pictures specially commissioned from John Bratby—the lot, in fact—is a violent wrench. Alec Guinness has seldom done anything better than his shambling, scruffy, raffish Gullej Jimson, and dear Kay Walsh, who never gives a bad performance, is splendid as Coker, the redoubtable barmaid; the whole thing is wonderful entertainment and quite

preposterous from beginning to end. We are swept back slap into fantasy of the kind that the English do superbly but have done too often. It is arguable that Ronald Neame and Alec Guinness have done this deliberately, so as to project the whole story through the obsessed painter's eye of Gulley Jimson, but all I can say is that if this is so, Joyce Cary's novel contrived to be twice as earthy and quite as fantastic with no loss of force. There is too much caricature, too much slapstick, too much general *bonhomie* in this film and the end-result, I regret to say, is disappointment. It is too *thin*, in spite of all the intelligence and care behind it. Gulley is a great painter—we accept this—and in pursuit of his much nobler goal he is no less ruthless than Joe Lampton. The fact that he had lost the game years before we meet him should only make the film more serious, but in fact nothing of the kind emerges. The moral crisis of Joe Lampton, Jack Clayton makes us feel, is important to us all, but Ronald Neame evades the issue as neatly as Gulley sails down the Thames in his house-boat—and as frivolously, I cannot help feeling, for Joyce Cary left him on his death-bed.

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

REVIEWS

THE ARTS, ARTISTS AND THINKERS. A Symposium edited by John M. Todd. (Longmans; 35s.)

There are twenty-three contributors to this symposium, writing on a variety of matters to do with art; and it is not easy to see the wood for the trees. The papers vary a good deal, in the points of view that they represent and in quality; but together they are a valuable witness to what contemporary Catholics in England are thinking about an important and complicated subject. The range of the book is impressive, though the arts of painting and music are not adequately discussed; and although certain writers on art get less attention than they deserve or than one might have expected in view of their influence; Mrs S. K. Langer is incomprehensibly overlooked by almost every contributor, and also, less surprisingly, Eric Gill. Some of the papers would have little interest apart from the rest; but some are valuable studies in themselves. Of the latter, three should at least be mentioned here: Mr J. Rykwert's very intelligent sketch of the inter-relations of art and society in the West since the Renaissance, Mr. J. Coulson's reflections ('The Retreat from Meaning') on the Cartesian denial of the