

THE HISTORY OF BELMONT ABBEY. By Dom Basil Whelan, O.S.B. (Bloomsbury Press; 25s.)

This is written by a member of the community at Belmont, at the direction of his Abbot, to mark the centenary of the monastery. The difficulties of writing a history in such circumstances need not be described. In this instance they have been remarkably overcome and the result is a book commendable for its frankness combined with fairness and charity, its clever balance of matters of domestic and of general interest, and its humour. It is a welcome contribution to the history of the Church in England and Wales. Some useful appendices give the text of such important documents as the Bull *Cambria Celtica* and Bishop Brown's letter addressed to the General Chapter of the English Benedictine Congregation in 1858. It is a pity that there is no index, for the book deserves one. A.R.

### NOTICES

THE ENGLISH ECCENTRICS, by Edith Sitwell (Dobson, 25s.) is a re-issue with fresh material. The distinguished poet presents her characters lyrically, not as excerpts from a psychoanalyst's case-book, and writes of them, as one might expect, with great elegance and much compassion. This is a most delightful book.

In THE FIRE-BORN, by Christopher Fry (O.U.P., 9s. 6d.), the characters of the Exodus work out a theme to do with authority and freedom that might perhaps have been better set in occupied France. Mr Fry has re-shaped the play since it was first performed in London. It has fine moments and fine speeches, but the language is too consistently high-flown to allow the persons and their problems to make a real impact.

HAPPINESS WITH GOD, by Dom Basil Whelan, O.S.B. (Bloomsbury, 12s. 6d.), is a series of conferences emphasizing the happiness attainable in the practice of our Catholic faith.

SAINTE MADELEINE (Lethielleux, 540 frs.) is an interesting presentation by Dom Albert Schmitt, Monk of Solesmes, of treatises by Bérulle, Coeffeteau and Bossuet on St Mary Magdalene. The first of these is of particular interest to the English reader as it was written for Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I.

SILENT BEDES, by S. G. A. Luff (Longmans, 8s. 6d.), is a sequence of practical meditations for the Mysteries of the Rosary. It is a pleasing book both in content and presentation.

ONE NUN TO ANOTHER, by Sister Mary Laurence, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 12s. 6d.), is a sensible book for nuns. It gives practical suggestions on how to face the religious life in contemporary terms.