

REVIEWS

PSALMS AND CANTICLES OF THE BREVIARY. By Richard J. Foster, S.T.L., L.S.S. (The Mercier Press; 15s.)

There can be nothing but praise for this book. But why wasn't it done fifty years ago? When a young man had the temerity to tell Tennyson that anybody could have written *Enoch Arden* if only he had thought of it the poet is said to have replied: 'Yes; but it was I who happened to think of it!' Father Foster, who is the Professor of Sacred Scripture at Oscott College, has happily thought of a good thing; but only an expert could have done it so thoroughly well.

The book covers the Psalms and Canticles of the Divine Office from Sunday Matins to Saturday Compline. What the author has done is to introduce each psalm in its proper setting, outlining the circumstances that gave rise to it, so that it has a background of reality that helps the reader to understand why it was written and what it means. A simple explanation follows, with an application of its teaching to everyday life. A further point in the book's favour is that the new version of the Psalter has been used throughout.

Father Vincent McNabb once admitted to the present reviewer that he recited 'whole tracts of the psalms with an act of faith in their meaning', which may suggest that Father Foster's work will not be without value to many a 'Master in Israel'. To the young subdeacon, as well as to the religious novice who says the Divine Office, the book must come as a boon beyond all price. Elderly priests may be inclined to regret that a copy of it was not available as a companion to their first Breviary.

Every Novice Master—and Novice Mistress—should order a dozen copies at once. With the *Psalms* and *Canticles* rubbing shoulders with Father Martindale's delightfully inspiring *Sweet Singer of Israel*, and the new English translation of the Psalter by Mgr. R. Knox, our young men and women can now embark upon the Divine Office with interest and enthusiasm. Fortunately for them, Father Foster has made the recitation of it a happy adventure. *O si sic antea!*
EDWIN ESSEX, O.P.

BY JACOB'S WELL: A planned retreat by Archbishop James Leen, C.S.Sp. (Burns Oates; 12s. 6d.)

Mgr Leen is an Irishman who is bishop of Port Louis, Mauritius, and the retreat of which *By Jacob's Well* is the record was delivered in French. It has now been translated into English—one had almost said Irish—by Father Edward Leen. These circumstances explain an angularity of language which mars what is otherwise a notable book. 'God awaits your decision: He would know what is your election.' 'They are exposed to indulge in a sense of false security.' 'The sacrament condescends in a marvellous way.' We mention such