

Usage and Liturgy (School Edition). By John F. Sullivan. (Longmans; 6s. 9d.)

This is a revision for the English public of a work long standard in America. It makes an excellent guide to the outlines of Catholic organization, liturgy, devotions, terminology, etc. A number of points have been noticed where improvement would be possible, e.g.: the text might in several cases be more carefully adapted to explain all the points signalized in the clear and useful diagrammatic illustrations; an occasional Latin word could well be substituted by an English one, e.g. *gremiale*; 'the deacon wears a chasuble at Lenten Masses instead of a dalmatic folded up in front' (p. 231) does not give the intended sense; the *Glorias* in the Rosary are a customary adjunct rather than an essential part; it is not prescribed in the Roman Ritual that the candles used at Extreme Unction be blessed; Fr Sebastian Bullough (p. 307) is not a Passionist but a Dominican. In a generally good account of devotion to the Sacred Heart, no mention or explanation is made of the 'great promise'. The reviewer personally finds the constant playing-down of traditional stories rather over-done, e.g. the description of a story on page 275 as 'beautiful but rather fanciful'. But in general this is a useful and pleasing book.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

THREE WHITE VEILS FOR ALESSANDRA. By Lucy Prario. (Longmans, Green and Co.; 18s.)

The hopes of a dead Cardinal Archbishop of Paris were realized in 1928 when, from Paray-le-Monial, a Carmel was founded on the north side of Montmartre under the shadow of the great white church that dominates the city. 'I shall not regard the Basilica as complete', Cardinal Amette had said, 'until the day comes when in the shadow of our national shrine there arises a centre of prayer, a contemplative monastery.' The Foundress was Mother Mary of Jesus, Alessandra of the three veils, the subject of this unusual biography. Unusual, because at first it seems an ordinary story of a spoiled child becoming a society beauty and making a brilliant marriage.

There were, however, to be three white veils in the life of Alessandra di Rudini, the daughter of a wealthy marchese, an important politician in the new Italy after 1870. The first white veil Alessandra wore at her First Communion; the second white veil she wore at her wedding. The third veil was that of the Carmelite novice. Much happened to Alessandra between the first and second veils; most serious of all, she had ceased to be a practising Catholic. Between the second and third there came motherhood, widowhood and a romantic interlude with d'Annunzio.

A young widow with two adolescent sons, a woman whose defiance

of convention was the talk of Italian society, seemed an improbable subject for the third veil, that of a nun. And this is where Alessandra's biography takes its unusual and unexpected turn. She came back to God and received an imperative call to the Carmelite life. She arranged for the education of her sons, disposed of her affairs and gave up the world. For twenty years she gave her life to God in prayer, in austerity, in suffering. At last, on January 2nd, 1931, Alessandra, now Mother Mary of Jesus, left this world for ever. 'Lord God, we are home' she whispered as she died. It was an arduous journey and it is described for us by Miss Lucy Prario with skill and sympathetic perception. Miss Prario is fortunate in her translator, Mr George Lamb.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT. By D. Dubarle, O.P. (Blackfriars; 10s. 6d.)

This is a collection of five articles first published in France a few years ago. They deal with the problem raised for Christians by technical advances such as automation in the contemporary world. Cybernetics is given clear treatment in the second article, which also has an interesting account of the theory of games and its possible applications. The remaining articles are rather short and vague over the complex question of how these new techniques will affect our civilization. Work of an occasional nature by a distinguished author is often worth collecting together; it is less often worth the trouble of translating. Too little discrimination is being shown in giving books the permanence of English paper, print, covers and well-designed jacket. We risk being swamped by a flood of books which were never intended to have them.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE WAY IT WORKED OUT. By G. B. Stern. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

This book is a sequel to Miss Stern's story of her conversion, *All in Good Time*, and is described by her publishers as 'an eminent convert's most honest account . . . of what the faith did for her, and what it didn't do'. It is a lighthearted account and consists of a series of musings that produce the cumulative effect of a breathless, and rather pious, monologue. It is thus a patchy book and I found the most entertaining patches to be the stories about little-known saints. For the rest, some recent converts may find it of interest as revealing a community of bewilderment about some Catholic practices; Catholics of longer standing may find interest in the occasional fresh view of such customs.

It would seem, incidentally, to have worked out very well for Miss