

or given a spurious glamour. But his knowledge of his own loneliness, and of the roots of it, enables him to interpret the folly of others—and of the often unspoken human need that lies beneath—with an insight that is patient and true. Above all, one is amazed by the fidelity with which the priestly situation is conveyed. There is an awareness of the real fabric of a form of life that can in fiction so easily be either trivial or hysterical and in any case so rarely suggests the enduring paradox of a vocation that is in practice achieved in duties that can be tedious, among people that can be boring, and always bears the marks of a Simon Peter who was chosen not in spite of his humanity but because of it.

With *The Edge of Sadness* Mr O'Connor adds not only to his own reputation: he gives a new dimension to the American novel itself.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION IN BRITAIN 1909-1959, by J. M. Cleary ; Catholic Social Guild; 10s.

This book gives a clear picture of the history of the Catholic Social Guild from its formation in 1909 to its re-organization in 1959. One of the best features of the book is the way in which the author succeeds in bringing to life the pioneers of the social apostolate in this country. The work of the Catholic Workers College is included in the history, and we are shown something of the great effort put into their studies by the students, many of whom had left school at fourteen. Typical of the best of the early students was Tom Leyland, who served the Guild as Organizing Secretary from 1922 to 1951, and who continues to serve it as a member of its executive until his death, taking an important part, despite failing health, in the discussions preceding the 1959 re-organization.

The reader will learn too of the criticism and intrigue from which the Guild suffered in its early years from some Catholics who believed that the British Labour Party was socialist in the sense used in the papal proscription, and who believed also that much of the Guild's teaching was suspect. Let the reader draw the lesson from this unhappy phase in the Guild's history, namely the importance of free discussion in all matters where defined doctrine is not involved.

Towards the end of the book the treatment becomes less definitive. No doubt those who are still labouring in the field have been less willing to talk of their own labours than of those of their predecessors. Again, it is inevitable that, at this stage, little should be said about the details of the unfortunate crisis that led eventually to the Guild's re-organization at the end of the period under consideration. At some stage, it is desirable that a fuller account should appear, and that the subsequent history of the Guild should also be dealt with. Let us hope that when the time comes for this, the Guild will find a historian worthy of continuing the story that Mr Cleary has so ably begun.

J. M. JACKSON