

to fulfil his vow. Bridget, now a widow, had from henceforth but one wish for herself, to become a nun as she had vowed. But again it seemed that God's will for her was otherwise. He made it clear to her through one of the many revelations of which her life was full that she was to found a new order in the Church. She had to tread the difficult path of religious foundresses. It was not until 1370, three years before her death, that her order received its first confirmation in Rome. It did not get the final confirmation until five years after Bridget's death when her Rule was ratified by Pope Urban VI.

The book is a well written, concentrated account of visions and revelations, of pilgrimages and journeyings made in spite of the almost insurmountable difficulties of travel in those days, and of Bridget's special mission as God's Ambassadors. Like St Catherine of Siena in the same century she never flinched from the task God gave her, even when it entailed sending a severe warning to the Pope himself on the condition of the Church at that time. It may be that other warnings and reprimands she had to give during her life, including the taking to task of her own royal relatives, were even more difficult.

Bridget died in 1373. The last chapters give us shortly the history of the Brigetine order; how it spread from Valstena in Sweden into other lands, being established in England by Henry V, who founded the Syon Monastery at Isleworth. According to the Rule drawn up by St Bridget, her monastery was a double one, consisting of an enclosure for men and an enclosure for women, and the church which was shared by both. An Abbess ruled over the whole monastery. From time to time attempts were made to alter St Bridget's plan of a double monastery, but it was only in the last century that the men were finally done away with, which seems a pity.

FLORENCE ROCH

BEHOLD THIS HEART. By Rev. H. J. Heagney. (P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York.)

This is the story of the life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. From the outset, the author captures the reader's interest and holds it throughout. He is never dull. The story is colourful, vivid, fascinating, and told with a charm that grips. In a style that is eminently readable, in words beautiful and eloquent, he paints a picture of happy childhood. The pages as we read seem to grow into flesh and blood and spirit. The woman (as was the child) is real and living.

Here is a record of the emotions of a life which was consumed by one idea, to love God and to adore him in the spirit of reparation in his Sacrament on the altar. The author makes us aware of sanctity lurking behind the pranks and gaiety of the child.

The child who was daring, gay, vivacious and vigorous, tomboyish, exuberant and bubbling over with high spirits, was at the same time deeply conscious of God. The young rock-climber and tight-rope

walker would of a sudden drop her play and leave her companions to seek quiet for prayer. After a while the others didn't bother. They knew that when Margaret was missing they would certainly find her in the church before the Blessed Sacrament. At the age of six she made a vow of perpetual chastity.

A strange mixture, this child. A happy frivolity wedded to a profound solemnity. Something in the depths of her soul glowed like a living flame. Of course, as we expect, there is suffering. Very early in life she entered on the way of purgation. Beautifully does the author describe the gradual development of spiritual growth. Her sufferings increase with her years, but illumination comes at last when she meets Father de la Columbière, her counsellor and guide under God.

Behold This Heart might be described as an *itinerarium cordis ad Deum*, a journey to the realisation of her heart's love. More and more was she drawn to the Blessed Sacrament. There in the Presence all her troubles vanished and all else seemed small and trivial. She is one of the many saints of the Mass. She sets an ideal for all of us.

The book is very interesting, very beautiful, and draws magnificent character sketches: it shows real insight into circumstances. It is original in production. The paper is good, the type is very clear and artistic, the lay-out of the book is pleasing, the binding good. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and have nothing but praise for the author and publishers.

PLACID CRONEY, O.P.

CONCERNING THE INNER LIFE. By Evelyn Underhill. (Methuen; 5s.)

Miss Underhill was perhaps most remarkable as a director of the clergy, and the first of these two reprints was a series of addresses to parish priests of the Anglican Church. That in itself will make it a book to marvel at for Catholics. But no one need sit on a high horse and quote St Paul with reference to the silence of women in church. These pages contain a great deal of admirable common sense with regard to maintaining an inner life in the midst of pressing activity, and most Christians will profit by it. Practically all her authorities are Catholic mystics, from St Augustine to St Ignatius and Augustine Baker. 'The House of the Soul', which is the second reprint brought here into one volume with 'Inner Life', is intentionally more general in its appeal and extends the simile of the soul as the house in which God dwells to include a great deal of practical advice on prayer and virtue.

JOHN HUNTER