

sixteenth of the series *L'Eau Vive*, and is a sequel to *La Croix, le Sang, la Vérité*, thirteen letters of St Catherine by the same translator, published by Gallimard.

These twenty-one have been chosen as examples of *les principaux symboles cathériniens*, the lamp, the sword, the table and others, and form a selection both comprehensive and characteristic, the correspondents ranging from blessed Raymond of Capua, the saint's revered but much scolded spiritual director, to the truly villainous Barnabo Visconti and his infamous wife Beatrice de la Scala. In her answer to each the passage that would have given the clue has been cut out. Probably the messages concerned events still recent when the letters were collected, and prudence required the excision. These are two of the longest letters in the book and are typical of Catherine's dealings with souls. To say, typical of her methods, would be wide of the mark. A saint acting habitually under the inspiration of God has always a divine *savoir faire* but it is as spontaneous and instinctive as genius on the natural plane, and of this too Catherine had more than a little. The usual way to keep on the right side of tyrants is by flattering them, but we might expect a saint to lash them with words of holy wrath. Catherine does neither. She is always courteous. Barnabo is her *réverend père*, though also, a few lines after the opening of her letter, an *esclave racheté* (by the Precious Blood), and in the next paragraph *très cher Père dans le doux Christ Jésus*. Beatrice is likewise her *révêrende mère* and, as the saint's heart warms towards a soul in so great need, her *douce mère et soeur dans le Christ Jésus*. So evident indeed in her pleading is her passionate love and solicitude for the souls of Visconti and his wife that even they cannot take offence when she censures unsparingly the sins they know to be theirs. No one but she would credit them with even a measure of good will, or expect their brutalised intellects to be penetrated by even a glimmer of the high spiritual ideal she sets before them. Yet perhaps the cruel heart of Barnabo, whom she bids, *Blottissez-vous dans les plaies du Christ crucifié*, was stirred by some memory of her letter when, in his last hour—as we learn in a footnote—he murmured unceasingly, *Cor meum contritum et humiliatum, Deus meus, ne despicias*.

As a translation the book compares unfavourably with the French renderings, by Père Bernadot, O.P., of the saint's letters to Blessed Raymond. The French construction is often faulty and sometimes ungrammatical.

AN INFINITY OF QUESTIONS. A study of the religion of art, and the art of religion in the lives of five women. By C. J. Eustace. (Denis Dobson; 8s. 6d.)

This book is not intended as literary criticism. It is a study of the relationship between poetry and mysticism, illustrated by the lives of five women of literary and artistic talents and their attitude towards their art.

The nature of poetic experience is here given as wonderment at the mystery, sensed as divine, lying at the heart of life. The sense of a unifying link between man and his environment lost to modern man 'bedeviled by the glittering achievements of technical science' is the birthright of poets and saints. Not the least value of the book is the corrective which Mr Eustace applies to the glib misuse of the word mysticism in connection with poetry. The division between Christian mysticism and poetic apprehension is shown to be a supernatural one. Poetic intuition as to the nature of existence and its dependence on God is contrasted with the real knowledge of the saint through the gift of a true mystical experience. After such an experience, expression in art becomes secondary to the task of the spiritualising of the self. God shines out to an unbelieving world through the countenance of his saints.

The lives of five women show stages of the ascent from 'song to sanctity'. All of these died comparatively young. Helen Foley never quite lost the innocent eye which sees a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower. Katherine Mansfield strove to explain this through her intellect. Frances Pastorelli, a gifted musician, forced by illness to give up her art, faced the problem of relinquishing the shadowy apprehension of reality for its substance in the mystery of God's holy will. Elizabeth Leseur hid a life of prayer and mystical experience in the duties of a wife and mother. Her journals show the poet's intuition fortified by spiritual insight. In the *Autobiography* of St Thérèse of Lisieux we reach the heights of attainment. Here the mystery of life is apprehended in and through God's love.

The modest appearance of the book conceals great depths of thought as to the transforming nature of God's grace and the gift of infused contemplation. The neat bibliography suggests further sources for meditative consideration of these. It is a pity that the printing and lay-out should be so unattractive and the photographic illustrations so harsh.

JANET CLEEVES.

ARCHIVES D'HISTOIRE DOMINICAINE, Vol. I. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars Publications; 7s.)

The first volume of a new journal of Dominican historical studies provides evidence once more of the industry and apostolic enthusiasm of the French province of the Order. One has grown used to such enterprises as *La Vie Intellectuelle*, *La Vie Spirituelle* and even to the exciting innovation of *Le Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*. And all this apart from the normal work of any Dominican province: in the field of preaching, missionary work, academic study and—it must be added—religious observance, France is pre-eminent. It is natural, therefore, to find the House of Studies at Le Saulchoir sponsoring an historical review. In no other Order, perhaps, is the study of its history so necessary for an understanding of its function. The providential impulse that led St Dominic to found his Order has lost none of its force, and seven hundred years of unified life