

after his open-air life is not easy to estimate. His attended walks in the Vatican gardens made him long 'for his carefree tramps in Venice where he talked to passers-by, gave candy to the children, shared his tobacco with the loafers enjoying the sunshine, and chatted with gondoliers and fishermen'. Once he said to his secretary when he heard a shrill whistle: 'Listen, perhaps that is the train for Venice'; and the same secretary once found him looking through an old Venetian train-guide.

Of his work as Pope there is little need to speak here; it has passed into the Church's history with other movements of historical importance. To restore all things in Christ was his motto, and how he abided by it may be seen in the encyclicals on Frequent Communion, the necessity of Catholic Action, the condemnation of Modernism, and other pronouncements of the utmost importance in safeguarding the teaching of the Church and protecting the flock of Christ. Everything was dedicated to his high task, and not even sickness was allowed to intervene. Once his doctor remonstrated with him for working too soon after a sharp attack of bronchitis and begged the Pope to remember his (the doctor's) responsibility before the world, but Pius replied: 'Think of mine before God if I don't take care of his Church'. And he died as he had lived, tranquilly and peacefully, with marvellous resignation, murmuring at the last: 'All things in Christ'.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

LA VOCATION RELIGIEUSE. By Chanoine Jacques Leclercq. Cahiers de la Revue Nouvelle. (Casterman; 66 fr.)

Here is a book which, unlike so many of its kind, is easy to read and worth reading. Good wine matures best in the wood, but should be bottled when maturity has been reached. Canon Leclercq has allowed the good wine of christian teaching to mature in his mind through the action of sanity and experience, and has here bottled it for us. It is humiliatingly clear that the author has gone about not only with his eyes wide open but also with his mind equally open. He has allowed his experiences to engrave themselves on his mind and has not shrunk from making statements which the more timid of human beings would leave unsaid. 'Imposer à une jeune fille d'aujourd'hui des attitudes que la réserve commandait il y a cinquante ans ou des formules de respect dans un langage désuet qui lui paraît comique, et lui imposer cela sous prétexte que c'est une exigence de la consécration à Dieu, c'est l'écartier. Mais beaucoup de vieilles religieuses refusent toute modification aux usages de la vie religieuse telle qu'elles l'ont choisie à vingt ans.' (p. 63.) How very true! It is not cynical either to state: 'Le vieillard détaché est la perle la plus rare au trésor de la vertu'. (p. 123.) The author's positive

attitude to perfection is so refreshing and encouraging. Rarely do we find an explicit quotation of any sort because the whole is so logical and common sense. This book is essentially realist in character and for this very reason is sometimes almost frighteningly humiliating. 'Or, beaucoup de religieux, quand on les retrouve à quarante ans, n'ont acquis aucune perfection et en sont moins préoccupés qu'à leur entrée en religion.' (p. 99.) The recurrent theme applied to the religious vocation is that it is essentially the total giving of self to God. Touting for vocations to a particular order is quite foreign to the thought of the author, and quite rightly too. The book is full of sound reasoning and sanity stressing again and again the positive nature of the religious life and its vows. The author prefers the obedience of the living human being to that of the corpse. 'Et si l'obéissance passive est bonne pour le jeune enfant incapable de raisonner . . . il n'en est plus ainsi pour l'adulte. . .' (p. 177.) It is a pleasure to think that someone has had the courage to say what has here been said and so unequivocally. The pity is that so many will miss this book unless it be translated into their own language.

D.J.S.

POEMS OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, Spanish Text, with a Translation by Roy Campbell. Preface by M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. (Harvill Press; 12s. 6d.)

This belated review has nothing scholarly to add to such careful judgments as those of Professor Sarmiento in *Blackfriars* (July-August, 1951), who will allow me, I am sure, to record his comment on the translation of the seventh strophe of the 'Noche'. Professor Sarmiento points out that 'the antecedent of *su* is *aire* and it is the hand of the wind that strikes the bride's neck'. (p. 357.)

Considering the difficulties of rendering St John of the Cross' poetry into English, Mr Campbell has done an admirable work. In the first place the Commentaries on the greater poems make the precise meaning of almost every word perfectly clear. Then there is the endless variety in the rhythm in each line of classical Spanish: the syllables are fixed in number, but where the stress comes is not fixed. Mr Campbell in this matter has done his best. English tends to fixed positions for the beats in a line, and consequently that elusive, mysterious element in the Spanish vanishes away. Of course the poetic element, of which that is a constituent part, cannot be translated into English. A new poem is created, and quite certainly new poems and good ones have been created in this case.

One of the beauties of this book is that you can see and judge for yourself. The Spanish is on one page, the English on the opposite one.