

REVIEWS

ROME AND THE COUNTER-REFORMATION IN ENGLAND. By Philip Hughes. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

This is a valuable work, and we regret that exigences of space allow us to do little more than most warmly commend it to the student of English Catholic history.

The writer deals with a period of which he is known to be a master, the reigns of Mary, Elizabeth and the two first Stuarts. He aims not at a general history of the epoch, but at a study of the measures then taken to counter the progress of the Reformation in England. In the course of more than four hundred tightly-packed pages he tells us a good deal that has been hitherto unknown, and much, too, that has been known to a few but has been kept back by older writers for prudential reasons and fear of scandal. He has tapped fresh sources, and has dared to tell the (sometimes unpleasant) truth in a way forbidden to Dodd and Tierney and Lingard. It is a sad story in the main, a story of tragic failure. There is much muck-raking and washing of dirty linen. But at the same time a glimpse of real heroism and wonderful triumphs of grace. And throughout we find in it the explanation of those strong prejudices which still at this day hinder the progress of the Catholic Church in our land. And from it we better understand why the 'Conversion of England' remains so largely a dream, and why for all our piping the English people refuse to dance.

It is a vast subject, and the writer skilfully groups his matter around three men who were the principal figures on the Catholic side—Cardinal Pole, Cardinal Allen and Dr. Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon. The last-named, the least known of the trio, has not been very fairly treated in Baron von Pastor's volumes: his life here receives its ample vindication.

The style of Fr. Hughes' work is vivid, sometimes exciting, always interesting, and not without purple patches. We have only two minute criticisms to make: Why is Cardinal Pole's legate-ship so oddly but persistently described as 'Pole's *legacy*'? And is it not rather harsh to say that Tunstall of Durham 'apostatized'? At the most, that prelate's offence was but what the lawyers might call 'constructive' schism.

ROBERT BRACEY, O.P.

ELIZABETHAN COMMENTARY. By Hilaire Belloc. (Cassell; 7s. 6d.)

Once more Mr. Belloc gives us his views on the character and conduct of Queen Elizabeth and on the Protestant Reformation in Great Britain. They are given with all the accustomed vehemence, posi-

tive assertion, and reiteration. Historians—‘that patient, modest, truthful, kindly and estimable race,’ as M. Maritain describes them—are to blame for neither sharing Mr. Belloc’s opinions nor accepting his conclusions. The whole business of the change of religion in England was ‘loot,’ according to Mr. Belloc, the ‘loot’ of the monastery lands and the chantry endowments. Historians do not find the explanation quite so simple. Gardiner with his published repudiation of papal authority, and the rest of the bishops who supported Henry VIII, are held, in spite of Mr. Belloc, to have had considerable influence on the change. The importance Mr. Belloc attaches to Elizabeth’s affair with her uncle, the Lord Admiral, Thomas Seymour, and her regard for the Duke of Anjou may seem somewhat exaggerated. It is certain that the popular risings in Edward VI’s reign were not in every case, as Mr. Belloc declares, concerned with changes in religion. Kett’s rebellion in Norfolk reveals no interest, for or against, in the new doctrines. But then Mr. Belloc writes of subdeacons in the Church of England; and ‘if you believe that, you’ll believe anything.’ (Mr. Belloc gives to Bernard Shaw and Andrew Lang the credit of this saying, though it is generally and rightly attributed in the first instance to the Duke of Wellington.) In matters of literary judgement Mr. Belloc insists that ‘the greatest master of English prose’ was Jonathan Swift. Thomas Huxley alone gets honourable mention as ‘one of the last exponents’ of English prose. As for Bunyan—‘he not only wrote prose, some of it very striking, though most of it dull enough as far as style goes, he also wrote verse.’ Wordsworth is ‘the high priest and chief exponent’ of what ‘may be called Protestant Pantheism.’ However, Shakespeare is allowed the benefit of the doubt concerning the authorship of his plays and sonnets. References are not given nor authorities quoted when evidence would be useful. Doubtful matters of fact are decided on Mr. Belloc’s word. The reader must take it or—leave it. In any case, Mr. Belloc is as forcible as ever in denunciation.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

SOVIET LABOUR AND INDUSTRY. By L. E. Hubbard. (Macmillan; 15s.)

A critical account of pre-revolutionary, N.E.P. and Five Year Plan Soviet commerce, with relevant discussions of the Soviet rationing scheme, price-control, ‘equal wages for equal work,’ and similar Soviet slogans, set against the background of Soviet practice. On a purely economic level, Mr. Hubbard has no difficulty in showing that Soviet achievement does not terribly outdistance capitalist: but there he rather misses the point. For the appeal of the U.S.S.R. seems to lie in its refusal to accept economic defeatism: its urgent conviction that our problems can be solved: its presentation of the State, not as an all-devouring Leviathan, but as a family, the prior