

REVIEWS

Professor Janelle maintains that the origin of the Laudian movement, the temper of high church piety and the characteristically English conception of the gentleman were profoundly affected by the work of the Jesuit missionaries. The suggestions would seem to be in a descending order of probability.

In contrast Mr. Waugh is barely concerned with the abstract. His *Campion* is delightfully spontaneous, personal and entirely convincing. His occasional use of primary authorities is not always fortunate; the description of the death-bed of the Queen is drawn from *Lady Southwell's Account*, which seems to be derived as much from the first book of the Maccabees as from court gossip, a variant on that trite theme *The Last Hours of the Persecutor*. But among secondary authorities he has chosen very wisely and he writes with a sense of period and a sustained vitality of prose. Again there are trivial errors; there was never an Elizabethan Duke of Rutland save upon the stage. But there are no false emphases, and the interview with Philip Sidney, the episode of the last sermon at Lyford and the final offers of preferment are described with an engaging realism. A feeling for the texture of English life has brought with it a sense of the improbable.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

SIR THOMAS MORE. By the Rev. Sir John R. O'Connell. (Duckworth; 6/-.)

This work does not pretend to compete with that of Professor Chambers as a piece of historical biography. But it does give us a forthright and accurate narrative of the life of St. Thomas More. The style is easy and delightful, and the book is perhaps the best and most readable introduction to the life of the saint.

Sir John has, apart from his evident scholarship, certain other advantages. He is an Irishman, a Catholic, a lawyer and a priest. As an Irishman he resists the temptation which the distinguished author of the delightful *Diary of Master William Silence* was unable to resist of claiming Irish ancestry for St. Thomas. As a Catholic he is preserved from the error which leads Dr. Coulton, in an article in the *Quarterly Review*, to speculate on the circumstances in which Thomas More might have become a heretic (a historian ought surely to be content with history).

As a lawyer Sir John O'Connell shows a technical appreciation of the influence that his life in the law may have had on the literary and political writings and speculations of Sir Thomas More. "The ideas suggested in the *Utopia* were the fruit of the experience of affairs and his knowledge of men and things which More was to gather in his public and professional life in the fifteen years which intervened between his lectures on St. Augustine and the publication—in Latin and abroad—of his *Utopia*." This view of *Utopia* needs to be supplemented and to some extent corrected

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by the analysis of the work which Professor Chambers has made. Yet it is well that emphasis should be put upon the legal life and training of Thomas More and on the influences that such life and training must have had on his work and character. One wonders how it is that earlier biographies have failed to enquire what books and authorities Thomas More must have read and studied during the seven years that he was a student in the Inns of Court and during his life as a practising barrister. Glanville, Bracton, Littleton, Fortescue: these were the text-books of St. Thomas More in the life and practice of the Common Law. Their influence is evident in *Utopia*. So we think is the influence of Aquinas, who was the master of Sir John Fortescue as he was the master of More.

As a lawyer again one could have wished that Sir John O'Connell had proceeded to a technical examination of the trial. Oddly enough there would seem to be an error in date (p. 176) in connection with the preliminaries of the trial. It was (as I remember) on the 12th June, not on the 14th June, that Rich had his conversation with Thomas More in the Tower of London. And the point to be made in connection with the Interrogatories that were administered and answered on oath on the 14th June, 1535, is that if More had given away his position in conversation with Rich on the 12th June there was no need to administer Interrogatories on the 14th in order to build up a case. Again, Sir John does not mention, much less explain, the failure of Thomas More, the lawyer and the judge, to take the one point of law that stood staring out in his favour at the trial. It is all the more astonishing since John Fisher had taken the very point as an amateur lawyer fourteen days before. The point that More failed to take and that Fisher took in his defence is that according to the law of England *no man can be convicted of treason on the evidence of one witness only: there must be two or more witnesses*. Now there was only one witness, namely Rich, against More. Southwell and Palmer had been called and had failed to corroborate. Why was not the point taken by Thomas More? Was it that he was overwhelmed by the words that Audley is said to have spoken after Fitzjames had pronounced in favour of the validity of the indictment: "Quid ultra testimonium desideramus?" Or was it that More, for a reason that seemed good to him, abstained from taking the point?

Perhaps he was sparing the conscience of his judges. We do not know. For the book remains to be written of which the title shall be *The Mysticism of Thomas More*.

Meantime, we thank Sir John O'Connell for his work on one who seems likely (with St. John Fisher and the Carthusian Martyrs) to fulfil the splendid prophecy of G. K. Chesterton that they shall in the strange truth of things be the hinges of English (and in some measure of European) history. RICHARD O'SULLIVAN.