

"Coningsby")—"Had Brummell been nothing better than an elegant automaton, he would never have acquired the influence that he decidedly obtained; he would not have enjoyed the society of clever men; neither would they have thought it worth their while to bestow a word on him, even in their moments of relaxation. But the reverse was the case. His acquaintance was not limited to men of fashion only—it comprised a great portion of the most intellectual men of the time; and at what period of our history was there such a constellation of genius?" Brummell, of course, had great qualities. He was a man of the world, with instinctive knowledge of his fellow-creatures, a great gift of tact, and an alert and brilliant wit that found its *métier* in a deliberate affectation. "I did my best for the lad," he remarked of someone he had been asked to introduce to the great world of fashion. "I gave him my arm from White's to Boodle's." "For your son to dress, ma'am," he answered an anxious mother, "he will require to spend on clothes eight hundred a year." Brummell was satirical on these and other occasions, but, curiously enough, his friends seem to have taken him literally, which was an undesigned compliment to one who, in an age when all posed, was the master *poseur*. Brummell, although a poor man of no rank, held his own with the wealthiest and noblest until he was attracted by the allurements of gambling, which proved fatal to him as to some others in that day. When he had to fly from his creditors, an intimate said to Alvanley that it was a pity the *beau* had acted so precipitately, as otherwise his affairs might have been arranged. "No, it was Solomon's judgment," said the witty peer, alluding to the then well-known money-lender.

After Brummell's flight the leadership of fashion was, as it were, put in commission, until Count D'Orsay came upon the scene and eclipsed the rest. "Count D'Orsay was a brilliant leader of the dandy class—strikingly handsome, of a splendid *physique*, a commanding appearance, an admirable horseman of the *haute école*," says Lord Lamington. "When he appeared in the perfection of dress (for the tailor's art had not died out with George IV.), with that expression of self-confidence and self-complacency which the sense of superiority gives, he was the observed of all. Add to this his real accomplishments—a sculptor, an excellent artist, and the possessor of a happy faculty of seizing the expression and drawing an admirable likeness in a remarkably short time." D'Orsay undoubtedly introduced a note of culture into the circle of the exquisites that was wanting before his time, but his taste in clothes was rather more "loud" than that of his famous predecessor, who had carefully eschewed the noticeable. "I have frequently ridden down to Richmond with Count D'Orsay. A striking figure he was in his blue coat with gilt buttons, thrown well back to show the wide expanse of snowy shirt-front and buff waistcoat; his light leathers and polished boots; his well-curved whiskers and handsome countenance; a wide-brimmed, glossy hat, spotless white gloves." He was then regarded the very *beau-ideal* of a leader of fashion, and the passers-by paid homage, by their obvious admiration, to his magnificence.

The times have indeed changed since D'Orsay was a power in the land, and the inner circle of society did not exceed six hundred persons. To-day men devote little thought to dress, and, whereas once it was regarded as desirable, and in the case of a *beau* essential, to attract attention by externals, it is now held that the best-dressed folk are those whose costume passes unnoticed. The dandy has gone, never to return, and with him has gone the extravagant indulgence of those habits that inevitably, sooner or later, spelt ruin to those who practised them. Extravagance has ceased to be fashionable. To sit down at the card-table to win or lose a fortune is thought foolish, even criminal; and though there are still persons of weak intellect who provide the lower-class journals with paragraphs by giving "freak" dinners at forty pounds a head, or commit other absurdities of a similar nature, no man of sound mind is distressed when he hears, in after years, that the organisers of these disgraceful functions have died in the workhouse. It is no longer regarded "the thing" to beggar oneself in purse or in health; and an ostentatious display of wealth is regarded as bad form. To-day the man who swears lustily without serious provocation is regarded with amazement, and the heavy tippler is looked at askance.

"We advance in simplicity and honesty as we advance in civilisation," said Thackeray; "and it is my belief that we become better bred and less artificial, and tell more truth every day." Let us be grateful that we can endorse these sentiments.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

THE SAINT.*

There are at least two distinct considerations which we ought to have clearly in mind if we are to appreciate the importance and at the same time allow for the atmosphere of such a book as this. We all make mistakes about people of a different nationality; if we did not there would be no such thing as nationality. We all make mistakes about men of a different religion; if we did not there would be no such thing as religion. But there are some mistakes which are deadly; and there are some which are not. I have heard of a writer who suggested that "hors d'œuvre" was the French for "out of work." It does not in the least matter whether a man thinks that "hors d'œuvre" means "out of work," because "hors d'œuvre" really means (both verbally and actually) something quite unimportant. But it does matter very much if a man thinks that the word *gentil-homme* is the French for the word gentleman. If he thinks that he will misunderstand not only France but England too. While therefore it is quite certain that we must, from the nature of the case, make some mistakes in estimating an Italian picture of Roman Catholicism, there are some mistakes which we need not make and which we can guard against at the beginning. There are, as I have said, at least two of these preliminary understandings necessary in the case of a book so important as "The Saint."

First we must realise this: that in judging anything concerned with Catholicism, we are dealing with an enormous and miscellaneous civilisation, very old, very varied—certainly much more varied than the British Empire, probably much more varied even than the Roman Empire. As the author of the introduction to "The Saint" suggestively says of the work in question, "the Jesuits have had it put on the Index; the Christian Democrats have accepted it as their gospel: yet Jesuits and Christian Democrats both profess to be Catholics." We in England do not realise this Catholic differentiation in philosophy; because we in England have almost entirely lost all interest in philosophy. But we have not lost our interest (for instance) in pictorial art; we still retain a real tradition from Ruskin and Walter Pater on that point. And in pictorial art we do realise this differentiation in Catholicism. Ruskin has taught us to believe that nothing could be more distinct from another thing than is the happy timidity of Giotto and the early draughtsman from the desolate violence of Michael Angelo. Yet Giotto and Michael Angelo were both Catholics, were both devout Catholics. Ruskin has taught us to take as opposites the strict lines of Gothic drawing, as in Cimabue, and the opulence of Venice as expressed in Titian. But Cimabue and Titian were both Catholics. The first and chief kind of good which a book like "The Saint" may do is to induce us to realise that there is and has always been in Catholicism a degree of intellectual variety similar to its artistic variety. The author of the book, Antonio Fogazzaro, is described as one of the most convinced and prominent of the Catholic laymen of Italy; and he is engaged, like his hero in the book, in a living philosophical struggle with other Catholics. This is the first thing to be borne in mind in estimating the book, both by way of asserting and moderating its importance. Catholicism has many strands, and this is only one of them.

The second thing which has to be remembered is somewhat more difficult to state. There are many strands in Catholicism; this is one of them; and it happens to be the one which it is dangerously easy for us who are English to understand. We in England always think of Catholicism as Italian; as much more Italian, I fancy, than it really is. The reason that we do so is that our happy-go-lucky and highly poetical English nature finds much that is akin to us in Italian romance and Italian casualness; we feel much more at home in Italy than we do, for instance, amid the elaborate science of Germany or under the sharp regimentation and rigid equality of the French. We do not mind Italy, where bureaucracy is done badly; but we cannot stand

* "The Saint." By Antonio Fogazzaro. 6s. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

France or Prussia, where it is done well. In view of some of the talk about race, it may seem a paradox to say that the English are like the Italians; but it is true; and it only shows what a great deal of sense there is in paradox and what a great deal of nonsense there is in race. Englishmen and Italians are united against Frenchmen and Germans in the great and sublime cause of doing as one likes. In both countries the only real trouble is a sporadic and disorderly local development, one place having this sentiment or privilege, another place having that. The only fault of the kingdom of Italy is that there is no kingdom of Italy. The only fault of the United Kingdom is that it is not a united kingdom. And of this lounging and liberty in both countries one result is dreaminess, mysticism, a love of strange symbols. It is all expressed in one man who was a link between the two nations, a man who would never have been quite understood in any other two nations, an English Italian, an Italian Englishman—Rossetti.

This, then, is the second thing to remember about "The Saint." It marks a sort of Catholicism to which we English are more perilously prone: that of sentiment, colours, and perfumes, an atmosphere, an emotion. This goes along with liberty, for one can feel when one is too free and easy to think. The old Liberal idea of a sympathy between the love of liberty in England and the love of liberty in Italy was not a maudlin mistake: it was sound sense, like most of the old ideas of Liberals, especially before they began to listen to unscientific rubbish about Teutons and Latins. But this affinity may be almost misleading. An Englishman reading "The Saint" will be constantly reminded of the drifting and dreamy, and yet noble religious sentiment of England—especially of the cultured Nonconformist. But it would be a mistake to call this Catholicism: it is Italy. He will feel near to Italy, as were all very robust Englishmen. Chaucer was near to Italy. Browning was near to Italy.

The story of Benedetto, the "Saint," which is told in this dreamy and sympathetic and very Italian tale, is typical of both these truths. It is the story of a revolt in the very heart of Catholicism, a revolt conducted by earnest Catholics. Such a rebellion may sound stranger than it really is to Englishmen who have formed a quite exaggerated impression of the coercion and cohesion of Catholicism; but such rebellions have not only been frequent, they have been almost continuous, ever since Catholics were Catholics. They have also one marked trait, which is also to be found in the struggle and sentiment of Benedetto. I mean that "The Saint," though regarded by some as almost a heretic, really is a "saint": rather too much of a saint; too austere, too ethereal, too watchful of himself. This has always been so. The Catholics who rebelled against Catholic discipline have scarcely ever been the lax Catholics. Those who rebelled against the discipline were always the severe Catholics. It was always the too lax authority against the too harsh individual; the almost epicurean Pope against the almost Puritan Savonarola. And where the central authority at Rome has suppressed particular developments of religion in Italy, it has sometimes been an act of brutal cynicism and sometimes an act of human common sense; but it has always been on the side of the reasonable as against the enthusiastic. The enthusiasm all comes from below. Catholicism is an hierarchic policy, but it is a popular religion.

Benedetto has also the other trait, the trait of sentiment: it is here that he is most interesting, and yet in a manner it is here that he is most weak. His attack on the routine of his religion is rather a thing of the emotions than of the intellect. There is a good argumentative case for discipline always: it is only our feelings that can tell us when it has gone too far. Nevertheless, this gives the book a quality that can only be called inconclusive; with all its poetry and delicacy: we have clouds around us at the end. If the author has any ultimate quarrel with Rome (which he would probably deny), it is not because Rome is mystical or sacramental, or supernatural or ascetic, but because Rome is appallingly logical. Yes, appallingly scientific.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

Novel Notes.

MRS. GRUNDY'S CRUCIFIX. By Vincent Brown. 6s. (Hutchinson.)

Could Mrs. Gilpin have invited "Mrs." Ansley Wybourne and Harry Albemarle to her house, after all that had happened, on a thin pretence of celebrating the birthday of Harry's cousin (who is not to be present, and who is in no way related to herself), but really with the object of disgracing the persecuted Ansley by dramatically confronting her with her child? You may have doubts on minor points, such as this, but there can be no doubt whatever of the consummate skill, the effectiveness of the alternating humour and pathos with which Mr. Vincent Brown has presented this tragi-comedy of life in a country district that is agitated by the "pigmy spites of the village spire"; nor of the truth and mordant irony which has given us in Mrs. Gilpin a very embodiment of our national Mrs. Grundy. Ansley is a pure-souled woman, with one great mistake in her past of which she has sincerely repented. "I have been in the presence of people whose robe of righteousness has been so bright it has seemed to dazzle my eyes and make me hold my breath; but I have known there were spots on that robe, though I could not see them, and dared not look for them," says Walter Ingram, before he is fully conscious that he loves the girl who is engaged to his cousin. "All of us have some dark secret, and the higher we rise the less trouble we take to conceal it; and the saints, I suppose, would wear it openly on their brows did they not fear it would be an offence to the weaker brother and sister." Ansley has this secret, this spot on her robe of righteousness, and the story is of how most of the countryside, headed by Mrs. Gilpin, came to suspect and ostracise her; Mrs. Gilpin has private enquiries made, then draws the kindly Lady Shernfold to league with her in degrading Ansley and breaking off the engagement betwixt her and Lady Shernfold's nephew, and in the moment of their triumph they find they have only won a victory for Ansley herself. There is something of greatness in the idea and the manner of it all; it is one of the few novels of the year that will not be forgotten after the year is over.

THE SPOILS OF VICTORY. By B. Paul Neuman. 6s. (Murray.)

On the title-page of his new novel, Mr. Neuman acknowledges the authorship of "The Greatness of Josiah Porlick," a book that raised much of the dust of interest and criticism last year. That book, which rightly won great praise for its then anonymous author, was a fine study of a business nature, obviously done from the life. This new book takes an artistic nature for its subject, the life of a successful novelist who was a really great man. It is unfortunate that while the lives of business men are secret unrecognisable things, the biographies of nearly all great men of letters are at least as well known as their books. For, in reading Mr. Neuman's account of "John Champlain," one recognises Balzac in every detail, and begins before the end of the book to be unable to regard it as other than an imaginative paraphrase of his life. But, being a novel it is a privileged paraphrase, and bridges plausibly and very possibly correctly many of the gaps in our knowledge of the real man. Mr. Neuman has given us an English Balzac, the topography of whose adventure grows steadily nearer to that of the Frenchman's extraordinary life, as the book proceeds. We think that from Mr. Neuman's point of view this is a pity. The book is too like a biography to be considered apart from its original. John Champlain is so near to the popular idea of Balzac, that the substitution of names is an annoyance rather than a mystery. It is exasperating to feel that we have to read a novel, that is a fine thing in itself, as a mere commentary on the life of a great writer. Mr. Neuman has felt the epic size of his subject. His is not the biography of one literary man but of all. It is a good book conceived austere, and built with stern rejection of ornament, as far from the common novels of the day as a statue from a lot of waxworks. It is a book that we are proud to have seen written, sorry only, for the author's sake, that he has sacrificed himself at the feet of another writer, even though that other man may be the greatest of the great French novelists of the nineteenth century.