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St. Ignatius Loyola, Osuna, Luis de Granada, Juan de los Angeles.

Juan de la Cruz is the *pièce de résistance* of this collection, but in his analysis of his writings Professor Peers has omitted all mention of M. Baruzi's notable discoveries on the suppression and alteration of the texts. Is this because they are discreditable to the Church?

In Teresa the biographic element, here so rich and copious, is out of perspective. Mystical experience differs from aesthetic experience in that it is very closely contingent upon the storms and conflicts of the mystic's life (it is, in my opinion, the capital error of books on this subject that the connection is always slurred over). Thus though Professor Peers has given a succinct account of Teresa's abnormal states, for any real understanding of this very human and tragic figure one must still plod through Mrs. Cunningham Graham's long volumes.

Of the other essays, that on Loyola's Exercises is the feeblest, that on Luis de Leon the most interesting. The author is at his best in literary appraisements, and everything he says about Spanish prose and poetry is just and sensible. There remain Osuna, whose importance is historical, and two divines, Luis de Granada and Juan de los Angeles, uninteresting in their substance, but remarkable, like Jeremy Taylor, for the beauty of their prose. The information that Professor Peers has collected about them will be of value to students.

One conclusion is forced upon me by this book—that saints are difficult people to write about. Open Culpeper's "Herbal," and one will find that all the common plants have virtues and cure diseases, and that each plant possesses every virtue and cures every complaint. So it is with hagiographies. Each Saint or Mystic has his complete set of virtues. One does not need to take a bite at St. Paphuntius or St. Polycarp to know that he will taste of humility and holy zeal and chastity, or that the water in which his bones are washed will have a good effect if you are pregnant. It is only the limpid insensibility of their panegyrist that permits us now and then to catch sight of something different, preserving like a wasp in amber the savage but human and intelligible misanthropy of old Polycarp. Almost in vain we search those dusty herbals for any sign of life or structure, and when at last we have evidence—there is Professor Peers, a herbalist at heart, even when he is writing botany!

GERALD BRENAN.

### DRAMA

**The Dybbuk.** By S. ANSKY. (Benn. 6s.)

**Iridion.** By ZYGMUNT KRASINSKI. (Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.)

**The Priest and His Disciples.** By KURATA HYAKUZO. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)

**Three Eastern Plays.** By EDWARD and THEODOSIA THOMPSON. (Allen & Unwin. 5s.)

THE theme of "The Dybbuk" is "the theme of love so strong that after death it can drive itself into the body of the beloved"—a theme full of marvellous possibilities for a playwright of any race, but one by which a genius suckled on the profound, mystical tradition of a people scattered among strangers, can produce a thing monumental, powerful, and lovely. Such a genius is Ansky. From the moment of being led—one is never conscious of being forced there—silently and awfully into the Jewish synagogue through which the voices of chanters fall with an air of mystery, to the point of the young girl Leah joining the soul of her beloved Channon, one is conscious of being guided everywhere by a hand sure and tender in its greatness. Ansky never for one moment makes a false impression. "The Dybbuk," we are told, grew slowly, from fragmentary things, to the perfect whole it now is. Those who feel acutely its tragic power, conveyed by touches sometimes so simple as to risk being naïve instead of strong, will understand the inevitability of this. It has, even while being steeped in the faith and tradition of the Jewish race, the restraint, richness and truth of a thing delivered only after immense travail of imagination. Ansky never shouts. His is the cry of a breast forced to wound itself in order to deliver up a

sound. And that sound is heard from first to last throughout "The Dybbuk," painful, intimate and sublime.

"Iridion" is another play wrung from an oppressed and suffering people, though delivered, not after centuries of pain, but as the abrupt, wailing cry of a poetic prophet calling in the wilderness that was the Poland of the early nineteenth century. In that period, following the defeat of the insurrection against Russia, its three great romanticists, Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski, produced their finest work. "Iridion," allegorical, its scenes laid in the decadent Rome of the third century after Christ, was Krasinski's contribution after seeing the Colosseum, where the despised cross of the Christian maidens, still standing in the centre of that imposing decay, impressed him deeply. It is a work on an immense canvas, often powerful, often crude, unrestrained and faulty, but with the supreme merit of having a sincere, passionate aim from which it never wavers. Much of its beauty has almost certainly been lost in translation. Yet it survives its demerits, greatest of which is the displeasing romanticism of the period, by nobility and rightness of purpose.

Kurata might have achieved his fame through the "Priest and his Disciples" otherwise than he did, for the play is excellent propaganda in the first place, and contains also as its figurehead the greatest revolutionary figure in Japanese Buddhism, the Shinran of the thirteenth century. Yet his fame, and what is far more important, the beautiful and enduring nature of his story, is dependent on neither of these things, but on what shows him to be at once a fine and sincere artist. The period of action covers thirty years. Outside Shinran and his disciples are a dozen other figures, including peasants and harlots, all varied and of that apparent insignificance so difficult to handle and utilize. Yet it is here Kurata impresses. Shinran—historically out of focus possibly—the sensitive priest-lover Yuien, and Kaede the young harlot, are all finely conceived and drawn. And it is a tribute to Kurata's power of portrayal that apart from these every one of the many figures of a long play remains perfectly embalmed in the consciousness at the close. Without having the profound, awful beauty of "The Dybbuk," this is a fine, moving work.

"Easter Evening," "The Queen of the Ruin," and "The Clouded Mirror," are the three Eastern plays. A good deal of speculation leaves them without category. Then, wandering idly through them again, category ceases to have its significance, and the factor which always reduces it to that absurdity—art, becomes alone important. And of the artistry of these three too-short plays there can be no doubt. All three, "Easter Evening" most, possess that rare quality of restraint whereby a whisper can become dynamic and a gesture tremendous. They are full of beauty too—beauty of conception and treatment. Their unrhymed verse, though suffering as always under the difficulties of that medium, is natural in its nervous simplicity. It gives them, in their own words, a sudden fragrance—a strange light.

H. E. BATES.

### THE INNER LIGHT

**The Faith and Practice of the Quakers.** By RUFUS M. JONES. (Methuen. 5s.)

**The Quakers: their Story and Message.** By A. NEAVE BRAYSHAW. (The Swarthmore Press. 5s. and 3s. 6d.)

**Quakers in Ireland, 1654-1900.** By ISABEL GRUBB, M.A. (The Swarthmore Press. 3s. 6d.)

THESE three books bear additional witness to a steadily growing interest in Quakerism. The volumes by Dr. Jones and Mr. Brayshaw cover much the same ground. Each offers us a brief historical survey of Quaker history, with an exposition of the modern position and outlook of the Society of Friends, and there is little disparity of views between the two writers, who differ widely only in manner and approach. Dr. Jones, while always vigorous and readable, and while preserving the characteristic Quaker simplicity of spirit, is a scholar and theologian, thoroughly primed in philosophy and the study of comparative religion. Mr. Brayshaw is equally well versed in his own immediate subject, and has a wide enough historical outlook to enable him, like Dr. Jones, to temper enthusiasm with a frank recognition of weaknesses. But he concentrates more closely upon his theme, and though both