

## BOOKS

*Catherine of Siena and Her Times*, by the author of *Mademoiselle Mori* (Methuen, 7/6). This is a delightful history of a delightful personage. How great those holy women were! memorable for common sense and organising power as truly as for their piety. The reader admires, too, the ample opportunities S. Catherine found for the exercise of her vocation, which was, be it understood, that of a politician as truly as that of a saint. It has been said that "politics are not moral," in the sense that they are neither moral nor immoral; but Catherine's policy was before all things moral, party ends and personal ends she never sought to attain. If her life expressed one virtue more than another, we should say it was patriotism—fine, just, liberal-minded patriotism—first towards Siena and then towards Italy. Her loyalty, too, how fine and yet how discriminating it was. The popes she had to deal with were difficult persons, but she knew how to manage them for their good; and she accomplished the enormous task of bringing Gregory XI. back from Arignon [sic] to the papal city; but she had hard work to persuade that "lily of Pontiffs," and used much plain speech and, possibly, some feminine craft. "Use a holy deceit," she says to him, "appear to delay and then act at once; for the sooner you do so, the less harrass and trouble you will have . . . .let us go soon, *babbo mio dolce*, without any fear." She prevailed, perhaps, because she discriminated; she knew Gregory's weaknesses, but she also knew the finer traits in his character, and while she could rate the *man*; she never forgot the deference due to the *pope*. As for her own disciples, both men and women, their devotion to her had no limit at all, anymore than had her sense of the duty of service to them. But this fourteenth century story is too long to tell here. Her labours and her prayers, her wholesome human interests, her far-reaching service to church and country, are all the more wonderful to read of when we realise that the whole was got into a short life of thirty-three years. Perhaps in administrative power and intellectual vigour she most resembled S. Theresa. The author of

*Mademoiselle*  
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*Mori* has found here a most attractive, and we should say sympathetic, subject; but we wish we had been made acquainted with sources, at any rate, with any English sources. The pictures are exceedingly interesting; and nearly all of the twenty-eight are photographs of paintings illustrating the various events of S. Catherine's life. Sodoma and Franchi are the best known of the painters.