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***The Nature of Sanctity. A Dialogue.* By Ida Friederike Coudenhove.  
London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933, pp. viii + 121. \$1.00.**

This small book is a translation of "Gespräch um die Heilige Elizabeth" written by a leader of the Catholic Youth Movement in Germany. It is a dialogue concerning the nature of sanctity as revealed in the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, a 13th century tertiary of the Franciscan Order, who in the twenty-eight years of her life gained a high place among the acknowledged saints of the Church.

The purpose of the book is in no sense biographical. Its value lies in its interpretation of the dominant motives and inner tensions of the radically ascetic life. In particular it wrestles with the problem as to the conflict between the values of the full human life and the more extreme demands of religion. The perplexities and doubts we feel in regard to the life of the ascetic saint and in regard to the more radical demands of religion do not arise from the renunciation of what is "low" in human nature, but from the sacrifice of what is "high," the finer forms of natural love and the goods of culture. The paradox is that "the beautiful, the noble and the excellent can become temptations because they are beautiful, noble and excellent." "This tension is not between good and bad, but between the lesser and the highest <258> good; it is not the struggle between light and darkness, but between the candle and the sun; not between nature and corruption, but between the natural and the supernatural, not between man and the devil, but between man and God."

The thesis of the book is that the way of sainthood lies not in despising the "beauty and excellence of created things," not in treating those things sacrificed to God as worthless, but rather that sainthood can only be built on the foundations of strong natural loves and appreciations and that true

sacrifice is a giving to God of what we treasure most. "Capacity for love is perhaps the only indispensable *natural* foundation for holiness." "The most human feature in Elizabeth was that she was a great lover, a heart endowed with extraordinary power of self-donation. And the formula of her sanctity is precisely the same. She was a great lover of God, a heart endowed with unequalled power of self-donation." The saint's love for man is not primarily a love for man as man, love for husband, sensitivity to human need, appreciation for the natural beauty in man. It includes and builds upon all these forms of love which are found in the purest humanitarians. But its distinctive character issues from the fact that it is a love of man for God's sake, for Christ's sake.

Into a few pages Fraülein [*sic*] Coudenhove has crowded many insights into the psychology of the saints.

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