

## Book Reviews

—which occupied some of the friars in Italy and for a while in the South of France, and meanwhile has hardly a word to say—despite by way of a sop a chapter on The Franciscan Achievement—on the vast missionary work embarked upon by the Order. It is as though one were to write a history of a hundred years, say 1831-1931, from parliamentary records alone. What a sorry picture that would give of English life and work: and yet that is precisely what we have, as far as the Franciscan Order is concerned, in this imposing volume. When will historians come to realise that the disputes in the Order in the first century of its life, which gave birth to so much contentious and tendentious literature—happy hunting ground for the modern student—were far less ‘actual’ to all but the disputants themselves than they have since been made to appear? How little they all meant to the Franciscans in England and Germany, China and Persia. Yet Miss Scudder’s book would lead the unwary to imagine that the *whole* Order was in perpetual turmoil till *The Rout of the Zealots*, as she melodramatically calls it, in the opening of the thirteenth century, and the subsidence of the Order, as she figures it, into a conventional and colourless body. No—as St. Bonaventure and Celano would tell Miss Scudder if she could read unbiassed those golden sources—the love of Christ and the love of souls form the real key to Francis and his Order. Ignore this, and the life of Francis and the achievement of his great foundation will never be read aright: we shall have, as in this instance and many others, a distorted picture. There is a concluding chapter in Miss Scudder’s book called *The Franciscan Promise*. If Miss Scudder had been in a position to add Pope Pius XI’s Encyclical on *The Social Order* to her bibliographical list, that chapter would never have been written. It is much to be regretted that it ever was.

O.F.M.

IRISH NUNS IN PENAL DAYS. By Mrs. Thomas Concannon, M.A., D.Litt. (Sands & Co.; 2/6 net.)

The author describes her book as ‘an attempt to tell, in broad outline, the story of the four ancient Orders: Poor Clares, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians, who in Penal Day Ireland kept the light of their hidden conventual life burning, . . . and the still more wonderful story of the foundation by Nano Nagle of the great Irish teaching Order of the Presentation Nuns . . .’ The record of the sufferings and achievements of these heroic women, so deserving of memory, bespeaks long

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and painstaking research. The wealth of dates and names of places and persons is sometimes superabundant, while the brevity of the account whets our appetite tantalisingly for more details from such works as Bishop de Burgo's *Hibernia Dominicana*, and especially from convent annals. The excuse that these annals 'have received due attention from the laudable zeal of the Catholic Record Society,' is one we are loth to accept, since copies of the works of this society, whose chief aim is one of preservation, are printed, so far as I know, only in small numbers, and without a view to general publication. But no doubt Mrs. Concannon has given compensation at least in regard to one Order, in another book of hers, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*.

Excellentlly printed and well illustrated, *Irish Nuns in Penal Days* is a good half-crown's worth.

M.B.

THEOLOGY. A Monthly Journal of Historic Christianity.

Edited by E. G. Selwyn, D.D. October, 1931. (S.P.C.K.; One Shilling.)

Many readers of BLACKFRIARS must know this valuable review — 'catholic and critical' — which represents the best sort of modernism outside the Church. It is gratifying for the Thomist to note its ever growing appreciation of his position. There are many echoes of St. Thomas's teaching in a long and thoughtful article by Dr. Leonard Hodgson on *The Christian Idea of Liberty*. Scarcely surprising, perhaps, since St. Thomas but witnessed to Christian life and tradition. Freedom does not lie in a capacity for sin, but is ours for a purpose; literally a share in the divine freedom—the specifically Christian note. It is refreshing to find this unconscious defence of the Papal condemnations of *Liberalismus*—in reality a sound piece of Pauline practice, but too often a boggy: obscurantist priests panicking over the Gladstonian Ideal and vainly trying to continue the policy of the Congress of Vienna long after the fall of Metternich. Evoked in the *Editorial* is another boggy, of the imperialistic Latin Church throttling the life of the Spirit with its principles and methods. Only the insider can know how little it cramps his style, as little as Bradshaw the lordly beauty of the Royal Scot steaming down Trent Valley. We may make our own what Mrs. Ellis Roberts says on *The Attitude and Challenge of the World to the Church To-day*. The attacks of the intelligentsia are far less serious than the ignorance and indifference of ordinary people. The former are opportunities, the latter tragedy.

T.G.