

gressiveness was of the daring kind that can only be described as revolutionary and his Order, which laid no claim even to be a new Order, sometimes shocked the monks of an older tradition by its glaring innovations. The idea of universal preaching entrusted to simple priests and religious was entirely novel; communal poverty added to the personal poverty of the religious was not advocated before the time of St. Francis and St. Dominic; study as an absolute duty binding each cleric more strictly than the choral office and superseding the old monastic manual labour was another of St. Dominic's innovations; dispensation as a law and life-giving force and not as a mere merciful concession to weakness was a new element in monastic life which the traditionalists must have considered paradoxical. St. Dominic, wise statesman and prudent legislator, conceived and worked out his great idea so that everything should subserve the single apostolic purpose of winning souls to Christ and furthering God's kingdom on earth.

Fr. Reeves has earned our thanks for his clear, concise account of the Dominican ideal and Constitution. His attractive presentation of its supernatural common sense will strike even those who know it intimately with all the freshness of a surprise.

K.

THE FRANCISCAN ORDER : An Essay on its spirit and history.
By Dominic Devas, O.F.M. (Burns, Oates & Wash-
bourne; 3/6.)

Father Dominic Devas approaches his subject in a manner entirely different from that of Father Reeves. In just over a hundred pages he casts a rapid glance over seven centuries of Franciscan history and in that way he presents a vivid impressionist view of the Franciscan spirit and ideal. He is aware of the difficulty of his task and he is prepared to admit that the history of his Order is prickly with controverted points. He faces squarely the fact of 'the intricate and unending ramifications' of the different Franciscan groups, but he finds a point of unity and a key to this problem of diversity in the *Fioretti* or *Little Flowers of St. Francis*. The *Fioretti* divides into two; first the scenes depicting Francis, the active apostle; and secondly the series of incidents illustrating the contemplative lives of some of his early disciples. 'In this twofold division all Franciscan history lies mirrored.' It is the old human story of the divine discontent that eats into every generous heart—the active apostle yearning always for solitude and for the untrammelled pursuit of holiness. And this noble longing is a particu-

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larly Franciscan and contemplative quality which explains the vicissitudes of the Seraphic Order.

Father Dominic has an inspiring chapter on the missionary activities of his Order, and another on its spiritual influences and he appeals wistfully for translators so that the vast untouched Franciscan literature might be made accessible to English readers.

K.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. Authorised translation from the Third Revised and Enlarged Edition of 'Le Thomisme' by Etienne Gilson. Translated by Edward Bullough, M.A. (Heffer, Cambridge; price 8/6).

English people are not, generally speaking, attracted to the reading of scientific philosophy: the exposition of fundamental truths of reasoning has comparatively small appeal amongst a people that prides itself on being illogical. Works of this nature do not easily bloom a second time in the uncongenial atmosphere where 'thriller' weeds flourish and multiply. But when, notwithstanding that 'it is impossible not to be thrilled by Edgar Wallace,' a philosophic treatise survives the choking influence of the weeds and speedily renews its vitality in a second edition, no further proof is needed of its outstanding merit and wide appeal.

This new edition of Gilson's 'Le Thomisme' in its English rendering, based upon the latest French edition, is adorned with the addition of two important chapters: one, 'The Corporeal World and the Efficacy of Secondary Causes,' the other 'Knowledge and Truth.' Further, there are certain useful amplifications of already existing themes. But more than this, the whole translation has been carefully revised, notably in the chapters on the proofs of the existence of God where a more accurate fidelity to the original Thomist doctrine has been effected. Not least of all, the Index has been entirely re-cast and now presents (in distinction from the former one) a valuable and necessary means of reference both to themes and to proper names.

It is to be regretted that the original inaccurate title, 'The Philosophy of St. Thomas,' must now persist. A mere transliteration of the French title would have had at least the merit of accuracy. Mr. Bullough is, however, to be congratulated not merely upon his ability as a translator, but even more upon his evident care in checking the translation by continued reference to the Angelic Doctor's own statement of the teachings ascribed to him.