

## Book Reviews

However familiar we may be with the Latin text of the Psalter we shall certainly gather much that is helpful in the recitation of our breviary if we study this excellent translation, even though we may cavil at certain renderings, e.g., the translation of *praeclaris* in Psalm 16 by *loveliness*.

H.P.

THE SCHOOL OF JESUS CHRIST. By Père Jean Nicholas Grou, S.J. Translated by Mrs. Rodolph Stawell. With an Introduction by Dom Roger Hudleston, Monk of Downside Abbey. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 10/6.)

Père Grou's holiness, described in the interesting biographical Introduction, is the best of all recommendations of a book written, Dom Hudleston tells us, towards the end of the author's life, when, exiled by the French Revolution, he was living with the Weld family at Lulworth Castle in Dorset. The chief aim of these explanations of the Gospel lessons is, he says, to maintain 'that man's happiness here and now is the necessary fruit of his perfection, and that the degree of the former is in the most exact proportion to the degree of the latter.'

Although we cannot wish that a book so full of good things had been abridged, there are many reasons for desiring a separate reprint of the most valuable parts, the chapters, for instance, on *Humility* and *Prayer* filling about one hundred pages, and such others as *Peace in the Heart*, *The Spirit of Faith*, and those on fraternal charity. In these hurried days when people are loath to swallow instruction save in meat-lozenge form, many will hesitate to tackle a quarto volume of four hundred and fifty pages. Least of all will it be read by the worldly Christians to whom so much of it is addressed. This is a pity, because while the most prevalent spiritual ills of the Church to-day are not those deplored by Père Grou, the spirit of the world is perennial, and varies less than its outward fashion. How eternally needful, for instance, is the cry echoed through the Church from the first centuries onwards: 'If God have given you much and your neighbour be without the necessaries of life you are obliged, in virtue of this petition [give us this day our daily bread] . . . to use your abundance for the relief of his need . . . When your brother asks you in God's name for his share, which happens to be in your possession, and you refuse it to him . . . you are not only being cruel and inhuman, but are keeping something that is not your own.' (*Thief* is the word used by St. Basil).

In speaking of suffering Père Grou makes no mention of its redemptive value when united to Christ's Passion. This apostolic

## *Blackfriars*

aspect might surely be a strength to many whose outlook on the subject lies between mere egotism and the high desire of the joyous few who long to suffer because their Love was crucified.

The translation can hardly be too highly praised; and since good translators are rare and much needed, we hope Mrs. Stawell will give us more of her excellent work.

M.B.

**ABBOT COLUMBA MARMION: A MASTER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.**

By Dom Raymund Thibaut. Translated by Mother Mary St. Thomas. (Sands & Co., 1932; 15/- net.)

The French original of this book was reviewed in **BLACKFRIARS** on its appearance and warmly commended. It is a book that should be certain of a good reception, for it gives a full and attractive account of one whose spiritual writings are now well-known to the Catholic world and deservedly appreciated. Many a reader of those writings must have desired to know what sort of a person their author was; which desire is satisfied by this book in a workmanlike and thorough fashion. With the help of diaries and letters, and the testimony of those who knew him and lived with him, Dom Thibaut takes us behind the scenes and makes us intimately familiar with the sincere and devoted life of the true priest and monk that Abbot Marmion was. It is a story full of interest and edification, and we cannot but be grateful to the industrious and judicious biographer. So much, then, about the substance of the book; and now let us speak of the present English translation.

In regard to this we should like in the first place to express what may be an unreasonable regret, namely, that it was not possible to make the English book as compact and easy to handle as the French original. The English volume is just twice the size of the French, yet contains no more matter.

In the second place we must say that we have not been entirely pleased with the quality of the translation. It is a laborious piece of work, not quite flexible enough to be easy reading. The sentences are sometimes very awkwardly arranged and the vocabulary is often too near to the French. Certainly it is good enough to let the patient reader follow the story and follow it completely; but it does not make his task easy. That is our general criticism of its quality, a criticism which we do not wish to stress overmuch. In detail we have noticed several misprints and not a few errors due to mistranslation. When the book tells us that the River Shannon is in the County Kildare, or that the dioceses of Ireland deal with a population of 'nearly