

## THE FRIARS' BOOK-SHELF

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**Saint Thomas and Medieval Philosophy.** By the Very Rev. D. J. Kennedy, O. P., S. T. M. Pages 128. \$1.00. Encyclopedia Press, Inc., New York City.

This unpretentious volume from the pen of Doctor Kennedy will serve as a splendid introduction to an understanding of Aquinas—whom the Church has pointed out to be the safe guide for the direction of the human mind.

To understand St. Thomas it is important to know something of the state of human thought in Europe when he began to think. For this purpose the first three chapters of the book are devoted to a study of the immediate predecessors of the Angelic Doctor, St. Anselm, Abelard, Albert the Great and Roger Bacon; while the fourth chapter treats of the general condition of Catholic philosophy in the thirteenth century. After giving the reader the information necessary to appreciate properly the work of St. Thomas, the learned author proceeds to analyse what the Angel of the Schools did for philosophy and theology. In order to give his readers a more direct idea of the *Summa Theologica*, he adds specimen pages and outline charts of the plan of this masterpiece of St. Thomas. The book evidences a wealth of erudition, and is written with great clearness and simplicity. It should be in the hands of all who desire a better acquaintance with the Angelic Doctor.

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S. S.

**Revised Unified Course of Catechetical Instruction.** J. J. McVey, Philadelphia, Pa.

Catholic parents, Catholic teachers and Catholic journalists will welcome the appearance of this series, revised according to the New Code of Canon Law and embracing in a unified form, as the name implies, the entire field of catechetical teaching from kindergarten to advanced college. Great credit is due the Brothers of the Christian Schools who have prepared the work in all its simplicity, directness and wonderfully systematic completeness, combined with as great a degree of brevity as its purpose permits. The series has anticipated and corresponds with a movement begun in Rome toward the preparation of a unified course in Christian Doctrine and is the only series that embodies all changes in marriage legislation, etc., taking place within the past twenty years, including even those found in the 1918 Code

of Canon Law. It consists of the following: Catechism for first Communicants; Catechism for third grade pupils; Catechism for fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils; Catechism for seventh and eighth grade pupils; Catechism for High Schools and advanced classes in Sunday Schools, and a Manual of Christian Doctrine for advanced classes in academies and for colleges and seminaries. The two last named cost fifty cents (\$0.50) and a dollar thirty five (\$1.35) respectively; the others, a few cents each. This splendid course of religious instruction deserves more general adoption here and in all English-speaking countries. M. M.

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**The Patrimony of the Roman Church in the Time of Gregory the Great.** By Edward Spearing, B. A., LL. B. Edited by Evelyn M. Spearing, M. A. (Lond.) Pages 166. \$1.50 net. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

Despite the fact that the lands and territories which comprised the inheritance of St. Peter have been thickly repopulated, covered with flourishing villages and towns accurately mapped down to the last foot of ground, and that the customs and institutions of their inhabitants have been thoroughly investigated and minutely described, the subject of the Patrimony of the Church, to which certainly no minor importance can be attached, has been hitherto almost utterly neglected. The monograph of Lieutenant Spearing, an officer of the British Army who gave up his life at the battle of the Somme, is practically the first attempt to bridge this gap which exists in the English historical studies of the early ages of Christianity. Premising the growth of the possessions of the Holy See, which for the most part consisted in agricultural lands, and using the works of Pope St. Gregory the Great, especially his "Letters," as his principal sources, he has delineated for us the extent of the Patrimony, its government and organization during the pontificate of the first Gregory, setting forth with scholarly precision and in a pleasing and fluent style the relations of the Church to the State during this period, the collection of the revenue and the expenditure of the income.

The essay is incomplete; a fact of which the author was fully cognizant, as we learn from the preface, and one that unhappily he was not spared to remedy; for it is evident that he was aware not only of the great interest centered in the subject of the Patrimony itself, but also of its bearing on the subsequent

development of the temporal sovereignty of the Popes and the light that it throws on the contemporaneous history of the Church and Empire; subjects that are now left for others to pursue. The product of a non-Catholic pen, if we overlook the fact that the supernatural in the Church is lost sight of, there is little that is objectionable to the Catholic. A pioneer in its field, the work deserves the unreserved applause of a first endeavor.

B. N.

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**The Hand of God.** By Martin Scott, S. J. Pages 217. \$1.00 net.  
P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York City.

Information is continually sought about such doctrines of the Church as Purgatory, Indulgences, the Immaculate Conception, etc. In the non-Catholic mind the notions of these dogmas are too often grossly distorted, and even among the faithful there are many who would be hard put to it to give anything like an intelligible account of them.

Fr. Scott's book aims to give the Catholic something more than a mere speaking acquaintance with the beliefs and practices of his religion, and to qualify him to return a satisfactory answer to questions that might be put to him by those outside the fold. Since the book is intended for the laity the author has avoided the more intricate problems that might confuse or tire a reader not professedly a theologian. The simple, vigorous language and the abundance of illustrations aptly chosen make the subject matter intensely interesting.

P. O'B.

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**Ten Years Near the German Frontier.** By Maurice F. Egan.  
Pages 364. \$3.00 net. George H. Doran Co., New York City.

In this "retrospect and warning" Mr. Egan shows clearly how and why Germany was the cause of the Great War. It is history in its most palatable form, written by one who helped to make it and who has no rivals better able to record it. Every reader of good books must be grateful to the author for this simple narrative of the complicated facts of the world-war. For ten years, as American Ambassador to Denmark, Mr. Egan watched the operation and execution of Germany's carefully made plans for world dominion. Our poet statesman was underrated in Europe as a diplomat. This fact was rather in his favor in observing the Prussian diplomacy from the "listening gallery of Europe."

Denmark was too close to Germany for comfort. The latter had already seized the Danish province of Slesvig to make possible the Kiel Canal and the German fleet, and the whole kingdom might have been taken over had not the world been shocked to action by the march through Belgium.

Every patriotic American should read this volume to appreciate the part which the United States took in crushing Prussianism. The account of Cardinal Gibbons' and Archbishop Ireland's efforts to defeat German propaganda in our own country, and the story of our long-drawn-out, and finally successful, attempt to buy the Virgin Islands are particularly interesting. In this volume Mr. Egan has given us a large share of the wealth of his information on the subject in hand.

G. I. S.

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**The Elstones.** By Isabel C. Clarke. Pages 399. \$1.35 net. Ben-ziger Bros., New York City.

"The Elstones," the latest of this author's productions, is fascinating from many points of view. It cannot fail to gain the good will of impartial readers by its energetic, at times terse and vivid, style and its orderly procedure of unravelling itself. Unquestionable originality is shown throughout the entire novel in the manner of introducing naturally both characters and events. There are no improbable incidents nor any unnecessary delays to cool the interest of the reader; on the other hand, the novel must win the admiration of all for its appealing representations of fraternal and filial devotion and for the exceptional instance it affords of child heroism elevated to a degree of spiritual excellence.

D. M.

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**Essays in Occultism, Spiritism, and Demonology.** By Dean W. Harris. Pages 187. \$1.00 net. B. Herder & Co., St. Louis, Mo.

Dean Harris' book has for its object the combating of a gigantic present-day social and spiritual evil. Without resorting to scientific verbiage, he expounds the doctrine of the Church on the existence of good and evil spirits in the universe, quoting frequently from the Scriptures and the Fathers. He proves that God makes use of certain good spirits as deputies in carrying out His providential plan. On the other hand, he admits that the earth is enveloped by powers of darkness into whose embrace men, if they will, may abandon their souls. The book is fascinating and as absorbing as a thrilling novel. These essays, if

put in the hands of the Catholic laity, would aid greatly the spreading of truth concerning the seductiveness and danger in developing cults which if not properly understood have such baneful effects on the physical and spiritual man. R. M. B.

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**The Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement on Canon Law.** Pages 75.

\$1.00 cloth; \$1.50 three-fourths Morocco. The Encyclopedea Press, New York City.

Admirers of that thesaurus of Catholic information known as "The Catholic Encyclopedia" will welcome enthusiastically this latest supplement to the great work. This new volume treats of the changes in the new "Code of Canon Law" which in any way differ from the old regulations, containing, as it does, revisions of all the articles on canon law. This supplement will prove beneficial both to the clergy and to the laity, since it points out clearly the changes affecting the governing of the faithful. It treats of such questions as abstinence, fasts, marriage laws, dispensations, etc. The Catholic Encyclopedia is not complete without it.

A. P.

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**The Barrier.** By Rene Bazin. \$1.25. Pages 218. Published by Benziger Bros., New York City.

The moral fibre of the leading characters in this excellent novel is in no wise different from that of the martyrs. The latter **lay down their lives in testimony of the Faith**; the former sacrifice ancestry, family ties, inheritance, and even their own hearts, for the Faith. The gifted author evinces a clear and sympathetic insight into character; and it is with a distinct feeling of awe and reverence that we follow his gaze into the inner sanctuary of two noble souls and watch his delicate portrayal of human nature's reaction and correspondence to divine grace.

It is a moving story, and several dramatic scenes give it an added charm. There is no "happy ending." That is left to the reader. Besides, we have always been taught by those who know, that the writer who makes us do some of the work is superior to him who does everything himself and never dreams that possibly we also may have an imagination.

The theme of the story is a vital one, all the characters are alive and real, and the whole piece is so deftly handled that it is safe to say that it is good literature and a noteworthy addition to the better class of Catholic fiction. N. E.

**The Book of Lincoln.** By Mary Wright Davis. Pages 399. Price, \$2.50 net. George H. Doran Co., New York City.

Since the literature of Lincoln is already extensive, the value of a new book must be estimated from two points of view: Does it give anything new? Does it correct the old? This book contains a short but comprehensive chronology of our martyred President's life, a few of his principal addresses and the long-disputed but now proven Lincoln family-tree. This part would need a life of Lincoln as a companion volume. The larger portion of the book is given up to appreciations of Lincoln, some from the pen of foreign poets and statesmen but mostly from our own American authors. Many of the selections have never been collected before and are little known. This attractive book is well illustrated by numerous prints from pictures and statues of Lincoln.

N. G.

**Preparation for Marriage.** By Rev. J. A. McHugh, O.P., S.T.Lr. Pages 89. 60 cents net. Benziger Bros., New York City.

This little work should prove a very serviceable handbook for all priests engaged in parochial activities. It gives a clear, simple, logical summary, supplemented by practical applications, of all points of Church legislation that concern that extremely important and oftentimes difficult task of preparing and instructing couples for marriage. This handbook by compiling all the legislation on the matter into ten brief chapters should prove of much value and help in one of the most vital functions of priestly duty.

E. H.

**Our Own St. Rita.** By Rev. M. J. Corcoran, O. S. A. \$1.00 net. Pages 187. Benziger Bros., New York City.

The purpose of this pleasing life of a very lovable saint is both to give her devoted adherents a better understanding of her character and to gather new clients for the "Saint of the Impossible," as she is commonly called. Devotion to St. Rita is of recent years; almost forgotten up to the time of her canonization in 1900 she has become since then one of the most popular saints of the Church. As a help to devotion a number of illustrations are included in the book.

N. G.