

BOOK REVIEWS

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, ANGEL OF THE SCHOOLS. By Jacques Maritain. A translation of *Le Docteur Angélique* made by J. F. Scanlan. (Sheed & Ward; pp. 240; 7/6.)

M. Maritain has been indeed unfortunate in his translator. His magnificent essay on St. Thomas, *Le Docteur Angélique*, was rightly hailed at its appearance as a new and valuable interpretation by a great Thomist of the fundamental importance and worth of Thomism, especially in our times and in view of modern world upheavals. In its English guise, too, it has already been received with no little enthusiasm, for even the defects of the translation have not completely overshadowed the value of the original. This essay is essentially French not merely in language but still more in concept. If it had to be rendered into English, it should have been done by one who could translate the concept as well as the words. Mr. Scanlan shows himself, in our opinion, unable to do either. Even if his word parallels were accurate—and often they are not—transliteration is not translation. Further he appears to be ignorant of the life and works of St. Thomas, and is unaware of the accurate terms of reference to Aristotle's works.

We quote one passage only, giving also the original French, but we offer it as a true sample :

' . . . the famous incident of temptation from which Thomas emerged with a cordon of angels.'	' . . . la célèbre scène de tentation dont Thomas sortit ceinturé par les Anges.'
---	---

We cannot understand how the publishers' reader could have let this, and many other only less flagrant defects, pass his notice.

H.J.C.

THE WORDS OF THE MISSAL. By C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Sheed & Ward. Pp. 224; 6/-.)

From the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Life is given to the whole Mystical Body on earth; in it every individual Catholic is united intimately to the Head of that Body. The Mass is the greatest fact in the world, the nearest approach of man to God. Any book, then, which attempts to show the value of this great fact in its various aspects—and the number of these books is significantly on the increase—must be welcomed with enthusiasm. The Mass is an action accompanied with words. These words form an essential part of it; so that to understand

Book Reviews

the Mass fully we must understand its words. Fr. Martindale shows the value and significance of some of the more common words which appear in the Missal throughout the year. But he aims at something deeper than that 'spiritual reading' in which the book is read once as a temporary stimulus. The *Words of the Missal* is rather a text book for study—he suggests its use as a positive Lenten penance—to be used as the foundation for an ever deepening appreciation of the Mass. He does not aim at a scientific treatise, but one of his most interesting chapters, on the Wording of our Prayers, explains the perfect balance and rhythm in the Latin of many of the prayers, which lose their effect in translation. Other chapters deal with joy in such words as 'laetare' and 'gaudere'; God's Initiative, Power and Largesse represented by 'praevenire,' 'omnipotens,' 'largiri' and 'satiare'; Man's Transformation and Discipline; the Mysticism of the Missal, and so forth. All are profusely illustrated from the prayers, and the meaning of these central words is explained in a popular form, which should make it possible for those entirely ignorant of Latin to meditate profoundly on each word. For example, 'vegetati,' at first sight a curious word to apply to human beings, is shown to mean a vigorous uprooting and growth of the soul, represented by the stirring life of flowers and plants in spring. The appendix on Latin and English, where Fr. Martindale tries 'to show a way, that even those who do not use Latin can use, of comparing an English word we know quite well with a Latin one to which it is like, but that we do not know at all,' would have had more chance of success had the Latin been used more freely next the English in the body of the book. But the method is a very practical one.

We have only one criticism to make. Instead of showing the words in relation to the Mass, so that understanding the words better we might also obtain a deeper knowledge of that mystery, the ideas are drawn from outside the Mass and considered as separate from it. It is as though concentration on the material fabric had brought forgetfulness of the substance it clothes. Most of the words are taken from the variant prayers, few from their accompanying graduals, introits, etc., and only one here and there from the Ordinary which, occurring every day, surely contains the most profound and primary words. A word such as 'suscipiamur' in the Offertory is barely mentioned, yet it contains the whole doctrine of the unity of priest and people with the sacrifice to be offered. The 'Per Dominum, etc.' so important that the Church uses it at the end of all her prayers,

Blackfriars

also receives little attention. This defect is most noticeable in the chapter on 'Charity, Unity, Peace,' which is short and deals almost exclusively with the last of the three. The value of the book would have been greatly increased had there been more concentration on the Mass. However, once the reader grasps this point, he can supply from his own meditations the true perspective, and this after all is to follow out Fr. Martindale's desire that we should use the book as a starting point for a deeper understanding of the Mass than any book can provide.

C.P.

JOHNSON AND QUEENY : LETTERS FROM DR. JOHNSON TO QUEENY THRALE. From the Bowood Papers. Edited by the Marquis of Lansdowne. (Cassel & Co., 1932; cloth, £2/5/0.)

When Hester, Viscountess Keith, died in 1857 at her house in Piccadilly at the age of ninety-three, there passed away not only a very great lady, but also the last survivor of all the famous men and women who figured in the pages of Boswell. It was well known that Lady Keith had in her youth been the recipient of many letters from Dr. Johnson, for was she not the Queeny Thrale, the child-friend, the ward, almost the adopted daughter of the Sage in the later and happier years of his life? Those letters, jealously treasured, and refused to all collectors, remained hidden and unpublished, until at last the very memory of their existence died down and was gone, and the various editors of Johnson's voluminous correspondence neither knew nor thought of them. But by a happy accident, Lady Keith's papers passed eventually into the keeping of the Marquis of Lansdowne, a descendant of her husband, the celebrated Admiral Lord Keith. Looking through them quite recently, Lord Lansdowne discovered a carefully preserved and absolutely intact series of letters from Dr. Johnson, thirty-three in number, which thus most unexpectedly emerge after an interval of one hundred and fifty years. This is perhaps the greatest Johnsonian 'find' of our time. The letters are admirably written, full of good advice and wise counsel well-suited to the very clever and highly educated girl to whom they were addressed, and show the Doctor in a somewhat new and very charming light. Lord Lansdowne has written a helpful introduction to his book, which is superbly produced, exquisitely bound and printed, and enriched with twelve engravings, including a reproduction of Sir Joshua Reynolds' beautiful portrait of Queeny Thrale preserved in the Lansdowne collection.

F.R.B.