

Book Reviews

Another startling thing is the number of dedications of churches to SS. Peter and Paul, which far outnumber dedications to any other saint.

It is the same thing when we come to the consecration of churchyards. The idea of making a place holy seems to have gone; for in some cases, when the Bishop refuses to consecrate, a legal permission or licence now fulfils the same purpose.

There are a number of misprints and one serious blunder in the making of the book, two pages (85 and 87) are completely transposed.

F.M.

THE THUNDERING ABBOT. By Henri Brémond, of the French Academy. Translated by F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

M. l'Abbé Brémond has taken the trouble to select from the celebrities of the reign of Louis XIV the outstanding figure of Armand de Rancé, Abbé de la Trappe, and thrown upon it in his inimitable manner the lights and shades which seem to suit a certain modern trend of thought. Perhaps less severity in treatment would have given us a truer portrait of de Rancé, for M. Brémond reacts against the favourable delineations of the great Reformer's followers and admirers, from whose writings, moreover, we are given copious extracts. The translator has endeavoured to give us this study in English dress, though his work must have had more than usual of the thanklessness of transmuting the language of France, since the author is one of its ablest exponents and of its Forty Immortals. Somehow the English title, 'The Thundering Abbot,' sounds strangely unfamiliar. It agrees, perhaps, with the rather theatrical dust cover and its caricaturist reproduction of the very excellent frontispiece, but with little else. In his native country Abbé de Rancé is famous for having spent some thirty-seven years among the luxuries and refinements of the noblemen of his day, and for devoting the remaining half of his span of life to the practice of extraordinary penance. Though the Reform which he originated bears his name and its flourishing condition down to our own time is sufficient testimony to the efficacy of his example, it is rather as a penitent that he stood out from his generation, and it is as such, we think, that he will go down to posterity. We say this because to our mind the publishers' extract on the wrapper stresses even as does the author the *shades* of his character, ignoring the light which he did not fail to diffuse around him since even M. Brémond admits the devotedness

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of his followers. The paper and printing leave little to be desired, but there is no Index. F.M.

CATHERINE DE GARDEVILLE. By Bertha Radford Sutton. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 7/6 net.)

Mrs. Bertha Radford Sutton has written some very pleasant short stories. Her choice of a larger canvas, in *Catherine de Gardeville*, is not a happy one. Her main characters are too refined—in the snobbish sense rather than the literary—to come to life, when they are not, as in the case of Catherine's mother, too impossibly ill-mannered. Moreover, American spelling, errors in punctuation and spacing of paragraphs, and a vague use of words put up such a barricade between reader and read that a mental discomfort almost approaching indigestion—an 'un-sereneness,' to use Mrs. Sutton's own term—is the result. All this is regrettable, for Catholic novelists are rare. If Mrs. Sutton had approached her story simply and had written with an effort at clarity rather than at brilliance, her interesting theme would have stood a much greater chance of success.

A.C.

SACRED SIGNS. By Romano Guardini. Translated by G. C. H. Pollen, S.J. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

When Francis Thompson said that ritual was poetry addressed to the eye, he gave us an apt description, but not an exhaustive definition. The Liturgy is not merely something we behold as spectators: it is a life; it is something we do; it is 'a whole world of sacred and hidden events which have taken visible shape—it is sacramental.' It is even something more than acted poetry and supreme drama: it is living worship—the dedication of the whole man (body, soul, heart, mind and sense) to the Creator of all things. *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum.*

The object of this great little book is not liturgical teaching, but *liturgical education*. The Sign of the Cross, Hands, Kneeling, Walking, Genuflecting, Striking the Breast are all shown to be instruments of unspoken prayer. Holy Water, Candles, Ashes, Incense, Bells, Bread and Wine have their glorious part in man's effort to lift up his heart to God. The only effectual education is that which teaches the young to do and to make. The Church's wisdom as an educator is made clear in this book. We hope that Catholics will lay hold of it and educate themselves and their children by means of it. B.