

Book Reviews

FOUNDATIONS OF THOMISTIC PHILOSOPHY. By A. D. Sertillanges, O.P. Translated by Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. (London, Sands; pp. 255; 3/6.)

This translation of *Les Grandes Thèses de la Philosophie thomiste*, depressingly bound but pretty accurately printed, is the latest addition to the *Catholic Library of Religious Instruction*. Père Sertillanges is a prominent figure in the French Thomist renaissance, and his book is a useful introduction to St. Thomas' philosophy, neither a *résumé* nor a specialist treatise, but an attempt to present its broad plan to the ordinary intelligent reader. And not without success, despite lapses into technicality. The entrance into metaphysics is made in the second chapter, *Being and Knowledge*; the assimilation of reality through knowledge is described, but explicit treatment of Being, its nature and properties and principles, is lacking. In orderly arrangement, chapters follow on *God, Creation, Providence, Nature and Life, the Human Soul, and Morality*. This last is a trifle sketchy, but even so it indicates the sublimated hedonism of St. Thomas's moral theory, in which duty and reward represent the proper development of human activity, not an arbitrary imperative and sanction imposed from without.

The translator has successfully wrestled with a difficult style. His translation, which on the whole reads quite well, tempers some of the unfortunate mannerisms of the original, for instance the unconsciously half-contemptuous tone sometimes used in referring to opposing views, and wisely omits the lyricisms which remind the reviewer of the nineteenth century pages of French verse anthologies. St. Thomas and Victor Hugo are not altogether congenial, in style at least. Incidental errors of thought do not seem to be the translator's.

Perhaps an enterprising publisher will now give us a translation of Père Wébert's able *Essai de Métaphysique thomiste*.

N.W.T.G.

ST. FRANCIS OF ROME AND HER TIMES. By Irene Hernaman. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 2/-).

A short life of the Saint for those who prefer to see her in her historical setting rather than from a psychological point of view. And to very many people the solid historical facts will be more satisfying than the ingenious conjectures of the psychologist.