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## —BOOK REVIEW—

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REGINALD M. COFFEY, O.P.,

*The Man from Rocca Sicca*

(Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1944)

In his preface to *The Man from Rocca Sicca*, Father Farrell writes the following: "Father Coffey's book makes some amends to Thomas, his works, and his readers by concentrating on Thomas the man. Much has been written about the works of Thomas; probably too much. Much has been done to the works of Thomas; certainly too much. Not nearly enough has been said of Thomas himself."

The author himself says in the chapter on "Thomas the man", "In our day of streamlined hagiography when books come pouring off the presses throwing new light on old Saints . . . . Thomas has remained the king of shadows. To those who know his name he is still the *Angelic Doctor*, the *Angel of the Schools*, the *Divus Thomas*, the *Prince of Theologians*—all justly merited titles, all showing his glory after a fashion, but all unsympathetic and suprahuman." So we see that the chief idea which prompted Father Coffey to write *The Man from Sicca* was to establish Thomas Aquinas as a man.

He takes Thomas out of the book world in which we knew him and shows us his life as he lived it with his immediate family and his fellow monks. He converts him from a mere mind into one of the most likable of creatures. Nor does Father Coffey sacrifice anything of Thomas's sanctity for his humanity. As we read this book we see and admire greatly the humility of the "Dumb ox." Thomas's humanity was excelled only by his sanctity.

The style of *The Man from Rocca Sicca* is vivid and beautiful, and the language is simple and well chosen. Any person who has ever heard anything of St. Thomas will find a wealth of new material concerning the "hidden saint" in this book. To students of Thomas's philosophy and theology the book will give an entirely different, but pleasing, picture of the man from Rocca Sicca.



Father Coffey has achieved outstanding success in a difficult task. We believe it is his first complete book. But even if he never writes another his fame as an author is assured him by *The Man from Rocca Sicca*.

—THOMAS MacLELLAN, '46

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ALFRED NOYES, *The Last Man*  
(London: The Catholic Book Club, 1941)

Fortunately for us, Nazi Germany has not discovered the death ray to which Mr Noyes introduces us in his novel, *The Last Man*. In this book he describes the evolution of the weapons and methods of warfare. After enumerating such modern weapons as poison-gas, bacteria, and bombs, Mr Noyes imagines a new and almost infinitely more destructive weapon, a death ray which was the newest invention of a German scientist and which was capable of dealing death to "everyone, friend or foe, except those who stood behind the transmitter, or were under the surface of the sea." Its inventor was a poor man, and for this reason he sold the plans to the nations of the world, all of whom declared that they would use it only as a "last resort" and even then that "our consciences are clear." Unfortunately the nations of the world could not reach a settlement of their many international problems, and at a zero hour a new world war was begun. Simultaneously in all the capitals of the leading nations of the world the death ray was released to destroy all living on the earth.

Mr Noyes skilfully surmounts the obvious difficulty of having a survivor by contriving that Mark Adams, imprisoned in a disabled submarine, escape. He arranges this situation so skillfully that the reader is unaware that the plot is forced.

In these days of robot bombs, rockets, and jet-propulsion planes it would seem, according to Mr Noyes's conception of things to come, that the modern civilized—or should we say decivilized?—world is playing only act one, scene one of the tragedy of modern warfare.



After his remarkable escape, Mark Adams finds himself the only survivor in England, and travels to Paris in the hope of finding another survivor. It is in Paris that he discovers a clue which gives him hope. He searches frantically, and after many adventures which take him to Italy, he finally finds the other survivor. At the time when the death ray was released, Evelyn Hamilton, under the guidance of Mardok, a scientific genius, was engaged in photographing the floor of the sea in a diving bell twenty feet below the Mediterranean Sea. Her helper turns out to be the villain of the story. The events which follow the meeting of Evelyn and Mark provide the occasion for a story of love and adventure that concludes with their marriage and the death of Mardok, who tried in vain to frustrate it.

In his presentation of a most fascinating story, which may indeed be a prophecy of the progress that will be made in the scientific development of newer and more deadly weapons of war, Mr Noyes combines such elements of human interest as apologetics, art, travel, and a captivating love story. The reader of *The Last Man* is assured of an intellectual treat and real entertainment.

—CHARLES HOLLAND, '47

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THOMAS KERNAN, *Now With The Morning Star*  
(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944. pp 234)

This is the first English novel to be written in a German concentration camp. It begins with a description of the circumstances leading up to the closing and the confiscation of the property of the ancient Cistercian monastery of Maria-Morgenstern in Germany. The remainder of the novel deals with the troubles of Brother Nicholas—Andreas Hoffman—after the closing of the monastery. Andreas had been a very skilful jack-of-all-trades at the monastery for eighteen years.

Andreas found himself in a world which was very different from the one he had left. Since he was not a member of the Nazi party, his first difficulty was in obtaining a job.



When he finally did find one, he could not keep it because he was unaccustomed to the speed of Nazi regimentation. He lost one job after another and finally, penniless and in desperation, he sought out his former Abbot.

The Church in Germany at this time was in a terrible plight. Due to Nazi censorship She could send no information out nor could She obtain any funds from without, unless illegally. Now, Andreas had spent his childhood near the Swiss border and he knew the mountain paths. He was the man for the job if he were willing to risk the dangers. His Abbot presented him with the problem and asked him to make the choice. He accepted the responsibility.

Under the subterfuge of caring for the cattle of a mountain sanatorium, he carried information to a secret rendezvous on the Swiss border and carried funds back. This went on for weeks, but on the very day of the invasion of Poland, the mountain guard was strengthened and Andreas was captured.

Along with many others, Andreas was sent to a labor camp. Much to his surprise he found himself at his old monastery. Owing to his good behaviour and his skill he became a favorite with the authorities and soon managed to receive his old cell back. When the story ends we see him living a life which is not far removed from that of his earlier one in the monastery. He remains the symbol of the rebirth of the monastic life, when civilization triumphs over barbarism.

In this novel the author is describing the conditions which he actually experienced; this fact makes for a greater possibility. The sincerity of the author—which is one of the greatest needs of the modern world—is, we believe, one of the novel's greatest attributes. As the portrait of a strong sturdy soul it will long be remembered.

—VINCENT MURNAGHAN '45