

SOME BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

THE HOLY BIBLE, translated from the Latin Vulgate in the light of the Hebrew and Greek Originals, by Ronald Knox (Burns and Oates, 30s.) now appears in a definitive single-volume edition. Its publication marks an achievement of the first importance, for Mgr Knox's translation has already established itself as a noble version which has opened the sacred text to thousands who were untouched by the existing English Bibles. Now finally authorized for public use by the Hierarchy of England and Wales, the Knox Bible takes its place as a monumental part of the Catholic, as well as of the English, tradition. The new edition takes into account many suggestions of verbal modification, but the translation of course remains substantially as we have already grown to know it. It is unquestionably the work of one man, bearing as it must the mark of his taste and indeed of his limitations. That is as it should be, and speculation as to how far its style may seem congenial a hundred years from now is profitless. We must be grateful that the scholarship and devotion of Mgr Knox have been so untiringly employed in producing for our own time a version that is fresh and living and easily understood. Its presentation by the Cambridge University Press is admirable in all respects. Legibility is successfully preserved despite double columns and numerous footnotes, and some thirteen hundred pages are happily contained in a book of manageable size and weight. This will be an essential book for Christmas and indeed for many years to come.

ST PIUS X, a Pictorial Biography by Leonard von Matt and Nello Vian, translated from the German by Sebastian Bullough, O.P. (Longmans; 30s.), provides a wonderful collection of 150 photographs to illustrate the life and times of the recently canonized Pope. The selection and quality of the photographs is of quite unusual excellence: as well as records of great ceremonial occasions there are intimate pictures of the Pope's family and of his personal possessions; 'background' illustrations of his childhood's countryside near Riese and of the seminary he attended at Padua are as significant to his story as is the final splendour of his canonization.

CARDINAL BERNARD GRIFFIN is the subject of a biography by Michael de la Bedoyere (Rockcliff; 12s. 6d.) It is never easy to write of a public figure who is still in middle life, and in the case of Cardinal Griffin grave illness has cast such a shadow over his work that the biographer's task is made even harder. But Count de la Bedoyere has provided a readable and intimate picture of the Cardinal, revealing most properly the strong spiritual resources that have made it possible for him to face physical suffering with such fortitude. Here are recalled the main aspects of his career, from his days in Birmingham, with their record of indefatigable work, to the immense responsibilities of Westminster. The life is illustrated by forty-four excellent (and largely unpublished) photographs which indicate the variety and devotion of his work.

ST BERNADETTE, by Henry Petitot, O.P. (Mercier Press, 3s. 6d.), is an engaging life of the saint of Lourdes, written with a real understanding of the psychology of Bernadette, too often presented as simply an ignorant peasant-girl who was caught up in the astounding events of the Grotto. Father Petitot traces her spiritual growth, her struggle with herself, which made of her a saint. 'What encourages us most in Bernadette is that, throughout her life . . . she had, without the aid of revelations, ecstasies or special graces, relying only on the support of the cross, to climb with slow steps the painful path to Calvary.'

FURNITURE IN ROMAN BRITAIN, by Joan Liversidge (Tiranti, 10s. 6d.) might seem at first a highly technical work, of interest alone to the archaeologist. But sixty-nine photographs of remains of Roman furniture or of illustrations of it on sarcophagi or tombstones, interpreted in a long introductory essay, provide a vivid picture of the social life of the Romans, so usually thought of in terms of military or monumental grandeur. As Professor J. M. C. Toynbee remarks in a preface, 'Roman villas will no longer be empty shells, now that Miss Liversidge has equipped them with couches, chairs, tripods, tables, cushions, mattresses, and other items of furnishing, for all of which she has chapter and verse'.

THE HERDER ART SERIES (6s. 6d. each volume) has recently been enriched by five new titles: *The Seasons*, *Emblems of Love*, *The Saints*, *The Holy Trinity* and *St Peter*. Each volume has a short

introduction and some twenty-five plates, some in colour. What is notable about this excellent series is the intelligence of its arrangement, so that a single theme is illustrated from many angles—often unfamiliar ones. Thus the volume on Saints has scarcely one obvious picture: here are Botticelli's St Thomas Aquinas, several mosaics and stone carvings, and details of hands from paintings by El Greco and Botticelli. Again, *Emblems of Love* provides an original treatment of the idea that 'loving and giving go hand in hand', and the illustrations of this subtle theme include an Egyptian relief of a bearer of sacrifice, a 'serving woman' by Tintoretto and 'Mary fainting' by Roger van der Weyden. *The Seasons* is particularly rich in unusual examples of a familiar theme: here are paintings by Pieter Brueghel, Jan Steen, Monet, and the Grimani Breviary. This Christmas can scarcely see more suitable or more reasonably priced books for gifts.

THE OXFORD JUNIOR ENCYCLOPAEDIA is now completed with the publication of Volume XI, *The Home* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. London: Cumberlege; 30s.). This volume is 'about people's homes and home life: how people live, dress, eat, and bring up their children'. Five hundred pages of double columns, with an immense number of illustrations, provide a thorough guide to subjects so diverse as Allergic Diseases, Crochet, Nutrition, and Walking-Sticks. As usual in this encyclopaedia, there is no attempt at 'writing down' to the alleged levels of juvenile intelligence, but the contributors have none the less realized the importance of clear descriptive writing: facts are always foremost. It should be explained that the 'juniors' for whom the encyclopaedia is intended are presumably senior grammar school children. Such articles as those on 'Family Welfare Services' and 'Reproductive System' require some consideration by Catholic parents before giving them to their children to read. The encyclopaedia is objective in the few judgments it makes, but its choice of subject and emphasis in treatment naturally enough reflect the intellectual climate of our time. With these reservations, which plainly have to be made about most books nowadays, this latest volume of the *Junior Encyclopaedia* provides an interestingly written and brilliantly illustrated introduction to the fundamental human society. It is perhaps a matter for gratitude that it is still thought to deserve a whole volume to itself.