

NOTICES

THOSE who want books for Christmas which have Christ for subject would seem to have their needs more than ordinarily well met this year by three books published in England in the last twelve months. These are all meditative studies by distinguished Catholic writers already well-known by their previous books. While Romano Guardini's *THE LORD* (Longman's, 28s.) deals with the earthly life, and is marked by that freshness of approach and depth of insight we have come to expect in any book by this author, *THE SPLENDOUR OF THE CHURCH*, by Henri de Lubac, S.J. (Sheed and Ward, 18s.), is concerned with the Lord's continued presence here on earth in the Church which is his mystical body. This has always been a favourite theme of Père de Lubac's and his love of this mystery has shone through the zestful scholarship which makes all his books so enjoyable to read. In the present volume, while the scholarship is still very much in evidence, he has given a freer rein to his affection, as the original French title, *Méditations sur l'Eglise*, perhaps shows. That the Church is the 'Sacrament of Christ' is the theme of one of Père de Lubac's chapters; and, of course, it is ultimately the Sacrament of the Church which is Christ which effectively makes her so. It is Christ in the Eucharist which is the subject of *THE LIVING BREAD*, by Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O. (Burns Oates, 12s. 6d.). Fr Merton's book is much briefer than the other two; but the power and depth of his meditations, long-ripened in elected silence, are such that this trio of books presents a remarkably balanced and attractive statement of the full dimensions of Catholic belief in the Incarnation.

The year which is drawing to a close marks the fourth centenary of one who through the religious family which he founded has ever since been associated, even on hostile lips, with the name of the Child whose birth we celebrate at this time. But behind the verbal association lies the reality of the vision of La Storta in 1536 when the long search of the converted Inigo of Loyola for his complete vocation ended in the assurance that 'God the Father was placing him with Christ his Son'. That vision is the true secret of the power and influence of the Jesuits, and it forms the fitting climax to Fr James Brodrick's *SAINT IGNATIUS: THE PILGRIM YEARS* (Burns Oates, 30s.). Ignatius is a saint for whose achievement Catholics, and others too, have always had a profound respect; but it was, perhaps, peculiarly within Fr Brodrick's powers to make plain, as he does here, the loveliness of the man. This book contains some fourteen illustrations—several in colour—which add to our delight and form a background to the written page. In *ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY*, by Leonard von Matt and Hugo

Rahner, s.J. (Longmans, 30s.) text and plate meet on more equal terms, each in turn capable of playing the part of a commentary on the other. Although this is the Ignatian gift-book *par excellence*, rich but not lavish, what is most remarkable about it is the almost severe restraint exercised by artist and author alike. Indeed, Fr Rahner's chapters which, despite their brevity, give us an astonishingly complete picture of the whole course of St Ignatius's life, form a kind of classical foil to the more picaresque treatment Fr Brodrick devotes to only a part of the life of his wandering hero. Also to be commended to those whose interest in this saint has been awakened or reawakened by the centenary celebrations are the Irish tributes, *THE FIRST JESUIT*, by Mary Purcell (Gill, 21s.), and *JESUITS* (Gill, 12s. 6d.), a series of biographical essays on distinguished sons of St Ignatius from the foundation of the Society to the present day. Finally, *BLACK GOWNS AND REDSKINS*, edited by Edna Kenton (Longmans, 25s.), is a welcome reprint of a precious selection from the *Relations* of Jesuit missionary activities among the Indians of North America between 1610-1791. This book is clearly the ideal gift for anyone who prefers his religious biography mixed with more than a dash of travel and adventure.

Another centenary celebrated this year was that of the rehabilitation of St Joan of Arc. *THE MAID OF ORLEANS*, by Sven Stolpe (Burns and Oates, 25s.), while based on a critical acquaintance with the older and more recent literature about St Joan, is a most readable account of her story, and points out the relevance of her kind of sanctity to the modern world.

THE SAINTMAKER'S CHRISTMAS EVE, by Paul Horgan (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), might well be called a modern *Christmas Carol*, since its publication is clearly designed to meet that mood among grown-ups which Dickens's Christmas stories were written to satisfy. The period is the early nineteenth century; but, as the setting is a Spanish-speaking peasant community in New Mexico and not Victorian England, this is a 'miracle' rather than a 'moral' tale. This *genre* is, of course, a deceptive one as far as children are concerned: books belonging to it seem to be written for them, but aren't really. On the other hand, *THE BOOK OF BOOKS: THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*, by Daniel Rops (Kenedy, \$3.75), is unmistakably an answer to many a harassed parent's December prayer. Those who have enjoyed M. Daniel-Rops's many books on sacred and ecclesiastical history will need no further recommendation of this translation, by Donal O'Kelly, of his *Histoire Sainte de mes filleuls*.