

PASTOR NIEMÖLLER. By Dietmar Schmidt. Translated by Lawrence Wilson. (Odhams Press; 21s.)

A biographer should certainly admire his hero, for sympathy enables him to enter into the very heart of his subject. Yet if he lacks detachment enthusiasm will make him blind to certain defects and deficiencies that are rarely absent from human life. Dietmar Schmidt certainly has plenty of admiration for his hero but does not seem to have used his critical faculties to anything like a sufficient extent. Although he mentions adverse comments made about Niemöller by friend and foe alike, he fails to see his inconsistency with regard to three important issues. The first is his apparent and self-confessed failing to appreciate fully the relevance of theology to human affairs, although he is shown to be constantly concerned with theological issues. The second is Niemöller's decision to apply in 1941 from the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen for recall to active service in Hitler's army. This decision is said to have been prompted in part by his desire to resume active opposition; yet such an opposition could not have been resumed without a number of false statements. Lastly, in his dealings with Russia Niemöller appears anxious to limit himself to purely religious matters but in dealing with other states he refuses to recognize any such narrow religious sphere. As a result of this double standard one gets the impression that he balances his non-interference on the soil of U.S.S.R. by over-interference elsewhere. Taken as a whole the book makes interesting reading if one overlooks the rather pronounced German nationalism behind some passages. It also makes for pleasant reading thanks to a smooth translation.

CESLAUS VELECKY, O.P.

GREAT CATHOLIC FESTIVALS. By James L. Monks. (Abelard Schuman; 12s. 6d.)

The lavish dress and simple popular language of this book could blind one to the erudition that has gone to making it. It traces with thoroughness the origin and development of the liturgy and popular customs surrounding the feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi and the Assumption. It is to be welcomed for the generosity of the illustrations and the learning.

G.A.M.

THE HIGHLANDS. By Calum I. Maclean. (Batsford; 25s.)

This is an astonishing book to come from a London publisher. Although Messrs Batsford have given us a number of very good books about Scotland, by such lively interpreters as George Blake and George Scott-Moncrieff, this has an unusual and permanent value as an

expression of Highland culture by a scholar of international repute who is at the same time a native Highlander who has kept his roots firm. It is an intensely personal book based largely on the author's meetings with people on the mainland, when collecting folklore material for academic archives. Because it is so personal it is sometimes less informative than some readers might wish, especially on economic questions and details of social structure. Almost on every page it will remind other Highlanders of some person or place, some fact or story, which might be added to its contents. But then we remember that books must have their limits, especially when they belong to a series. This one within its limits is packed richly with description and comment, informed, affectionate, fair and greatly charitable, even when dealing with the atrocities of 1746 and the brutality and tragedy of the Clearances. There is no romantic high colour in these pages, no attempt to attribute monopolies of virtue or vice to any group of people. This is a faithful book, which no one genuinely concerned with the Highlands will miss.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

CALLIGRAPHY. By Johann Georg Schwandner. (Dover Publications, Inc., New York; Constable, London; \$10.00.)

'Among the more elegant of those arts which commend and ornament a man of quality, calligraphy—I am sure there will be no dispute—scarcely deserves to be assigned to the lowest place. . . . Calligraphy is a word of Greek root. . . . It means nothing other than the art and manner of writing with beauty and grace. . . . Calligraphy is dedicated to elegance of writing and illuminating [whilst] tachygraphy . . . is devoted to speed. . . . While the characters drawn in calligraphy are elegant, with large letters that do not touch their neighbours, tachygraphy, by a natural adaptation, uses casual, gracile, elongated letters which for speed's sake are joined to one another.'

I think it is as well to make these quotations from the introduction to Schwandner's *Calligraphia Latina*, here under review, in view of the widespread interest in and revival of the Italic hand during the past decade or so. Four years ago we were given a facsimile of a handwriting manual written in the sixteenth century and it may be necessary to point out that the present book under review is not another handwriting manual. Essentially, at least in Schwandner's opinion, calligraphy consists of *drawn* letters or characters, and here we have a collection of ornamental initials, decorative frames and panels, calligraphic pictures, ornamental flourishes, which is a tribute not only to the artist but also to the engraver. Not only is it a collection which in itself is a most beautiful and remarkable plate book for anyone interested in