

BOOK REVIEWS.

I. CHURCH HISTORY.

Innocent III.

Par Achille Luchaire, Membre de L'Institute, Paris. Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1906. 4 vols. 3.50 F. per volume.

Innocent III. is generally regarded as the most important of the popes. The papacy reached the zenith of its temporal power in him. No other pope interfered so widely and effectively in the temporal affairs of the kingdoms of Europe. His influence on the affairs of the church were scarcely less important. There is already an enormous literature bearing on the life and work of this pope. But the present one is not unnecessary. It is a literary biography. All the learned apparatus of notes, references, etc., is wanting. The text runs smoothly without break. The style is delightfully clear and picturesque. Indeed it is not a biography in the ordinary acceptation of that term, but a series of studies in the life and times of this great pope. The book was written to be read and it will be read. Indeed one volume has already passed through the third edition and another volume through the second. This will indicate that each volume is complete in itself.

The four volumes bear the titles, "Rome and Italy," "The Papacy and the Empire," "The Question of the Orient" and "The Crusade Against the Albigenses." The discussions are not chronological or learned, but vivid, literary, interesting. There is abundant knowledge of the times, and the author has command of a vivid style. The discussion is dispassionate and sympathetic, but makes no effort to shield the great pope. It is distinctly shown that the impulse to the cruel crusade on the Albigenses of Southern France for example came from other points. His politics are shown to have been dictated by self-interest. The supposed advancement of the church and its interests was ever the controlling motive of his actions.

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