

Fair', or could have evoked such strangeness from the Calendar of Events issued by B.E.A.: 'May 8-16. Ninth Congress of International Union for Thermalism and Climatothermaltherapy (Dubrovnik)'?

The special quality of Mr Jennings' humour owes something to G. K. Chesterton, but it would be quite wrong to see in him a streamlined, mid-century version of the Old Master. It is truer to say that the genius of both owes much to a common source, and in the case of Mr Jennings one can be grateful that our own time, with its follies and its goodness too, has found in him so penetrating and yet so charitable an inspector.

I.E.

THE SPEAR. By Louis de Wohl. (Gollancz; 15s.)

Here indeed is a *tour-de-force* of imaginative invention. The author tells an original version of the story of the Centurion, later known as St Longinus, who pierced the side of our Lord with his lance. It is quite different from the *Golden Legend* history of the puissant knight Longinus, but then, as Mr Donald Attwater says in his *Dictionary of Saints*, 'the truth about his life is not known'.

The Judean scene, the nationalist aspirations, the indignation of the priesthood against the preaching of the Carpenter of Nazareth are colourfully depicted. The Jewish versions of familiar names, somewhat bewildering at first, accentuate the local colour. The climax of Calvary is movingly described.

It would be an exaggeration to say there is a surprise on every page and no one expects the historical novelist to confine himself within the narrow limits of fact. The impact of the author's original inventions is perhaps less telling since *The Robe*, *The Silver Chalice* and other American novels of that genre. They cry out for, and usually get, the full CinemaScope treatment. *The Spear* is a distinguished successor. An incidental diversion for the reader sufficiently well-informed about Hollywood stars might be casting the roles for the screen version.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE HOLY WELLS OF WALES. By Francis Jones. (University of Wales Press; 12s. 6d.)

This interesting book will be of value both to the student of Welsh pre-history and of the Early Church in Wales. In it the holy wells of Wales are listed and classified in full for the first time and discussed under such headings as 'wells and megaliths', 'wells in the lives of the saints', 'distribution', 'belief and ritual', etc. The different types of wells and their distribution are shown also on six maps at the end of the book.

Taken in conjunction with *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in*