

At a time when an increasing fragmentation of historical study makes a general view hard to achieve, Dr Alington's survey is especially valuable. It is always good-natured and usually interesting.

What is more 'personal' (apart from certain judgments, as on the Reformation) is the proportion. And here Dr Alington's Greek sympathies provide, for instance, a more extended treatment of the Byzantine Empire than might be expected in a general book. The solid mass of fact is leavened with much odd information, such as the etymological notes ('Augustus's greatness is rightly recorded by the number of towns which recall the name which he made famous, for instance, Augsburg, Autun, Aosta and Saragossa', or 'only one Norman baron, Montgomery, has given his name to a county in England and Wales'). What is 'political' is rarely other than a common denominator of the opinions of English historians, and provides a safe, if sometimes 'superior', guide to the maze of European history.

There are many statements which one might wish to take up, but the object of Dr Alington's book precludes any complaint based on a difference of opinion. But one would like to know how St Benedict can be said to have taught that 'labour was prior even to prayer' in view of 'Let nothing be preferred before the work of God' (*reg. cap. xliii*). Again, it is scarcely true to say (p. 108) that Cistercian lay-brothers 'were not allowed to read or write'. That most of them were in fact unable to is a different matter.

For the Dean of Durham, what is 'Latin' is often regrettable, hence, the Latin Fathers—unlike the Greeks—were exercised 'over comparatively juristic questions, of which the possible salvation of unbaptized infants is an extreme but not altogether unfair example'. This is a somewhat drastic summary of Augustine, Leo, Ambrose and Jerome.

But it is unjust to give the impression that Dr Alington's book is as a whole other than a most readable and serene summary of a very troubled story. Peacemakers are not usually in our time remarkable for their sense of history, and they are, one supposes, too busy to bother with books. But for the rest of us, what is happening in Europe now will be put in its proper proportion through the skilful guidance of Dr Alington, who realises that what is, grows from what has been.

Excellent maps and tables are included, but one might wish for a bibliography which would indicate at a glance the rich selection of historians on whose work Dr Alington has, inevitably, drawn. I. E.

OUR THREATENED VALUES. By Victor Gollancz. (Gollancz; 5s.)

An eloquent and courageous plea for sanity in the affairs of Europe, Mr Gollancz's new book reveals the deep distress of one whose socialist faith has been sorely tried by the triumph of that faith—or rather by the triumph of its official exponents. He appeals for a return to the basic decencies of international life, and his analysis of what is happening now in Eastern Europe, together with his brave championing of justice—when its principles are being so generally betrayed—must be warmly welcomed.