

carrying out William's ecclesiastical policy. As archbishop of Canterbury he was both Primate and Superior of one of the greater monasteries. To assist him in governing Christchurch he chose Henry, prior of Bec, and compiled for his and the community's use a body of customs taken from 'those monasteries which in our day have the greatest prestige in the monastic order'. He intended that Canterbury should set an example of liturgical and monastic observance to all England. As Benedictine monasteries (apart from Cluny and her dependencies) were completely autonomous, Lanfranc's Constitutions could not be enforced elsewhere, but owing to the personal influence of the compiler and the excellence of the customs they were readily adopted by other houses and survived in one form or another down to the fourteenth century.

The Constitutions are divided into two parts: 'The Liturgical Directory and the Administration and Discipline of the House'. The latter part is mainly from the Customs of Bernard of Cluny and is of general interest. Lanfranc shows much Benedictine discretion when making his liturgical arrangements. These may appear complex to the reader unacquainted with the structure of the Divine Office and its medieval monastic accretions, but in point of fact they are simple in comparison with the elaborations of Cluny. Several interesting events of the liturgical year should not be passed over: the bath before Christmas, the Lenten distribution of books, the Palm Sunday and Rogation processions and the Maundy ceremonies.

Professor Knowles has appended a later document 'The Instruction of Novices', which throws additional light on the daily practice according to the Constitutions. Lanfranc's work, providing as it does exact evidence of the first Norman observance in England, is well worthy of attention.

PLACID HIGHAM, O.S.B.

THE EPISCOPAL COLLEAGUES OF ARCHBISHOP THOMAS BECKET. By David Knowles. (Cambridge University Press: 12s. 6d.)

This book is in substance the Ford Lectures delivered by Professor Knowles in 1949, augmented by the inclusion of material which time forced him to omit from the spoken lectures, and which amounts to about one-sixth of the book. It is presented with some diffidence, 'mainly out of deference to a convention', as a work with no claim to great and permanent value, which treats only certain aspects of its subject and has no foundation of new or exhaustive research.

To contest the self-judgment of the author, as far as it goes, would be presumptuous. But although the reader will share his hope that this book will be superseded by more ambitious works, he will be

immediately grateful for it and may think it of greater importance than is suggested in its Preface. Apart from its value as an introduction to an important chapter of English history, it will probably be valued for a long time as an example of historical scholarship at its best; an illustration of how human sympathy and lively imagination, disciplined by the most careful scholarship, can bring new life to the staler parts of history.

For most students the history of the investiture contest in England has indeed become stale; a story of legal differences, with its dramatic moment in the death of Archbishop Thomas—but that only a small thing in the sober pages of Stubbs and Maitland, and almost lost to sight altogether in the seven volumes of *Materials for the History of Archbishop Thomas Becket* which came out in the Rolls Series between 1875-85. The shortcomings of the latter edition are pointed out by Professor Knowles, and the kind of work that needs to be done before a definitive treatment of the controversy can be attempted. Some of it is already being done; editions of the letters of Gilbert Foliot and John of Salisbury are in preparation. Nevertheless, editions of letters and other source material will be valuable only as they are used. A definitive work will have to pay closer attention to the human context of the controversy than has been given before. It has been a weakness of great scholars that they have treated periods in history as though they were simply the 'straightforward narrative' of one man's life, forgetting how much any man's life, and its decisions and actions, must be affected by the greater or lesser men with whom he lived.

Archbishop Thomas had as colleagues a bench of bishops of unusual distinction, which included such men as Gilbert Foliot, Bartholomew of Exeter, Henry of Blois, and Henry of Winchester. By looking to see what kind of men they were, and what were their views, what it was they said and did when Thomas and the king were at variance, Professor Knowles has placed the Archbishop in a new perspective, and has brought the whole story of the controversy to life. No student of the controversy can afford to neglect his book, but to any historian it will show the value of looking not simply at the central figures in history but at those who were their colleagues. It is only in relation to the latter that the true proportion and significance of the central figures can be judged.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

THE AGE OF CHARLES I. By David Mathew. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 21s.)

The approach of the struggle between King and Parliament has overshadowed, for too many historians, the charm and interest of the years 1629 to 1640. These are the years when Charles I ruled without a