

laid under contribution by this heartening book; which, for all who would lend head or hand, in however inconspicuous and piecemeal a fashion, to repair our disintegrated outlook and ravaged soil, should act as a refresher course in sanity.

H.P.E.

WESSEX: Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, with West Berkshire and East Somerset. By Ralph Dutton. (Batsford; 12s. 6d.)

Those who love the English tradition, countryside and architecture, are very deeply in the debt of Messrs. Batsford. Were England to be wiped out, either by catastrophe, or by increasing industrialism and 'planning', and the War Office determination to devastate the most beautiful places, then—supposing a set of Batsford illustrated books survived—it would still be possible to get some idea of what Great Britain used to be like, in those past days when there was time for craftsmanship and worship, those antique times when men found more joy in building a Cathedral than a factory.

It is a large slice of England that Mr Dutton has undertaken in his 'Wessex', which so long ago was one of the Seven Kingdoms of the Heptarchy. Topographical writing is a difficult art, and the fact that it is done so easily and so badly by many people, does not make it less so. But Mr Dutton has the necessary knowledge, imagination and sensitive perception to do it well. He moves smoothly from place to place and from one period of history to another, and thus avoids the horrid jerkiness and the still more horrid facetiousness that disfigures so many country books.

What Mr Dutton sees—such an English rural picture as 'The Cottages of Britford are scattered along the lanes, and the fourteenth-century Church and Georgian vicarage lie with a Tudor farmhouse close to the banks of the river'—he can make his readers see also. Add to this the many and enchanting photographs which adorn this book in the usual lavish Batsford manner, and there is Wessex in one's hand in the most compact and convenient way possible.

ESTHER MEYNELL.

CANTERBURY. By William Townsend. (Batsford; 8s. 6d.)

Few English cities are more saturated with historical associations than Canterbury, which for nearly a thousand years was the centre of Abbey, numerous lesser religious houses, hospitals and a score of parish churches combined to produce a scene of religious activity which must have been outstanding even in Catholic times. The shrine of St Thomas was the most famous place of pilgrimage in the British Isles, to which flocked pilgrims not only from this country but, also,