

welcome inclusion; the passage from his *Lay Sermons*, and Dean Mansel's lecture on 'The Limits of Religious Thought', both illustrate the important reaction against the deadening and mechanistic system of later eighteenth century rationalism (Mark Pattison considered, in *Essays and Reviews*, that Coleridge had 'restored rationalism to its former vigour of a century before.') But however worthy of reprinting these documents may be, they appear to have been somewhat arbitrarily chosen. Most surprising of all, Mr Cockshut makes no reference to the very important christological debate centering in this country probably on

D. F. Strauss. Although this was a scholars' controversy, it had profound effects not only within theology – and hence on the sacramental and social thought of both Anglo-Catholics and the Broad Church – but also on the whole approach to christian faith amongst a wider public, as the literature of the later mid-century repeatedly testifies (see, for instance, Browning, Matthew Arnold, and George Eliot). Both as a religious controversy, and for its wider significance, it would have deserved Mr Cockshut's attention.

K. J. BATTARBEE

A HOUSE OF KINGS. The History of Westminster Abbey. Edited by Edward Carpenter. Pp. xix + 491, with 100 plates. *John Baker*; 70s.

Westminster Abbey, as all the world knows, has a unique position among the churches of England, and a power over the minds and emotions of Englishmen whether Catholic, Anglican, dissenters or unbelievers. Indeed, in its combination of architectural and other visual beauty with its regal and sepulchral associations and its fame as a symbol of past and present national pride and as a focus of union for all the English-speaking peoples, it has a wealth of attraction surpassed only by the basilica of St Peter in Rome. It is therefore not surprising that it has given rise to a large literature. What is perhaps surprising is the fact that no single book on any aspect of the Abbey, whether academic, literary, popular or merely explanatory, has succeeded in doing full justice to its subject. The only possible exception to this judgment is Dean Stanley's *Historical Monuments of Westminster Abbey*, but the success of that book, now a century old, was due to the personality of the author and a blend of historical imagination, fact and enthusiasm that could not be successfully imitated at the present day. This is not to say that no good books have been written about the Abbey. Quite apart from old histories and learned articles and monographs, W. R. Lethaby's *Westminster Abbey and the King's Craftsmen* (1906), the scholarly works of Dean Armitage Robinson (1909–11) and Dr Pearce (1916–20), and the sumptuous volumes of Canon Westlake (1923) are in their various ways notable and still indispensable, but none of them is a work that by itself suffices.

Whether the present volume achieves this excellence is hard to say. It is a bulky book,

and therefore not easy to read or to carry about. It is a collection of a number of disparate parts of varying length, in this resembling the history of St Paul's published a few years since, and the works have at least two contributors in common. They resemble each other also in the clear distinction between a long section on the medieval period and shorter chapters on later centuries and other topics. In the case of the earlier volume many readers and critics found Professor C. N. L. Brook's contribution the most satisfying piece, and here it may be felt that Dom Hugh Aveling's long and original study is the most interesting and valuable part. Confined by his brief to the results of personal research directed towards the general reader rather than the student, he has succeeded in giving a compressed history of the house that never becomes tangled in detail, and that consistently presents the religious and economic life of the abbey as a picture always changing and sensitive to the world outside it.

Westminster, though always a wealthy house and a royal 'peculiar', situated near the administrative heart of the country and visited ceaselessly by Londoners and foreigners, never displayed a *genius loci* as did Bury St Edmunds and St Albans. It produced only one distinguished abbot (Langham) between Gilbert Crispin and John Islip, few notable monks and few writers. Dom Hugh knows the sources well, and more than once pauses to assess the spiritual and material fortunes of the house, but the image he leaves in the mind is that of a worthy, workaday set of men passing through the daily round without the encouragement of a genius or of a saint, and without giving to us

the sidelights on human nature that we obtain from Jocelin of Brakelond, Matthew Paris or Walter Daniel. All historians will regret that footnotes were not permitted, and we may hope that at some future date Dom Hugh will find an opportunity for re-publishing or re-writing his pages with full scholarly apparatus.

He ends before the Tudor age begins, and the story is taken up (1474–1660) by Dr Tindal Hart, who gives a lively picture of Abbot Islip and a sympathetic account of the surrender and of the Marian revival. Later, the story gradually changes its character from the history of an institute to that of successive deans, and later still come various topics and aspects, and the second half of the book is without sequence of date and theme. Much of it is of interest, particularly the portraits of outstanding deans, but some sections, such as those on architecture and music, seem to fall between the two stools of detailed expertise and skilful vulgarization without satisfying the scholar or the armchair reader save in isolated passages, such as the lively whodunit by Canon Fox on the stolen Stone of Scone, the vignette of that remarkable and eccentric character, Dean Armitage Robinson, and the able survey of nine hundred years of coronations by Mr L. E. Tanner, whose unique learning in Abbey matters might well have been given fuller scope elsewhere. Taken for all in all, a very difficult task has been adequately performed, but the classical history of Westminster remains to be written.

A few details may be mentioned. Dom Hugh is not altogether clear in his treatment of Marial devotion at Westminster. He does not distin-

guish between the pre-Conquest feast of the Conception (the legendary miraculous *active* conception by Anne) and the theological argument of Eadmer for the sinless (passive) conception of Mary herself. Fr S. van Dyk's article in the *Dublin Review* (1954) is not used. Later (p. 35 and elsewhere) he states that from the early thirteenth century onwards the night office (the modern Matins) at Westminster began at midnight 'thus decisively splitting the night's sleep', and (p. 37) that 'compulsory monthly bleeding' was the practice at Westminster in the thirteenth century. What is his authority for this? On p. 70 he takes the 'spice-money' issued to the monks too literally. The word 'spices', as used commercially in the later middle ages, covered a multitude of items including metal, glue and cotton, and 'spice-money' was expended on as many objects as the 'pin-money' of eighteenth century marriage settlements. Dr Tindal Hart, in his section, tells us (p. 90) that the curious use of 'chapel' still current in the printing trade derives from the location of Caxton's press at Westminster, and later (p. 118) that the phrase 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' derives from Westminster's contribution to the repair of St Paul's. In both cases a footnote would have been valuable.

The many illustrations, some of historical and aesthetic interest, others more personal and newsy, keep the reader awake to the last lap. The printing (by Messrs Clay) is excellent. A felicitous and almost solitary misprint OBDORMINUS (p. 142) may throw a rusty classic momentarily off the rails.

DAVID KNOWLES

MEDIEVAL LATIN AND THE RISE OF EUROPEAN LOVE-LYRIC by Peter Dronke. Vol. I, Problems and Interpretations; vol. II, Texts. *Oxford, The Clarendon Press*, 55s. and 45s.

'Everyone', wrote C. S. Lewis in a weak moment (but in a book that could afford a lapse or two), 'everyone has heard of courtly love, and . . . knows that it appears quite suddenly at the end of the eleventh century in Languedoc'. This was too jaunty to be true, even in 1936; and Lewis's broad definition of courtly love ('that romantic species of passion') left him wide open to historical attack. Mr Dronke, in the first chapter of this very brilliant and original but also somewhat uneven work, easily disposes of the view that courtly love – unless *very* narrowly understood – was a French medieval discovery. He is convinced that 'the feelings of *courtoisie* are elemental, not the

product of a particular chivalric culture' – nothing essentially to do with feudalism (nor with adultery), not confined to any court or privileged class but springing from a basic *gentilezza* (Dante's term is appositely brought in here) that may be found in any man at any time. I had always felt this was so, and am delighted that so learned a man agrees with me. I do not care for the term Mr Dronke chiefly uses to denote it – 'the courtly experience' – but perhaps there is no better one. What it implies, at any rate, and the manifold richness of the implications, he makes sufficiently clear as he weaves his way through the astonishing material he knows so well – whose every