

outcome of the initial struggle between Christian and pagan culture.
J. J. R. BRIDGE.

THE CHRONICLE OF JOCELYN OF BRAKELOND. Edited and translated by H. E. Butler. (Nelson; 15s.)

To some of us it has always seemed a pity that later Latin literature is not better known than it is; and that most people think of Latin only as the language of ancient Rome. True, much has been done in recent years to acquaint a wider public with the treasures of medieval Latin poetry; and Messrs Nelson are now to be congratulated on an enterprise which will make generally accessible a representative selection of post-classical Latin prose works of literary and historical importance. Among the first in this series of 'Medieval Classics' the famous Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond rightly finds a place.

It was Carlyle, in his 'Past and Present', who introduced this vivid record of the activities of a twelfth-century English abbot to the nineteenth-century public; and since that time, popular editions of the Chronicle have effectively rescued it from the oblivion which has overtaken other medieval works. There is, therefore, no need to describe its contents at any length. Jocelin, monk of St Edmundsbury, who held successively several important offices in what was one of the largest English abbeys, gives an account of the daily affairs of the Abbey under its great Abbot Samson, the circumstances attending whose election in 1182 he minutely relates. The Abbot of St Edmund's was a temporal ruler over a wide area of East Anglia, subject only to the King; and much of the Chronicle is devoted to the description of Samson's many financial anxieties, of his disputes about property, of his struggles to maintain his rights against his powerful neighbour, the Bishop of Ely. Disputes with his own convent (whose property was separate from the abbot's) also occurred. In all, the character of Abbot Samson, strong and firm, given to sudden wrath and yet as ready to melt into tears of repentance, a wise administrator who endeavoured to be a true father to his community and to his temporal subjects, shines clearly forth; yet (as in the matter of the abbatial fishponds at Babwell) the chronicler does not disguise his superior's faults.

This work has long been one of our most valuable sources of information about the internal life of a monastery of the period, as well as about its general and social history. Scholars as well as the reading public will welcome this finely-produced edition, in which Latin text and English translation face one another. The latter is an excellent piece of work, which conveys the flavour of the original without being archaic. Alternative renderings will inevitably suggest themselves to the reader; but it would be captious to pick out examples. Misprints are few: 'thou was' (p. 114) is the kind of thing modern compositors are always perpetrating; and either the

Latin or the English must be wrong when 'xiii. sterlingos' (p. 117) appears as 'twelve pence sterling'. (This amount, by the way, was all that King John gave to the Abbey.) '1120' on p. xvii of the introduction should obviously be '1020'.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

IDEAS AND BELIEFS OF THE VICTORIANS. (Sylvan Press; 21s.)

The series of talks and readings on the Victorian Age, broadcast on the Third Programme last year, was the most ambitious piece of serious broadcasting yet undertaken by the B.B.C. Fifty-seven talks and twenty-six readings were devoted to variations on a single theme, that of the Victorian idea of Progress. It is true that the range of discussion went beyond a narrow consideration of an abstract idea, but the series as a whole was a conscious attempt at examining the culture of an epoch in the light of a general theme.

The interest of the collected talks is therefore not confined to their contribution to scholarship, though in fact the speakers—from Bertrand Russell to Ronald Knox, from G. M. Young to Julian Huxley—have an initial authority that assures seriousness of treatment. The published volume has, as Mr Harman Grisewood suggests in his preface, importance as illustrating a technique; it has value as the herald of a new tradition of literature. The medium of broadcasting remains new, and its full potentialities are still to be realised. The technique of writing for speech can elude a practised writer who is used to the autonomy of the essay or the extended book. Oratory, sermonising, lecturing: superficially they suggest a parallel, but it is one that fails. In broadcasting sincerity is all, and content and style alike need to be reduced to what is essential—and therefore communicable.

By this standard *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians* must be considered a notable achievement. For many of the contributors brevity must be an unfamiliar determinant; and even the listening public of the Third Programme must be reduced to a common denominator. And the most accomplished broadcasters are often themselves acknowledged prose stylists who have gone to the trouble of adapting their writing to the demands of a different medium. But broadcasting is fundamentally discontinuous, and the material of even a closely-knit series must lend itself to repetition and to a failure in sustained argument.

The talks are divided into five main themes: the theory of Progress, Victorian Religious Belief and Controversy, Man and Nature, The Liberal Idea, and The 'Working-Out' of Victorian Ideas. A short notice cannot attempt to give an indication of the variety of this material, nor of its generally brilliant treatment. It would be true, however, to say that the series reflects a refreshing reaction from the fashion of slick judgment associated with the name of Lytton Strachey. We are sufficiently far removed from the Victorian Age