

tell him that 'Walsingham might have belonged to any Christian country' (*Great Tudors*, p. 211). But neither writer will help the general reader to further study. All three books, but particularly the first, would have been more valuable, and certainly not less attractive, if enriched by a short reading-list.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY'S HISTORIA NOVELLA.

GESTA STEPHANI. Latin text with translation and notes by K. R. Potter. (Nelson; 20s. each.)

It is a pleasure to welcome excellent new editions of these two histories fundamental for the study of the trouble years of Stephen, more especially as the second is something of an historical event. When a text of the *Gesta Stephani* was already in typescript, a manuscript which supplied the lost ending of the work was discovered at Valenciennes. Professor Mynors, who collated the MSS and contributes a note on them in either volume, concludes that the new manuscript was a copy of the now lost Laon MS used by Duchesne, in which several *lacunae* already occurred before the fourteenth century. Unfortunately this means that there is still no account of the Battle of the Standard which must once have been there. Dr Poole has given us an admirable estimate of the evidence which the newly-discovered manuscript supplies. Malmesbury's *Historia Novella*, which was left incomplete and unrevised, is a more shrewd and concise narrative than that of the author of the *Gesta Stephani*, but it is impossible not to feel the attraction and at times the vividness of the writing of this unknown supporter of Stephen. The two works, seldom differing over the facts, are from their differing points of view delightfully complementary, and even Malmesbury cannot withhold a word of praise for Stephen, that *mansuetissimus homo*.

A.S.

FELIX'S LIFE OF ST GUTHLAC. Edited and translated by Bertram C. Colgrave. (Cambridge University Press; 30s.)

Guthlac was a Mercian who lived the life of a solitary in the Fenland during the last years of the seventh century and the first decade of the eighth. He attained a reputation for sanctity during his lifetime. Felix wrote his life of the saint before the middle of the eighth century while many of the saint's contemporaries were still alive. Later a certain amount of imaginative writing and not a little forgery was called in to build up the legend of the saint and incidentally to magnify the importance of the monastery of Crowland with which he was associated.