

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

Parliament, supported by the massive integrity of Laud and Strafford. Dr Mathew, continuing in this volume his study of *The Jacobean Age*, and enlarging upon his Ford Lectures on *The Social Structure in Caroline England*, has attempted to give the period its proper proportions. This he has done by setting out the relationship between the Caroline world and the Europe of Richelieu, Gustavus Adolphus and Urban VIII—what Dr Mathew calls the Tridentine world. He shows convincingly how very tenuous were the connections of the island and the continent, even though the influence of Henrietta Maria over her husband was steadily increasing. This insular detachment gives Dr Mathew excellent scope for his supreme talent in detecting and disengaging the different strands in the English culture, the steady growth away from the vestiges of feudalism, which Lord William Howard still recalled at Naworth, towards the great Whig families and the Tory squirearchy. The Church of England receives a very careful and sensitive treatment, and one of Dr Mathew's many valuable judgments is that the opposition to the Laudian bishops was to the sacerdotal rather than the sacramental character of their policy. It is impossible, without extensive quotation, to do justice to the width of Dr Mathew's view or the care with which he bases his conclusions upon contemporary documents. Naturally he has not overdrawn his pictures of the greater figures like the King, Laud or Strafford, but many subsidiary portraits stand out, like those of Sir Thomas Roe or Bishop Williams of Lincoln, looking to the past, and Falkland and Dr Wilkins looking to the future. There is a delightful aside on St Francis of Sales and a sketch of the merging scientific world with talk of frogmen and flights to the moon. Typical of the whole is the charming rencontre of old Archbishop Abbot in his coach with Lords Arundel and Maltravers on Banstead Downs: 'My lord's grace took occasion to congratulate unto both my Lord Maltravers' brave and hopeful progeny of three sons and a daughter; and so they parted. That was how England had been ruled, the great bland ease at the coach window.'

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES. (Arundel Press, Bognor; twice-yearly, 8s. 6d.; by subscription only.)

The standard Catholic historical reference books are now almost museum pieces. Gillow's *Bibliographical Dictionary* appeared in 1885-8, and the last volume (comprising half the alphabet) was, through no fault of the author, quite unworthy of its predecessors. Foley's *Records* is earlier still, and is ill-arranged and full of inaccuracies. The scholarly volumes edited by Fr John Morris, S.J., are more reliable, but they were never designed as reference books. Since the appearance of these