

assessment of Rousseau. We are given one of the two contrasting but equally conventional criticisms—Rousseau was ‘the true founder of State Socialism’.

For those who are tired of both Rousseau the Anarchist and Rousseau the Totalitarian, I can strongly recommend the new Nelson edition of Rousseau’s political writings. Professor Watkins in his excellent introduction gently reproves the classical critics for ‘crediting Rousseau with a degree of logical consistency which is not in fact characteristic of his writings’, and manages to avoid the standardized perspectives which have been imposed on his author’s writings by the later developments of those who have claimed to be or been accused of being Rousseau’s disciples. When all this has been cleared away and we read *The Social Contract* without reading into it modern preoccupations the outstanding feature of the book is, as Cassirer has pointed out, its intense moral seriousness; it was this that accounted for the admiration which Kant (hardly an enthusiast for either anarchism or totalitarianism) had for Rousseau. Professor Watkins makes this his starting point in his analysis of the work and suggests that it is in part derived from the Calvinism of Geneva. I think he does less than justice to the originality of Rousseau and Kant when he describes the theory of the General Will as essentially a restatement of ethical rationalism, the tradition of which extends from the Stoic idea of natural law to the Kantian categorical imperative. Professor Watkins says: ‘It is true that the rationalistic element is somewhat obscured by his emphasis on will’; this emphasis cannot, surely, be brushed aside as misleading, for in it is the seed of Kant’s achievement—the development of a non-naturalistic ethic within the rationalist tradition. Besides giving the most readable English translation of *The Social Contract* that has yet appeared, Professor Watkins also provides translations of *Considerations on the Government of Poland* and part of the *Constitutional Project for Corsica* in which we see Rousseau at work on concrete political problems in the light of his theory. Of the two the essay on Poland is the more interesting, perhaps because Rousseau was so conscious of the obstacles to ideal legislation in that country. Corsica he thought of as the perfect setting for his state and the Project is consequently much less down to earth.

H.M.C.

FROM ROMAN EMPIRE TO RENAISSANCE EUROPE. By Denys Hay.
(Home Study Books, Methuen; 7s. 6d.)

The author of this little book succeeds very well in carrying out his intention of ‘conveying a general impression of the changes in European society during a thousand years of its development’. Of course he

can only do this in so short a space by continuous generalization, and so the reader has to remind himself now and then that he is not being given facts, but a series of judgments on facts which for the most part are unstated.

These judgments are most apt when the writer is dealing with the social and economic developments of his period. His reflections on ecclesiastical history are not so just. There are inaccuracies of statement; for example the variations in the calendar of the Celtic Church are put on a par with the deviations in doctrine of the Arians, and called unorthodox; and the ecclesiastical censure of interdict is spoken of as though it were a sort of excommunication in bulk. Then again to say that Christian teaching 'mainly affected the manners of the knightly class, and spilled over into the conscience of common men in the less desirable forms of mariolatry and saint worship' is to put a wholly false and anachronistic division between the religion of the upper and lower orders. Medieval devotion, medieval superstition and crypto-paganism were common to all classes of society, clergy not excluded.

The author does not indeed overstate the entanglement of the medieval Church in temporal society and politics—it would scarcely be possible to do so. But he does seem to regard the Church and religion as purely social phenomena, and not as existing and functioning in their own right. So he can talk of the Roman Church, with its sense of order and authority, being the Roman Empire's chief legacy to the West, when in fact almost the exact opposite was the case; it was scraps and relics of the Roman Empire which were preserved for us by the Church. The principle of authority in the Church is not derived from Roman Imperialism, and it developed into the 'Papal Absolutism' of the Middle Ages when secular absolutism had been dead for centuries.

A historian of course does not have to accept the Church's claim to be a divine society, in order to be a good historian. But he should realize that the claim is made in all seriousness, and that it dominates ecclesiastical history. Judgments are bound to be distorted if an institution which holds itself to be the tabernacle of God with men is looked upon merely as a sort of universal community centre, built in the Gothic style.

E.H.

MEMBERS OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT. By D. Brunton and D. H. Pennington. (Longmans; 21s.)

This serious study of the composition of the Long Parliament written in collaboration by Mr Donald Pennington and the late Mr Douglas Brunton is introduced by Professor R. H. Tawney in a careful and judicious foreword. The book opens with a chapter on the 'Original Members' which draws attention to the interesting point that on an average the Royalists belonged to a younger age-group than the