

England is, gridironed all over with railways, yet there are many districts in it the abode of loneliness, where the centuries come and go with little outward change, and the country looks much the same as it did in the days of the Stuarts, or even before their time'. The Wessex world of Hardy was still a living one as Blériot flew the Channel, the first Garden City was built, the theory of relativity was discovered, transatlantic wireless was heard, and the first hundred thousand of Britain's cars were on the

road. In their very different ways these two books provide an unusually good complement to each other – the official portrait, the personal snap-shot album – the former without stuffiness, the second without eccentricity. Taken together, they do much to restore imaginatively an age which for reasons of great complexity, fascinates us and leaves us fresh to ponder its special set of enigma variations.

IAN GREGOR

CONSTANTINOPLE: ICONOGRAPHY OF A SACRED CITY by Philip Sherrard. *Oxford University Press*. 63s.

In recent years there have been many books on Constantinople but this study is unique, for it deals not only with the City but with a civilization and a polity. In one hundred and thirty-four pages Mr Sherrard deals in turn with the place, people and buildings, with Constantinople as the New Rome, with Constantinople as the New Jerusalem and with its conquest by the Turks as the destruction of an Image. On a first reading the first section seems far too compressed for it is concentrated on the Palace, the Hippodrome and Haghia Sophia, it is not only that so much is omitted like the function of the town monasteries and the beauty of the Chara, the organization of the craftsmen and the flow of inter-continental trade. The Constantinople that Mr Sherrard describes is a city without brothels. But gradually when the book is being re-read it becomes apparent that the excisions are all-intentional, Mr Sherrard was not painting a naturalist picture, he has achieved an ikon.

It is the Ikon of Byzantium conceived as the capital of an universal empire, no other Byzantinist has ever portrayed this so well.

Partly this is due to Mr Sherrard's skill as an anthologist. There are citations from so many sources often quite unfamiliar, quite different in their period and in their provenance, Greek and Western and Islamic and yet combining in an overall unity. This is a work of artistry as well as scholarship.

There is no idealization, an ikon painter may concentrate on aspects of a reality but he does not idealize. On page 119 Mr Sherrard develops a theory of the Byzantine sense of collective guilt which is the only statement or theory of his that I would query. Of course there was much that was fetid in Byzantine civilization, for it was a civilization. Of course much classical paganism survived interwoven with Byzantine Christianity; as late as the fourteenth century Bryennios could write, 'we are certain that Nereids live in the sea and that Genii rule over each spot'. But I would doubt if either led to much psychological tension beneath the baroque rhetoric of self-denunciation there lay the tranquil consciousness of an utter superiority.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

EVOLUTION TECHNIQUE ET THEOLOGIES by A. Z. Serrand, O.P. *Editions du Cerf*.

The series in which this book appears focusses on the problem of working out a theology which will really answer the challenges and needs of the technological era. The volume under review, written with that attractively dry humour which is familiar to readers of the author's regular contributions to *Signes du Temps*, offers a schematized phenomenology of existing Catholic positions as regards the right relation

between the claims of the gospel and the purview of applied science, between Christ and Prometheus. In a subsequent volume Fr Serrand proposes to make sense of the variety of attitudes and to discuss the role the magisterium of the Church may play in recommending some particular one of them.

Fr Serrand discerns *eight* different attitudes 'Theology for Prometheus': the motto of