

REGINA V. PALMERSTON. *The Correspondence between Queen Victoria and her Foreign and Prime Minister 1837-1965*; by Brian Connell; Evans, 42s.

The author of *Regina v. Palmerston* has nothing vital to add to what we already know of the relationship between Queen Victoria and her sometime Foreign, sometime Prime, Minister during the period between her accession and his death in 1865. Mr Connell has, however, had access to the papers at Palmerston's home at Broadlands and, together with the archives at Windsor, has made good use of them in filling out the story of the lively dialogue between these formidable characters.

They were formidable because both had an immense capacity for laborious, detailed work; both were deeply acquainted with public affairs, though Palmerston had thirty years acquaintance with them before Victoria's arrival on the scene; both were immovably convinced of the rectitude of their views; both had great influence over the affairs of Great Britain at the moment of its supreme influence in the world. Palmerston was tricky, Victoria violently prejudiced; these faults enabled each to catch the other at a disadvantage from time to time; but the dialogue smooths out occasionally when the complexity of home and foreign affairs finds the two almost reluctantly on the same side.

The correspondence is almost uninterrupted as Palmerston was in office for 21 out of these 28 years and there can have been a few days when some sort of communication did not pass between them either in Victoria's illegible scrawl or Palmerston's copperplate. It is difficult, in the days of telephone and typewriter, to understand how this enormous mass of personally penned documentation was only one facet of the very full lives of two such abundant though contrasting personalities.

Two points of contemporary interest emerge from this admirably presented debate. We may be moving into a period in which party alignments are as muddled as they were after the Repeal of the Corn Laws; and we may once again have a queen with the immense influence derived from long years of uninterrupted office.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

ASIA IN THE BALANCE, by Michael Edwardes; Penguin Books; 3s. 6d.

Mr Edwardes tells us in his Preface that his aim in this book has been to 'supply a background both to the events in Asia and to those attitudes and actions of Asian politicians which so often seem without reason', and for this purpose he has attempted to 'show something of the historical, social and religious pressures which have influenced them'. He gives a survey of the present situation in Asia, both in Japan and South-East Asia and in China and India, and shows how past history has made it difficult, if not impossible, for these different

people to adapt themselves to western democracy and how democratic government is in danger of failing, as it has already done in China and in other countries, not least India, as well. His analysis of the situation in India is not optimistic, but it certainly contains a great deal of truth, and one gets the impression that he is equally accurate in regard to the other countries concerned.

The weakness of his book is that, in spite of his good intentions, he sees everything too much in political terms. He never seems to grasp the reality of the culture which still exists in Asia and which was responsible for the whole structure of Asian life. Thus he begins by denying that such a thing as Asia exists. If one is talking in political terms, of course this is true, but to deny the underlying unity of Asian culture, a unity at least as great as that of Europe, is to fail to see the deepest element in Asian history. In the same way he denies that India is a unity, and this again is to fail to see the most fundamental thing in Indian history. India may owe what political unity it possesses to the British rule, but the cultural unity of India goes back to its earliest days. Already in the ninth century Sankara could place four monasteries in the four corners of India in order to establish his doctrine throughout India, and this only reflects a cultural unity which goes back to the time when the Aryan peoples penetrated from north to south of the peninsula.

This may seem to be labouring a small point, but it is really fundamental. The crisis in Asia, as in Africa, today is due to the conflict between the European way of life with its system of democratic government and industrial technique with the ancient cultures, Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic, of Asia. Though the religious element in these cultures may be suffering a severe setback, it remains the basis, cultural, social and above all psychological, of their way of life, and the future of Asia depends on the way in which these ancient cultures can learn to come to terms with the modern west.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

THE CONCEPTS OF AESTHETICS, by D. J. B. Hawkins; Aquinas Paper No. 36; Aquin Press; 2s.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CISTERCIAN DE ANIMA, by G. Webb; Aquinas Paper No. 37; Aquin Press; 2s. 6d.

As their titles indicate, these papers belong to different disciplines; Dr Hawkins's is philosophical, Fr Webb's historical. The Aquinas Society of London, for which they are published, exists to study Thomism and its bearing on contemporary problems, but has always understood this purpose broadly enough to include such historical study of cultural 'background' as is represented by Fr Webb's account of twelfth century theories of the soul.

Dr Hawkins's paper falls into three parts: a definition of beauty in general ('pure formal beauty'), and considerations on beauty in art and in nature. To define beauty Dr Hawkins uses Kant's argument in the *Critique of Judgment*,