

an odd judgment on page 57 that 'In Anglo-Saxon monasteries classical literature was condemned as idolatrous'. There is some genealogical confusion on page 127: Isobel Despenser's second husband was not the 'King-maker', Earl of Warwick. She first married Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Worcester (as stated), and second, by a queer chance, another Richard Beauchamp, this time Earl of Warwick. It was the King-maker's union with Anne Beauchamp, daughter of this second marriage, which brought him the Despenser patronage of Tewkesbury.

We feel that 'the record of human life' embodied in our churches, which the author wishes to decipher, would have been made more vivid by the wider use of historical documents, such as manorial rolls. So, too, more could have been said of the actual religion, the currents of devotional practice, which after all chiefly explain the why and how of church building. In the survey of the types of people—monks, pilgrims, minstrels, and the rest—who used the churches, one would like to have seen a section on anchorites who were important in their time, and have left their scattered marks about the country. But on the whole this is an attractive book, well adapted to interest the 'general reader' in an old church and the men who made it.

ADRIAN HASTINGS

**THE GREAT MANTLE.** *The Life of Pope Pius X.* By Katherine Burton. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.)

It is to be hoped that this life of Blessed Pius X will have a wide circulation among English people. It reveals in a simple and straightforward way the fascinating story of one of the most holy Popes of modern times. The Church has indeed been blessed with very great men who have been elevated to the Papacy in these latter days. The reviewer recalls the conviction of holiness that was shown by the faithful at the tomb of Benedict XV. In the case of Pope Pius X that conviction was very evident even in his lifetime. All who saw him were conscious of his deep penetrating gaze into the souls of men as he raised up his hand to demand silence, fearful lest honour should be paid to anyone but his Master.

Katherine Burton has given a moving picture of a most remarkable man. In telling the simple facts of his life, she reveals the wonderful ways of God who raised up the boy, schooled in the hard discipline of poverty in a small Italian village, to be a man who was to be called later to denounce the cruel laws of the French Government; to give to French Catholics a programme from which they have never looked back; to see through the specious philosophies of the time and bring back the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas; to revivify the whole spiritual life of the Church with the practice of frequent communion and a dignified liturgical worship.

The story of his life reveals a character that never changed. He loved poverty and he loved the poor and the distressed. As a boy he would walk barefoot to school to save leather, only putting on his shoes when near to the village. As a country priest he would give all away. As a Cardinal he would himself try to dye his sash the right colour to save money! As Pope he continued a life of poverty and simplicity and had no interest in any other way of life. He hated display and would have liked to have arrived at Venice on his appointment there 'locked in a suitcase'.

It is to be hoped that this absorbing life of the newly beatified Pope may in turn help to hasten his canonisation.

C. M. DAVIDSON

THE YORK CYCLE OF MYSTERY PLAYS. A Shorter Version of the Ancient Cycle. Edited by J. S. Purvis. (S.P.C.K.; 7s. 6d.)

This summer, in connection with the Festival of Britain, and under the able direction of Mr Martin Browne, the York Mysteries have had their first performance since 1569. It has not been possible to revive the original form of production, in which the craft guilds exhibited the scenes allotted to them on wooden 'pageants' or wagons, at twelve successive stations throughout the town; Mr Browne has fallen back on the medieval French method, by which all the localities are represented by different points on a single stage, and for his stage he has the ground in front of the ruined St Mary's Abbey. This book is the modernised and reduced text employed for his production. Twenty-nine plays only out of forty-eight have been included; however, by concentrating on those central portions of the cycle dealing with the Incarnation and the Passion, the editor has preserved unity of dramatic effect. His task has been made easier for him by one of the peculiar characteristics of the York Cycle: the simple dignity of theological exposition with which it handled the sweep of cosmic history from Creation to Judgment.

In modernising the language Dr Purvis has acted with judicious restraint, adhering as closely as possible to the forms and syntax of his original; he is not afraid of leaving unpolished the clichés and tortuosities of Middle English alliterative verse; likewise, he rejoices when he can preserve some vigorous Northern idiom which rings down the centuries with a note of contemporaneousness:

*Attolite portas, principes!*

*Open up, ye infernal potentates.*

His version is thus a faithful mirror of the original. Modern criticism has tended to dwell upon the sharp contrasts in medieval religious drama between the crude realism of some scenes (e.g. the Scourging, the farcical scene between Herod and his wife and butler, or parts of the