

PORTRAIT OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL. By G. H. Cook. (Phoenix House; 12s. 6d.)

CATHEDRALS AND HOW THEY WERE BUILT. By D. H. S. Cranage. (Cambridge University Press; 8s. 6d.)

The Anglo-Norman nave of Durham invites comparison with the naves of Norwich, Gloucester, Ely and Peterborough. That it surpasses them is mainly due to the happy alternation of compound with cylindrical piers. The contemporary ribbed vault, too, apart from its interest as perhaps the earliest solution of a structural problem by means of the pointed arch, is more satisfying to the eye than the timber roofs of Ely and Peterborough, or the later ribbed vaults of Gloucester and Norwich. Other outstanding features at Durham are the Transept of the Nine Altars, the Galilee chapel and the lovely central tower; while the rose-window at the east end is interesting as one of the few experiments of James Wyatt's that has really come off. In recent times the re-erection of the Renaissance screen round the feretory of St Cuthbert's shrine by the Dean and Chapter is a notable enhancement and permits the hope that it may be found possible some day to restore Bishop Crewe's organ-screen too and re-erect it in its old position.

*Portrait of Durham Cathedral* is a new study of this noble building. With 73 illustrations, folding plan and several figures, supplemented by 60 pages of text, the author has adequately fulfilled the purpose he has set before himself in the Preface. The claim on the jacket, however, that the book 'presents, in general and detail, a complete portrait of a cathedral', requires modification.

There is, for instance, no mention of the two stone screens (the organ screen and the rood-screen) which once filled the spaces east and west of the crossing, and which must have given to the interior an appearance very different from what it has today. Again, one would not guess from the description how rich Durham was, in pre-Suppression times, in screens, parcloles and woodwork in general, about which, thanks to *The Durham Rites*, we happen to be particularly well informed; and it should, surely, have been noted that Bishop Crewe's handsome organ-case has been largely reconstructed and set up in the south aisle (visible in Pl. 39). A 'portrait' too should give some hint that bright colours on stone and woodwork were not confined to St Cuthbert's shrine (p. 26) but lavishly applied throughout the building, and so correct the impression which is created on the visitor by the interior (as by that of almost any English cathedral) at the present time. It would, in fact, be no bad thing if every monograph such as this could include a view in colour of the interior, reconstructed so as to give a reasonably probable idea of what it looked like in the pre-Reformation period. It is certain that the uninstructed visitor gets no such idea and thinks of the cathedrals as having always been as bare and colourless as they are today. Finally, an illustration of

the supposed portrait-head of Richard de Farinham, the master-mason who supervised the erection of the Transept of the Nine Altars, would have been welcome.

On some points Mr Cook's account conflicts with that of other authorities. Thus, he says that the Transept of the Nine Altars was inspired by Fountains and gives dates showing the priority of Durham. Batsford and Fry, on the other hand, in 'The Cathedrals of England', say that the Fountains monks copied from Durham. According to Mr Cook, the Renaissance organ-screen was put up by Bishop Cosin; but Aylmer Vallance in his 'Greater English church screens' says that it, as well as the organ-case, was put up by his successor, Bishop Lord Crewe. Quoting from *The Rites of Durham* Mr Cook says that the Nevill screen was made of 'Caen stone': whereas Harvey in 'Henry Yevele', and Batsford and Fry (*op. cit.*) say of 'Dorset clunch'.

The book is intended for the non-specialist but the specialist too will be grateful for so complete a collection of photographs. It is regrettable that these have lost some sharpness in the process of reproduction and that the shadows are, in general, opaque. In future volumes of the series this may, perhaps, be remedied.

The title of Dr Cranage's book, *Cathedrals and how they were built*, is rather misleading, since it inevitably suggests a comprehensive and detailed study of a very large subject. Actually, the book consists of a few rambling reflections of the main problems that confronted the builders of Gothic cathedrals, and on the steps which they took to solve them. The ground has been covered often before, as the useful bibliography (pp. 36, 37) shows, so that the necessity for going over it again is not obvious, especially since the layman, for whom the book is intended, will find at times some difficulty in following the author's explanations. Thus, the descriptions of the groined vault (p. 18), of lateral pressure (p. 19), and of 'plough-share' vaulting (p. 22) are far from clear. Of the figures too, nos. 1, 12 and 19 require more detailed notes in order to make them comprehensible; the drawing of no. 10 leaves something to be desired; in the lower of the two figures it is impossible to tell whether the transverse arch is meant to be stilted or not. The twenty plates are well chosen and good. In spite of shortcomings, this book will have justified its publication if it succeeds in imparting to others some of the author's own enthusiasm for his subject.

W. A. HEURTLEY.

FOUNTAINS ABBEY: THEN AND NOW. By Arthur E. Henderson, F.S.A. (S.P.C.K.; 2s. 6d.)

This brochure forms one of a series by the same author dealing with some of the great medieval churches of England. Photographs depicting the building in its present state are faced by drawings showing a conjectural restoration of approximately the same portion of the fabric. There is a brief introduction and a descriptive letter-