

OPINIO COMMUNIS

ALWAYS, always with their scalpels finely dissecting,
 The theologians, brown, black-and-white and black,
 Moving from refectory to choir, from garden to library,
 Bespectacled, sharp-eyed, discursive or silent,
 The teachers of sacred youth or the pontifical consults:
 These carve the rough diamond of the Corpus Doctrinae.

They cannot tell us much, these subtle geometers:
 'Non subest', they say reflectively, 'experientiae',
 And work on patiently at their chiaroscuro,
 Only hinting at the green leaves on the other side of the river.

Some fragmentate themselves with their own explosive
 (Hermes and Lamennais and the Old Germans),
 Or fall beneath the steam-hammers they control remotely:
 And one sheds a tear for them because one knows those cliff-edges
 Where they stood till they hurled themselves off with a desperate
 gesture.

But others cast white-hot ingots from the furnace,
 Laughing exultantly as they wield their hammers:
 They are the Master-Mariners,
 And their hand on the tiller is firmer than Ulysses' coming from Troy:
 They are the Flagship
 Which, proudly crest-riding, pennant unfurling,
 The trim battle-squadron lead shall to the Western Isles.

GARETH EDWARDS

REVIEWS

ROBERT GROSSETESTE. Scholar and Bishop. Edited by D. A. Callus.
 (Oxford, Clarendon Press; 42s.)

Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was the most dominant scholar as well as bishop in thirteenth-century England. He had been Chancellor of the new University at Oxford and was perhaps the true founder of its greatness. He had played a crucial role in the development of the English Friars. Simon de Montfort had venerated him; he had been respected even by Roger Bacon. He was never to be completely forgotten, but it is only recently that medievalists have come to realize the formative nature of his influence on so many movements in medieval thought—theology, philosophy, Greek and Hebrew studies