

MEDIEVAL MONASTERIES AND MINSTERS. By H. Ernest Roberts. (S.P.C.K.; 12s.6d.)

The fact that much has been written of late on English monasteries suggests that interest in this fascinating subject is still strong. Here we have a useful and pleasantly produced book with some attractive illustrations depicting the principal features of a monastic house. The book consists of a short introduction dealing with the various Religious Orders and the parts of a medieval monastery as illustrated by Chester, an unusually complete example. The remainder of the text is devoted to county lists of England and Wales arranged alphabetically. As is almost inevitable in a work of this sort various inaccuracies may be detected. Horton, Dorset, though founded in Saxon times as an independent house, became a cell of Sherborne in the twelfth century. Bisham 'Abbey' is a medieval manor house which was quite distinct from the adjacent Austin Priory, of which nothing now survives above ground. The visitor to Thetford will find no traces of the Austin Friars' house and the same applies to Wendling, Norfolk. On the other hand there are interesting remains of the Carmelite friaries at Burnham Norton and King's Lynn, Norfolk, and extensive foundations at Hempton in the same county. At Mottisfont, Hampshire, the principal remains are those of the church and include the stone pulpitum *in situ*. As so often in non-Catholic publications relating to monasteries it seems to be tacitly assumed that such institutions are entirely of the past and there is nothing to suggest that the same ways of life are in existence here today. It is surprising to find all reference to the Hospitallers and Templars omitted. Catholics will hardly be prepared to endorse the statement that 'the Church has regained possession of' Glastonbury. E.T.L.

LE MYSTERE DE LA GROTTE. By Pilamm. Premier Album de 'La Bonne Nouvelle'. (Casterman; n.p.)

ANGELS AT HOME. By Sister Mary Ansgar, O.P. (Bloomsbury Publishing Co.; n.p.)

*Le Mystère de la Grotte* is the first of four books of 'La Bonne Nouvelle', told in pictures. It takes us from the Annunciation as far as the first miracle. This book from France, beautifully printed, makes a refreshing change from the usual run of children's religious illustrations. A little reminiscent of Walt Disney perhaps, but none the worse for that if the child's interest is aroused, as it surely will be by these imaginative and original pictures.

Sister Mary Ansgar's drawings, on the other hand, are very much what we are accustomed to, but they have a clean line and children will enjoy painting them to hang in their bedrooms.

S.M.F.