

of some hostess, a critic no less fine than himself and far more competent—Arthur Balfour—sketched an impression of Victoria as her ministers saw her. 'The fancied figure of fun dissolved like some effigy cast in snow. . . .'

Most readers will find themselves turning for a second time to the intensely interesting essays which deal respectively with Disraeli and Gladstone. Where Disraeli is concerned Mr Cecil considers that we are faced with a mystery which is fascinating if only because it is ultimately inscrutable, while in the case of Gladstone he is substantially in agreement, it would appear, with Lecky's verdict—'an honest man with a dishonest mind'. And yet, at any rate for one reader, it is Gladstone who remains the more mysterious of the two. For, as Disraeli liked to point out, Gladstone could not write, and thus we are denied this window into his personality. Disraeli, however, could do so, and, as one considers his prose style, one wonders whether Lecky's judgment, transposed and transferred, is not as good an answer to the Disraelite mystery as we are likely to get on this side of the grave.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

A HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES. Vol. II. The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East. By Steven Runciman. (Cambridge University Press; 42s.)

In his second volume Mr Runciman takes the Crusading story from the aftermath of the capture of Jerusalem to its recapture by the Moslems under Saladin. As in the previous volume, the author has mobilised all the original sources, Eastern and Western, and the scene depicted runs from the boundaries of Persia to the distant shores of England and France. Over this enormous field Mr Runciman's scholarship moves clearly, accurately and fully, omitting no event of importance, yet never sinking into a monotonous catalogue of ill-related facts. Indeed, amid so much that is admirable, what is perhaps outstanding is his skill in focusing upon Palestine events occurring in Rome or Byzantium, Hungary or Georgia, without ever losing the sense of their relative importance to the brilliant, bellicose life of the Crusading states. Only the complex relationships of the Moslem emirs and atabegs of Asia Minor occasionally confuse the reader, and these would be less confusing if the maps were more numerous and detailed.

The picture he draws is immediately depressing, but not surprisingly so, as it is of the breakdown of the first great common enterprise of the West. The feudal disunity of twelfth-century Europe, transferred in microcosm to the cross-roads of the world, could not hope to maintain itself when once Saladin had united against it its many rabid enemies. The mismanagement and factiousness of the Crusaders is very depressing, and still more so is the vulgarity and intolerance they showed to the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church. They fatally weakened the former and

were a hateful encouragement to schism in the latter. These were the two greatest disasters in the Middle Ages. Mr Runciman does well to emphasise these points. Some encouraging facts emerge: first, that the disastrous effect of Latin parochialism are at last being realised; secondly, that, even in those distant centuries, many Franks proved that East and West can live harmoniously together; and lastly, because, though the Crusading purpose failed, it was a symptom of that revival of Western genius and enterprise which was later to dominate the world.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

THE GLASGOW STORY. By Colm Brogan. (Frederick Muller, 15s.)

There is a cosy tradition in English topographical writing which inclines the pessimistic reader to pause before a 'portrait' of a town or of a slab of countryside. Glasgow, however, is neither cosy nor English; and Mr Brogan is known as a satirist who is happier with vinegar than with oil. But in writing of his own city he has found a new and brilliant vein. He is as impatient as ever of the bogus, but confronted with the vast human heart of Glasgow he forgets to be smart, and his book is both generous and perceptive.

A belated review can therefore salute the deserved success of this sustained love-story, which tells of the growth of a city not simply in terms of commerce and municipal government (though the facts are here and are shrewdly assessed) but with a constant awareness of the men and women who made and make it what it is. 'The Problem' of Glasgow is a conflict of race and religion—the Kirk and the Catholic Chapel, Rangers and Celtic—and Mr Brogan, without attempting the clinical impartiality of the social surveyor, is just in his analysis. He places in a fair proportion the multiple factors of a society that has suffered more than most from the vested interests of human folly.

Witty, warm and unfailingly good-tempered, *The Glasgow Story* is much more than a municipal song of praise, and even those who have never taken a tram to Anniesland or who have never savoured the architectural wonders of the University will read Mr Brogan's book with the attention and admiration that must be evoked by writing that is so plainly motivated by knowledge and love.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Herbert Agar. (Collins; Brief Lives series; 7s. 6d.)

In a short biography such as this only the salient facts of a great man's life can be assembled, and this has enabled Mr Agar to concentrate on the deep strands in Abraham Lincoln's character. The main impression one gets is of a deeply thoughtful man who was, consequently, essentially humble, who never took decisions without tremendous heart-searchings