

German writers have an irritating habit of producing large volumes of penetrating analysis and calling the result a *Versuch* or *Einführung*. But it is genuine modesty and a truly scientific spirit which leads Dr Marbach to devote over 400 pages to an *Aufriss des Mittelstands* at all, and it is very properly and patiently occupied largely with *problems*. For this is almost the first attempt to deal with the subject preparing the way for a definition, critically examining the views already put forward, distinguishing the social groups and determining the diverse types of the middle classes. Not the least of our grounds for confidence in this guide is the determination with which from the beginning he rejects the identification of the social with the natural sciences. Thunder, lightning, smoke and fog, must be examined by other methods and from a vastly different standpoint than those applied to the great social realities of conscience, law and right.

EDWARD QUINN

THE FORMAL DISTINCTION OF DUNS SCOTUS. By M. J. Grajewski, O.F.M. (Catholic University of America, Philosophical Series, Vol. XC. \$2.25.)

With the exception of St Bonaventura the great Franciscan thinkers have attracted too little attention in recent years. The revival of interest in Duns Scotus is therefore a welcome change, and Dr Grajewski is to be congratulated on his very lucid exposition of one of his chief contributions to philosophy, the exact nature of the formal distinction. His treatment of the difference between it and the real distinction is clear and admirable, and he has also succeeded in showing the metaphysical, psychological and theological implications of the subject, although his treatment of these is necessarily summary, particularly in regard to the Godhead and the Trinity. A fuller discussion of this last problem would be desirable even within the limited scope of a thesis for the doctorate. The weakest part of the book is, however, his section on the historical background, for his discussion of Duns Scotus's forerunners is both sketchy and haphazard. It is difficult to understand why relatively obscure thinkers like John of Berwick and Adam of Lincoln, whose views are anyway only known through certain notes in a Cambridge manuscript, have been mentioned when John de la Rochelle, Eudes Rigaud and Pec-ham have been omitted. The same is true of the treatment of the secondary sources. Dr Grajewski obviously knows his material, but his refusal to use Dr Schmaus, and Dr Harris and Fr Longpré's general work on Duns Scotus has made it more difficult for the general reader to familiarise himself with the subject. Also, the almost tabular arrangement of the different chapters, whilst making for clarity, does not conduce to easy reading, and the frequent use of the uncommon preposition 'anent' is somewhat irritating. Dr Grajewski has, however, made one reader understand the importance of the formal distinction in philosophical thought, and wish for a fuller treatment of

an important subject than was possible within the limits of a dissertation limited to defining and clarifying its meaning. D. L. DOUIE

THE ENGLISH LANDS OF THE ABBEY OF BEC. By Marjorie Morgan. Oxford Historical Series, No. XVI. (Cumberlege, O.U.P.; 10s.)

This volume admirably maintains the tradition of sound scholarship established by the series to which it belongs. It provides a valuable companion-study to the late R. A. S. Smith's book on *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, published in a parallel Cambridge series. If its appeal is primarily to the economic and administrative historian, it has scarcely less interest for the student of monastic institutions. Miss Morgan's survey of the relations of the Abbey of Bec-Helbourn with its English dependencies throws new light upon the history of that *Ordo Beccensis* which was left behind as a kind of sediment when the spiritual or intellectual grandeur of the age of Lantranc and Anselm had departed. It was to avoid incorporation in the provincial capitular system established by the Fourth Lateran Council that Bec organized her dependent priories under the supreme control of the abbot of the Mother-house, and of a general chapter with disciplinary, legislative and financial powers, and prescribed for all the same statutes, liturgical observances and distinctive white habit.

The 'order' never rivalled in fecundity Cluny or Citeaux. Four small conventual priories were eventually established in England but they remained stunted and sterile growths. For the rest, the English possessions which accrued to Bec through the piety of the Norman conquerors had another *raison d'être* than to supply her with a revenue. They formed a group differing in many respects from the normal Benedictine estate, and exemplifying in an exceptional degree the interplay of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Miss Morgan's general conclusion is that centralised control and continuity of administration failed to impose a uniform pattern on the widely scattered manors. Yet the Bec estates reflected the main trends of contemporary economic development. There, as elsewhere, the 'boom' period of the thirteenth century saw a tendency, wherever conditions were favourable, to an intensification of demesne-farming, with its concomitant of increased villein obligations, and its inevitable sequel of litigation, conspiracy and open revolt. The fourteenth, by contrast, saw the beginning of a process of disintegration, marked by the progressive development of leasing which was adopted by Bec as a settled policy in 1379. Here, however, other than purely economic factors were at work, for in 1295 there had begun the great campaign against the 'alien priories', which was to culminate in 1414 in their formal suppression. The break-up of the English estates of Bec was, as Miss Morgan shows, a process lasting more than a hundred years. Two of the conventual priories obtained charters of denization and ended their days as independent houses. The rest of the abbey's possessions were gradually absorbed, in the course of the fifteenth century, by English monasteries and colleges—prominent among them Henry IV's foundations of Eton and King's, and Edward IV's chapel of St