

not, of course, what it sets out to be; for it is described, modestly, as 'An interpretation of English architecture since the Regency'. But in reviewing this field the writer keeps so strictly to his premisses that, in the end, it is these which impose themselves on the reader.

Though he makes a point of seeing it through French eyes, no man knows more about latter-day English architecture than Mr Goodhart-Rendel. We have often been invited to re-assess Victoriana on the strength of its nostalgic or imaginative content—we think of Mr Betjeman carried away by the smell of rotting hymnbooks: but here we are invited to reassess it on the strength of its value as design and composition—as these are understood in the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Fearful as your reviewer is of the possible effect of this book on the architectural lay reader, he would not be so mean as to try and detract from what is in fact an exquisite performance. For however much you may quarrel with what is implied in it, this is the most lucid book on architecture which has come out during the last quarter century.

LANCE WRIGHT

THE MANUAL OF OLAVUS PETRI, 1529. By Eric E. Yelverton, D.D.
(S.P.C.K.; 15s.)

The main interest of the Manual, here edited in an English translation with a learned introduction, is that it was the first vernacular Prayer Book to appear in modern times. Olavus Petri was no Cranmer either on the stage of ecclesiastical politics—though he was in many ways a leading reformer in Sweden—or in the sphere of literature, though his *Manual* has had a considerable influence on subsequent Swedish liturgical books. It was, however, unknown to Cranmer.

Olavus Petri was an early disciple of Luther and he studied theology at Wittenburg. Luther's teaching was decisive and Olavus became one of the pioneers of the Swedish Reformation, which however was brought about for any but purely religious reasons. An examination of his *Manual*, and, with the help of the many extracts provided by Dr Yelverton, of similar books compiled at the time, shows that the principal concern of the reformers was theological rather than liturgical. That liturgical reforms were eagerly desired at the time cannot be doubted, but among the reformers the reason behind that desire was a determination to harmonise the liturgy with their heretical opinion. Over and over again Olavus Petri leaves the shell of the ancient rite—for fear of upsetting the people—and by a slight change here and a suppression there produces a nice 'evangelical' document. It is all very sad. So many of these men were able, had the good of ordinary people at heart, and yet because they had broken with the See of Peter they went sadly astray and drew whole nations after them. They destroyed the Faith, once delivered to the saints, and evacuated the liturgy of all but a moralistic significance.

Dr Yelverton's book is a model of scholarly editing and he has made available a uniquely interesting document. The only lack is the absence of a general index.

J.D.C.

THE ENGLISH VILLAGE. By W. P. Baker. (Oxford: Home University Library; 6s.)

This little book is said to be 'intended for all those—whether they live in town or the country—who wish to understand village life today'. It must be said that, if this be its object, it fails to give any vital knowledge of country life to those who do not themselves live it. The study of the rural village has been attempted many times of late. We have Young's *Portrait of a Village* (1937), *The Changing Village* of F. G. Thomas (1939), *The Village Surveyed* (Arnold, 1949), and several factual works based on that mass-observation which Booth in London and Rowntree in York have made familiar, not to speak of the many contributions in such papers as *The Countryman*, but the present work adds little to our understanding, and the realities of the present situation are given insufficient consideration. The fact is that, with few remote exceptions, the village of today has been so urbanised by modern transport, wireless, newspapers, television and the like, to which must be added the closing of so many village schools, that, apart from the tourist, aesthetic and antiquarian interest, the problems of modern village life are not very distinguishable from those of the smaller market towns. This disappearance of what was once so different a society from the urban one is insufficiently emphasised in Mr Baker's book.

We turn with interest, particularly, to those chapters which are concerned with the undoubted decay of religious observance and belief in rural (as in urban) areas. In Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon there are over two hundred Anglican churches to five Catholic. The author speaks of the 'spectacular' decline in church-going and says that 'many of our country churches are nearly empty Sunday after Sunday' and that it is 'difficult to say whether the decline in the villages is greater or less than in the towns'; thus challenging the assertion often made that the habit of worship has lingered on in rural areas more markedly than in urban areas.

He thinks that 'the lovely buildings' and 'the magic of the bells' gives the Church (of England) 'a better opportunity of recovering its lost influence in rural England than have the Nonconformist Churches'. 'The Roman Catholics', he writes, 'in most parts of England tend to confine their church building to the towns and ask their members in the villages to attend Mass in the nearest town'; he neglects, or has never heard of, our Mass centres and the farms and manor houses so often used in country districts for Mass.

HENRY SLESSER