

the curious fact that domestic familiars were a peculiarly British aberration. Spain, however, provides a surprise, and the interesting point is very clearly brought out that it was here that the Church first deliberately worked to discredit a belief in witchcraft as a magical power, and was so successful that 'from 1614 onwards witchcraft practically disappears from the formal religious courts of Spain.' And there is much else of interest.

It may be doubted, however, how far it is possible to tell the connected story of witchcraft, however able and informed the treatment may be in detail, whilst ignoring so much. For the machinery of diabolism is largely that of the palaeolithic cults, crossed with that tradition of Egyptian magic which recurred constantly in the history of the Mediterranean. To leave out consideration of either makes much of the data inexplicable. Witches and fairies were often spoken of in the same breath, and finally decline together into folk-lore on the one hand and the excesses of psychical societies and soul-sick degenerates on the other. But neither contemporary witchcraft, as folk-lore, nor nineteenth-century diabolists and their followers, are dealt with. Contemporary evidences of the witch, both as parodist of Christianity and repository of traditional magic, in Africa, Haiti and elsewhere, are not mentioned at all.

So that in this sense Mr. Williams's book remains incomplete. Yet it is always distinguished and scholarly, and, which is a major virtue, the treatment is not a sensational one.

PENNETHORNE HUGHES.

### MEDIAEVAL STUDIES

THE WRITINGS OF ROBERT GROSSETESTE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN, 1235-1253. By S. Harrison Thomson. (Cambridge University Press; 21s.)

Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was undoubtedly one of the most eminent masters in thirteenth-century Oxford. As professor and as chancellor he took a prominent part in the events of university life; as Bishop, he enriched the University with new regulations and confirmed its foundation. His interests were many-sided; in addition to numerous sermons and other pastoral and devotional writings both in Latin and in Anglo-Norman, he translated works from the Greek, commented on the Bible, on Aristotle, and on the Pseudo-Dionysius, and composed treatises on philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and the natural sciences. Some of his writings are lost or untraced, while others, as often happened with famous mediaeval

writers, were wrongly ascribed to him. His influence was beneficial, wide and lasting, not only on the Franciscans, to whom he lectured from 1229 or 1230 to his election to the see of Lincoln in 1235, but also on the whole University and on the world of learning at large.

Yet, to appreciate duly the extent and versatility of Grosseteste's learning, as well as its significance, it is of primary importance to trace all his writings and to distinguish the authentic from the doubtful or spurious. This preliminary and laborious task has been undertaken, and carefully achieved, by Professor S. Harrison Thomson, of the University of Colorado. In search of Grosseteste's works he visited over 140 libraries and consulted about 2,500 manuscripts scattered over Europe. The result of these investigations is now embodied in the book under review.

Grosseteste's authentic works as listed by Professor Thomson, besides a collection of letters, sermons and *Dicta*, number 120. Eleven others are lost or untraced, while ten are doubtful and sixty-five spurious. The authentic writings are comprised under the headings: translations from the Greek, commentaries, philosophical and scientific, pastoral and devotional, miscellaneous and Anglo-Norman works. This division is not arbitrary. Obviously, some overlapping is inevitable; certain items escape strict classification; but, it seems the only logical and practical way of classifying such a large bibliography as Grosseteste's. On the other hand, I doubt whether all the items have been entered in their right class; why, for instance, has the *Hexaemeron* been included under the philosophical and scientific works, and why have the commentaries on the Pseudo-Dionysius and the *Notula super Epistolam Johannis Damasceni de Trisagion*, which are strictly theological, been grouped under the philosophical?

The most important problem throughout, as Professor Thomson observes, is that of authenticity. In solving it he does not neglect internal evidence, the testimony of bibliographers or citations in early writers, but he relies mainly on palaeography in which his skill is well known. However, by over-stressing this argument it seems that here and there he has been misled. Thus in the case of the *De Anima* (p. 89), if he had pondered its close dependence on Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de Bono*, he would surely have denied its authorship as flatly as he rejects that of the *Summa Philosophiae*. I have discussed the matter fully in another connection (See: *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, I [1941] 105-127), so I will not labour the point here. And since 'the authenticity of the fragment on the

*De Caelo et Mundo* is bound up with that of Grosseteste's *De Anima* (p. 86), the two works stand or fall together.

We may here note that numerous citations from Grosseteste's commentaries on the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus occur in Rudolph de Biberach's *De Septem Itineribus Aeternitatis*, printed among St. Bonaventure's *Opera Omnia* (ed. Vaticana, VII, 145-196; ed. Vivés, VIII, 393-482). Again, to the list of MSS. of the spurious *De Doctrina Cordis* (pp. 248-249) we must add MS. Pommerfelden, Schlossbibliothek, 40/2919, fol. 3-52.

'In spite of the temerity of the undertaking, dates have been suggested for the composition of many works' (p. 3). Such an attempt is praiseworthy, even though in several cases the indications are too slender to be convincing. As in the case of authorship, it is not wise to generalise about dates; each work must be examined and judged on its own merit.

These remarks are not meant to detract from the value of an accurate and thoroughly useful book, for omissions and oversights are inevitable in a work of this kind. The volume contains a wealth of information, and no student of Grosseteste will be able to dispense with it. Mediaevalists have all incurred a debt of gratitude to Professor Thomson for his patient labour and skill, and it is to be hoped that he will continue his work and give us the promised edition of Grosseteste's principal *medita*. The names of his collaborators, Professor Ezio Franceschini, Dr. R. W. Hunt and Miss Ruth J. Dean, are a good omen of scholarly work.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

EUROPEAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE. By Eric Newton. (Pelican Books; 6d.)

If you have thought about painting, European painting in particular, you will probably be already familiar with most of Mr. Newton's analyses and observations. But if you have not thought much about the art and are none the less interested (perhaps even to the extent of occasionally 'sketching'), then this little book may be just what you require. In any case you will enjoy his crisp and sometimes witty writing; and it is always fun to reconsider one's opinions in the light of a clear and charming statement of their subject-matter. Mr. Newton can rouse the intellect without ceasing to be observant and informative. He makes you think, and use your two eyes; and what more should an introducer to the history of painting do, in 125 pages?

The answer is 'nothing'—provided only that he teaches you to look before you think; and that he does not swamp your