

still, there are a few beautiful ghosts on our church walls, a few masterpieces such as the Chichester roundel.

Mr Caiger-Smith has compiled a useful short account of all the surviving frescos that are likely to interest anybody but the specialist. After his introduction, he has discussed these first in a chronological order, grouped as Romanesque, Early and Late Gothic. He has then discussed the major iconographical groupings and finally he has three chapters on patrons and painters, on the destruction of the images and on the materials and techniques employed. There are, in addition, a particularly useful selective list of frescos arranged by counties, a short bibliography and an index. All this occupies only a hundred and ninety pages which are illustrated by one plate in colour and twenty-five in half-tone. This describes the book and must convey the limits of its possible value: it is obviously neither profound nor comprehensive. Nor, unfortunately, is it as good as it might have been even within its scale and intention. Mr Caiger-Smith seems to have no very clear standards of aesthetic appreciation. He can, for example, say of a Virgin and Child fresco that though 'it does not approach the quality of the Chichester Roundel, it is equally interesting because of the kneeling donors beside it'. (I once overheard an old lady at an exhibition say: 'A cat always improves a picture'). This confusion of values suggests the presence of the undigested card-index and indeed that presence haunts us throughout. The book never rises above being a compilation and is never vitalised by any clear or consistent theme. It even suggests a Ph.D. thesis. It is a characteristic of such things that their 'subjects' are isolated and occasional generalisations outside them are often astonishingly naïve. Mr Caiger-Smith makes statements which are inaccurate or highly controversial without the flicker of an eyelid. For example, he describes Romanesque architecture as 'aristocratic and military' and most monks as 'well-born men brought up to think manual labour beneath them'. For the most part, he treats English mural painting almost as if the rest of Europe had never existed. He throws no light on the international sources of these paintings, though at one point, he mentions that Canterbury had 'extensive connections abroad', and that 'the presence of foreign style is not inexplicable'. But 'foreign style' is present in some degree in every stroke of every brush on every wall in Europe, even if it is not always historically explicable. This book is not concerned with an indigenous folk-art but with one manifestation of an international style. English mural painting may have passed into sudden, imposed darkness; but it did not, like the sparrow in Bede's story, also come out of darkness.

ANTHONY BERTRAM

MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LYRICS, edited by R. T. Davies; Faber; 45s.

This is an excellent anthology, because from first to last it has been made with the needs, the interests and the limitations of those to whom it is directed clearly

in view. The experts in Middle English philology can use the collections of critical texts, mostly by Carleton Brown, and if they are drawn to medieval liturgy and hymnody, Carleton Brown's notes will lead them to Chevalier, Dreyes and the Henry Bradshaw Society's volumes. But for the student of modern English literature who wants to go beyond Chaucer and to explore the origins of the Renaissance lyric, such discipline may be forbidding. To the modern undergraduate, coming from school with little formal grammatical knowledge, and generally given none when he arrives in the university, the need to use glossaries and dictionaries is often a total prohibition. The editor has done his utmost to make things easy for such students. Although the notes contain references to the manuscripts consulted, there is no critical apparatus, and modern characters replace the unfamiliar *thorn*, *yok* and *ash*. To the first thirty or so poems Mr Davies appends, on the same page, modern versions, and thereafter he gives glosses of words and explanations of difficult passages where he deems necessary. This has probably involved him in more labour than would have been entailed in the preparation of a formal glossary, and it would be ungenerous here to cavil at this part of the work, which has in the main been well done. Where one is disposed to criticize it, usually one finds that the poem in question—*The Man in the Moon*, for one—has puzzled many other scholars.

The anthology shows an equal attraction to the divine and to the amorous. In that, Mr Davies shares the tastes of many medieval scribes. Today we have no means of judging whether this volume fairly represents the whole body of medieval English poetry. Those of us who regard the lewd and witty poems of profane love which figure here so prominently as mere marginalia to the great corpus of songs inspired by the love of God, of His mother and His saints, may well be allowing the accidents of survival to sway our judgement in the opposite direction.

The editor is not afraid of stating his own opinions and preferences, which makes for interesting reading and should stimulate much comment. One reader, at least, thinks that he has been most unfair to Thomas of Hales's *Love Rume*, both as historical landmark and literary achievement, and that the ballad of the baron's daughter (no. 175) falls a good deal short of being 'a perfect poem'.

The notes preserve a just balance between erudition and factual explanations for the non-specialist, and they contain much valuable information, especially on Scriptural and liturgical allusions. Only occasionally do the works consulted seem to have been inadequate: to cite one instance, the appellation of our Lady as 'Emaus the riche castel', in no. 34, refers not to the Emmaus in Judea where the risen Christ appeared to His two disciples (the source here is Luke 24, 13-14, not Luke 10, 38-39, and neither passage forms the Gospel for the Assumption in the Roman Rite, which is from Luke 1, 41-50), but to Emmaus in Galilee, and to I Maccabees, 3-4.

One must sympathize with the desire, which has dictated the attractive composition of the introduction, not to repel new readers with a forbidding parade

of the many complexities which attend such lucid expositions of medieval themes as are given in the notes, and to provide an account of the whole field as simple as it is informative. Certain topics, however, one could wish to have been touched on or examined more fully. We have some knowledge (not much, it is true) about the sort of music for which some of these lyrics (no. 1, for example, the *cantus beati Godrici*) were composed, and such a general survey as this would have been an appropriate place for an appeal to the musicologists for more help on this matter. Then, too, though the editor laudably refrains from presenting those worn-out theories about the derivation of mediaeval poems of divine love from secular courtly models which are still being repeated in other surveys of the period, his treatment of the origins and development of songs of *amour courtois* is compressed to the point of inadequacy.

But these are all minor criticisms of a book which both beginner and specialist can read with enjoyment and profit. Perhaps its real achievement is to make some of us for the first time aware that the want, which it supplies, of a popular introduction to the wealth of medieval English lyrics has existed, unsatisfied, for so long.

ERIC COLLEDGE

FRUYT AND CHAF, *Studies in Chaucer's allegories*, by B. H. Huppé and D. W. Robertson; Princeton U.P./O.U.P.; 36s.

More recent scholarship has disturbed old generalisations about Chaucer. No one now would repeat epithets like *naïf*, or *unsophisticated*, which were once freely used of him. In fact it was the critics who were unsophisticated when they undertook to estimate and 'explicate' a poet of another age according to the artistic conceptions and conventions of their own. Chaucer has now for some time been established as a highly accomplished artist, precisely aware of the extent of his own use and disuse of the literary principles and devices of his day. Professors Huppé and Robertson go still further and, following the lines already opened up by their earlier work on Langland and on Chaucer himself, attribute to him in this book an even overflowing measure of that 'high seriousness' which Matthew Arnold denied him altogether. In his own words of another he is full of 'hy sentence', of profound and pious meaning.

The two authors have not rested content with Geoffrey de Vinsauf's exposition of the colours of rhetoric; they have pursued their researches into the literary views of the theological, liturgical, and Biblical writers who played as important a part in conditioning the minds of Chaucer's times as the popularising scientists do in conditioning the minds of the men in the street of today. It appears that if their methods of serious exegesis be systematically applied to Chaucer's allegories—this book treats only of the *Book of the Duchess* and the *Parliament of Fowls*—they will yield an almost alarming abundance of instruction.

The book contains a wealth of reference which would certainly seem to