

to pupil (the *via disciplina*). The former is properly the concern of a tiny minority; the latter is everyone's business—to be meted out however with the 'economy' already referred to. Both aspects of science are then distinguished from 'culture', but diversely: the former is more remote, it supplies the materials, so to say, of culture; the latter is an integral part of it. But together they still fall short of culture, for the knowledge they connote is always in the particular, whereas culture is essentially general because it is a training and aptitude for life as a whole. As Ortega characteristically puts it: "General culture". The absurdity of the term, its Philistinism, betrays its insincerity. "Culture", referring to the human mind . . . cannot be anything else but general. There is no being "cultured" in physics or mathematics. That would simply mean to be *learned* in a particular subject'. And culture, he fiercely insists, is no 'ornament' but a strict functional necessity if *human* life is to go on. What then is it? For Ortega it means a certain minimum knowledge (1) of the physical, biological and historical world, and (2) of 'the plan of the universe', of 'how speculative philosophy conceives today its perpetual essay to formulate a plan of the Universe'. The stress on modernity is respectable in the sense that it is reasoned out from a philosophical principle.

Yet it is here, if anywhere, that one senses a vagueness behind the surface logic. For Ortega philosophy is not, apparently, a strict science grounded on reason. He would not, I fancy, uphold a realist noetic, at least not in the metaphysical order. He prefers to speak of philosophy as the possession of those ideas concerning reality which are 'vital' at any given instant. This is to live 'at the height of the times', to be 'cultured'. Very well; but are there really any permanent, 'eternal' truths which transcend time, even if we can only discover and transmit them in time? And if there are such truths how in fact do we take hold of them? It is obvious that Sr Ortega has seen certain truths clearly; it is only doubtful whether his explanation of this fact would be philosophically valid. The question is relevant to his standing as a defender of human culture; even if, without putting this question, we can still delight in the racy vigour of his defence.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

GUTTERSNIPE. By Sam Shaw, with a foreword by Sir Bertrand Watson, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. (Sampson Low; 12s. 6d.)

That 'one half of the world does not know how the other half lives' is so true—and so unfortunate in its consequences—that one should welcome any book which helps to bridge any of the gulfs that yawn between man and man.

This story starts in a Birmingham slum and ends in a Sheffield A.R.P. Wardens' Post, traversing much strange ground in between—including an Industrial School, the farms and coal-mines of Wales, and a sanatorium (the sequel to the mines).

From this material the author writes a most interesting auto-

biography, all the more effective because of the directness and restraint of his style. The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate states in his foreword that Mr Shaw has written 'a most entrancing story which should attract a wide circle of readers'. But apart from the general reader there is much in this of interest to all who are concerned with bettering the lot of our less fortunate brothers. It is a good thing for us all to have a glimpse of what life is like for a child on the edge of starvation and with a drunken father—what it is like to leave the fresh air and healthy (though cruelly under-paid) life of a farm for the horrors of work at the coal-face, driven by economic necessity to continue at a job one detests until failing health prevents one from earning one's livelihood.

His life at the (now defunct) Feltham Industrial School is of more historic value, for the modern Home Office School is a very different thing—and children of 10, without previous convictions, are no longer sent away for six years for selling matches in the snowy streets. But it is as well that the rigour and, at times, brutality of that system of 'reform' for the young offender should be more widely known, for there are still plenty among us who deplore the 'softness' of our present treatment of child delinquents, and advocate a return to former practice. Let them read carefully 'Guttersnipe's' experiences and those of his companions (including a boy of 12, publicly flogged on his bare back for absconding, until the chaplain stopped the punishment because the child had lost consciousness) so that they really understand to what they would have us return.

Dust-jacket 'blurbs' are notoriously eccentric, but in this case one is left guessing. What is meant by this sentence?—'The author writes of the stigma which inevitably attached to this humane system of preventive delinquency and to the victimisation which in the bad old days usually followed'. What on earth is 'preventive delinquency'? Is this a curious misprint for '*preventing* delinquency'? But why should the system be described on the jacket as 'humane', when the whole tenor of the book shows that it is not? These are mysteries which one reader at least cannot solve.

H. GRANT SCARFE

THE CYCLES OF THE KINGS. By Myles Dillon (Cumberlege; Oxford University Press; 10s. 6d.)

The Irish sagas are among the splendours of European literature. In this book Professor Dillon has selected from among them those that have for their heroes the kings and dynasts and legendary characters of Irish history from the third century to the eleventh. He has translated some of the tales anew and has partly translated partly summarised others. His main purpose, he explains, is to serve the general English reader by giving him easier access to a rewarding literature. But the notes and critical apparatus are for students and scholars, and they are precise, suggestive and informative—and, on the whole, conservative. Students of comparative literature will also