

of information, this book attempts first to indicate the common patterns in which human art and science meet, and secondly, and less successfully, to infer a system of ethics, neither utilitarian, that is subsidiary to human experience, nor formal, that is dogmatically imposed from without, in which the self-assertive urge to be an independent urge to be an independent individual and the self-transcending urge to live in and for a nobler unity are matched in an equilibrium that is health for persons and cultures.

Such a summary does scant justice to the range and detail of an argument that restates, in a mixture of the clear idiom expected from Mr Koestler and a murky psychologese that one hopes will be ejected in the sequel to this book, some leading thoughts of Christian philosophy. Thus the natural love within the creature bigger for God than for itself. So also the working concept of *bisociation*, described as a mental occurrence simultaneously associated with two habitually incompatible contexts, which has been hit upon by other writers as the quality of intelligence and given other names, and which reinforces the philosophical importance of analogy. St Thomas himself relates wisdom and play, and the present inquiry begins appropriately with the various forms of the human joke, a recognition of opposites in an identity no physical reflex can explain. From talking *tête à tête* it mounts to the meeting of the trivial and the tragic, which is perhaps the nearest the literary psychologist can get to the mystery of time in eternity.

T.G.

THE CLASSICAL TRADITION. By Gilbert Highet. (Oxford University Press: G. Cumberlege; £2 2s.0d.)

The author, formerly a Fellow of St John's, Oxford, and now Professor of Classics at Columbia University, N.Y., has set himself the task of giving an outline of the way in which Greek and Roman influences have shaped the literature of Western Europe and America. It seems to be the first time a single work has surveyed, even in outline, the whole field though it has been partially covered by three series of publications, the best known being that of the Warburg Institute.

The author holds that the world is the direct spiritual descendant of Greece and Rome and his book is intended to describe that descent. In his conclusion the author points out regretfully that he has necessarily confined himself to literature and what directly concerns it and could not include other currents in the 'majestic stream', the personal experiences of each writer, the course of history, the imagination of ordinary people and the like. He considers the great mistake of many modern thinkers is to believe the past is dead. 'Men die but mankind lives continuously' and 'language is not dead while it continues to convey thought'. He says his purpose is to correct that error as applied to literature

by showing that the history of much of the best prose and poetry of the West is a continuous stream flowing from its source in Greece to the present day and this stream is one current in the continuous spiritual life of Western Europe.

The author has spared no pains to facilitate the use and further the value of his book. His notes, which come after the text and occupy some 140 pages in smaller type, are very informative and often a valuable reinforcement of what is said in the text. He gives a critical bibliography of selected works. The table of contents gives a synopsis of each chapter and there is an excellent index.

Professor Hightet has carried out his immense task in a notably convincing and effective way, and his book should command wide interest and serious attention as an outstanding contribution to the study of literature and just appreciation of the influence of Greek and Roman authors on the course and progress of civilisation. It is not alone that he speaks with great authority by reason of his intimate knowledge of Greek and Roman writers and also of those of greatest importance in the different stages through which literature has passed in the West, but he is eminently reasonable and temperate in his expression of his opinion, notably so when dealing with some possibly contentious matter, and he has the gift of style which makes a very scholarly work distinctly readable and attractive. The importance of a work of this quality and character at this juncture in civilisation is indisputably great.

J. J. R. BRIDGE.

THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN. By Nicholas Berdyaev. (Geoffrey Bles, 1949; 18s.)

The publication in this country of *The Divine and the Human* puts into the hands of English readers one of Berdyaev's latest written and most inspiring philosophical essays. It cannot be said that such a work from such a pen calls in any ordinary sense for review. Those who already read Berdyaev will hasten to acquire this volume; but those who know him perhaps only as a name might well choose this essay as an introduction to his earlier works. In his own terminology, the light shines from the end; and not only are many of the familiar themes of his religious and philosophical thought once again displayed, but their treatment seems to possess a clarity and lightness of touch, almost a diaphanous quality, which serves to illumine the breadth and depth of his peculiar spiritual insight. This essay is concerned with love and death, freedom and immortality. God and man. It burkes none of the painful paradoxes of human life on earth, fear, suffering, evil and war. To each of these perennially torturing problems Berdyaev devotes an enlightening chapter. His argument follows the familiar pattern; setting out from his belief in the necessity of freedom, revolving round the reciprocal need of God and man for each other, and looking towards the final consummation and transfiguration