

book of the Hague Congress). He writes: 'By our combined exertions we have it in our power to restore the health and greatness of our ancient continent—Christendom as it used to be called'; and again as Pius X once said: 'Civilisation has no longer to be discovered, nor the new city to be built in the clouds. It has existed and it exists; it is the Christian civilisation. . . . It is only necessary to keep on founding and rebuilding it on its natural and divine foundations'. Taken together these two comments might provide excellent epigraphs for future writers on Western Union; yet even better would it be if they might be taken as a cue by statesmen of the world before it is too late.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE.

WEST OF THE DECLINE. By Frederick Jellinek. (Alliance Press; 12s. 6d.)

One sure way of making a literary reputation nowadays would seem to consist in forming a circle of friends who are eager to indulge in mutual back-slapping: the pattern can easily be detected no matter what kind of circle is formed, whether left-wing or young Tory, whether Catholic or Anglican. The general public suffers from the lack of intersection between these circles and waits anxiously for a sign from an angry man who is sickened with them all. Mr Jellinek is an angry man, not disinclined to punch offending noses, and he is thoroughly disgruntled with the contemporary economists of comfort. Wearers of the noses which he handles so severely include Crowther, Beveridge, Laski, Koestler, Kingsley Martin 'e tutti quanti'.

A plain statement of fact provides a summary of the book, that there is not sufficient food produced in the world to afford each inhabitant a comfortable, or even an adequate, standard of living. This means that the primary problem is not one of distribution but of production; Jellinek's elaboration of the theme also shows how we Westerners, even the poorest amongst us, have been living upon the backs of slaving Indians, Chinese, Africans, etc. How we are to change the situation is a question which Jellinek scarcely answers, but his vigorous writing certainly helps us to recognise the need for change. It would be a pity if his ungainly literary style were to dissuade prospective readers from learning the lesson which he has to teach.

D. NICHOLL.

KEVIN O'HIGGINS. By Terence de Vere White. (Methuen; 18s.)

Injustice to a people, besides inflicting suffering, is apt to breed tragedy. Too often the injured party not only endures wrongs from its oppressor, but, in its efforts to redress them, becomes itself divided by internal feuds.

There have been minor instances of this in the differences that have arisen amongst the Poles in their struggle against Soviet injus-

tice; and the Arabs too have lost something of their unity as the result of the United Nations' support of Zionist aggression. But it was in the final stages of Ireland's fight for liberation from England's misrule that the tragedy of clashing patriotisms is seen in its darkest colours.

Kevin O'Higgins was one of the many Irishmen who paid with their lives for their convictions, and the penalty was exacted by fellow Irishmen fighting for the same cause. In his life and death is enacted the whole tragedy of the Irish civil war.

Born in 1892, the fourth son of a family of sixteen, O'Higgins studied for a short time for the priesthood, but soon found that he had no vocation. The outbreak of the 1914-18 war found him reading law at the University of Dublin. After a short period of inaction he joined the Irish Volunteers under MacNeill, which later came to be known as the Irish Republican Army, and, though prevented from entering Dublin to take part in the Easter Rising of 1915, he was sent to prison for five months at the beginning of 1918 for obstructing the police and making a seditious speech.

In 1919 he was elected for Queen's County as Sinn Fein member of the newly convoked Dail, and soon became a Minister in the semi-underground Government headed by Cosgrave, and of which Collins was the most influential member.

After the return of de Valera from America at the end of 1920 and the election of a new Dail, negotiations for a treaty with England began. The dispute over the terms of this treaty that was signed by Collins, Griffiths and the other Irish plenipotentiaries—a dispute which quickly developed into civil war—is well known. O'Higgins was one of those who stood by Collins and opposed the anti-treaty movement headed by de Valera, and from that time until his assassination in 1927 he worked incessantly and constructively to develop the terms of the treaty in such a way that Ireland should obtain complete independence without further bloodshed. It is during this period that his outstanding intelligence, his unswerving adherence to principle, and his utter selflessness are seen at their greatest.

Mr de Vere White has accomplished an exceedingly difficult, not to say invidious, task in a masterly way. He has not shrunk from including in his lively narrative of O'Higgins' life those drastic acts of discipline which 'that figure from the antique cast in bronze' never hesitated to enforce, when he believed that the good of his country demanded them; nor has he toned down the imperious spirit and the proneness to scathing criticism that mark the central figure of his book. To have overlooked the characteristics of O'Higgins which contributed greatly to the hatred in which he was held by a section of his fellow-countrymen would not only have distorted the history of those troubled times, but would have falsified the character of O'Higgins himself.

There cannot be many men who, rightly or wrongly, would subordinate their deep affection for a friend to political principle. Yet O'Higgins did not hesitate to take responsibility for the execution of his dearest friend—one who had been best man at his marriage a year before and was destined to be the godfather of his first-born child—when he felt that to do otherwise was to jeopardise the 'welfare and the safety and the freedom of the Irish people'.

Undoubtedly O'Higgins was cast in an heroic mould, yet the stern decisiveness of his nature was but the complement of a constructive mind that was never content to devise policy without ensuring the means of putting it into effect.

Outside the arena of statesmanship, for which he never doubted his vocation, O'Higgins was, as Mr de Vere White has shown, the most lovable of men—light-hearted, humorous, and at the same time utterly loyal and profoundly Catholic.

It is not for an English reviewer to pronounce judgment upon the rights and wrongs of that tragic period of rival expressions of Irish patriotism. Mr de Vere White, an Irishman, in spite of his high admiration for the subject of his book, has given his readers an impartial account of events. He has clarified a momentous piece of history without resorting to advocacy; and in doing that he has at once accomplished a task of vital importance, and paid a memorable tribute to a great Irishman.

R. D. JEBB.

Es.

EDUCATION IN THE FORCES, 1939-46: THE CIVILIAN CONTRIBUTION.

By N. Scarlyn Wilson, M.A. (Evans Bros.; 7s. 6d.)

In a review in *BLACKFRIARS* of *Adult Education: The Record of the British Army*, by T. H. Hawkins and L. J. Brimble, published by Macmillan in 1947, it was observed that no such record could be complete without a consideration of the very large part played by civilians in army education during the 1939-45 war and after. We have had to wait nearly two years since then for a survey of that civilian contribution, and it was well worth waiting for. Mr Scarlyn Wilson had a very difficult job, to degut the masses of material, statistical and other, with which he must have been faced, and to construct therefrom a story that should be coherent and adequate and, as Sir Walter Moberly says in his foreword, the 'narrative combines sobriety of judgment with liveliness of presentation'. It is indeed as refreshing as it is unusual to meet in an educational report an illustration of the possible misleadingness of statistics that tells of an American couple who limited their family to two children because, they had read, every third child born in their State was 'coloured'; or to find Caliban adapted to fit the senior officers present at an R.A.F. lecture—'the aisle is full of big noises'; or to read of the jurisdictions of Command education officers that 'each had to look after an area which anyone save a colonial bishop would have thought excessively large'.