

BLACKFRIARS

the idealist tendency of modern physics, regarding matter as mysterious, to define it as what mind knows, and to consider it as a mere 'aspect or a projection of mind's activity'; the growing demand of biology for a non-mechanistic explanation of the purposive drive of evolution towards higher forms of life; the disbelief in free-will and 'belittlement of reason' arising from psycho-analytic views of instinct.

It is quite clearly shown how these views and tendencies could determine contemporary answers to the traditional questions with which philosophers have wrestled. But the Thought to which this is a Guide is perhaps principally that of scientists doing their own philosophising and of novelists, rather than that of professional philosophers.

It seems scarcely fair to criticise Mr. Joad's own views as presented in a popular work, but his dualism of matter and a sort of Bergsonian life-force is too suggestive of Aristotle not to provoke unfavourable comparison with a theory which would make the potentiality of matter the only limit to the march of evolution, and life an entelechy in continuity with lower entelechies.

A poor index is perhaps the worst feature of this able and fascinating popular exposition.

Q.J.

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS. By Harold Laski. (Allen & Unwin; 7/6).

Here is a stimulating book about the prospect of transition from Capitalism to Socialism under the political conditions peculiar to England. We refrain from the obvious animadversions to be made by an educated Catholic reader. The book is valuable on the positive side. Capitalist democracy rests on the ability to soothe proletarian criticism by more and more concessions. And its final bankruptcy as regards this will be simultaneous with its collapse. We deplore that misnomer 'the Dole.' We are equally conscious of the ease with which Justice is dubbed charity, of the reluctance of charity to submit to the useful expedient of compulsion—of the picturesque but profitable gesture which bids the chauffeur stop the car and give the tramp a lift. These are things whose adequacy capitalist democracy naturally premises. Prof. Laski discusses our pseudo-democracy temperately, but we are moved to the opinion that it is high time the thing were seen in its right proportions. He says some intelligent things about the unbalanced conception of property, and its rights, in our law courts; and he writes in his usual easy, pleasant, clear-headed fashion.

T.P.