

justly calls, 'the first serious attempt to pluck the heart out of Poliphilo's mystery, and to unravel his crabbed symbolism with the methods of modern psychology'.

V.W.

THE OTHER WORLD, ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTIONS IN MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE. By Howard Rolvin Patch. (Harvard University Press; London, Geoffrey Cumberlege; 40s.)

All the other-world schemes, sacred and profane, which Professor Patch's happy erudition has assembled here, are for us, as they are to him, mainly 'the stuff that men's dreams are made of.' At the best they are shades and images of what the Lord hath prepared for them that love him. But generations of Christians, like their oriental and classical predecessors have evoked material settings, casts and properties to stage their paradisaical speculations and symbolise their visions. So in this adventurous piece of scholarship we set out with oriental and classical other-worlds, so on to pre-Christian, Celtic and German folklore, proceed to medieval conjectures and revelations and end with the paradisaical content—there is not much purgatory or hell—of medieval romances. The Romance of the Grail is rightly exhibited as occupying in symbolism the rank that Dante's *Divine Comedy* holds in allegory.

The author has deliberately shelved the impossible task of deciding how much truth there is in any of his material, though he has occasionally suggested the contemporary estimate in which that material was held. The most august vision, that of St Paul, is the least detailed, the most qualified, the most cautious. But what a wealth of colour, shapelessness, sound and perfume goes to make up the lost Edens and anticipated elysiums of lesser men.

H.P.E.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ANCIENT GREECE. By William Bell Dinsmoor. (Batsford; 30s.)

The remarkable civilisation which grew up and flourished on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean during the two thousand years before Christ produced some of the most glorious architecture the world has ever seen, architecture which is unique in the stylistic influence which it has had in other periods throughout Europe and the New World. No serious student of architecture, whether historian or creative designer, can pretend to a true comprehension of his subject without knowledge and understanding of the processes by which the simple and utilitarian buildings of the earliest settlers in Crete developed into the glories of the Athenian Acropolis.

Professor Dinsmoor's book first appeared in its present form in 1927

as a revised and enlarged edition based on the first part of 'The Architecture of Greece and Rome', by W. J. Anderson and R. Phene Spiers, and it is one of the best known works in English on this important period. Its scope is wide, beginning with an account of the fragmentary remains of the Aegean Age and ending with the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman phases; and because the shape of a building is dictated primarily by its purpose, the author does not neglect to sketch in, as background, what he describes as 'the broad views of history, religion and society'. The present edition has been revised to include those results of research available up to 1949.

It is unfortunate that it was not found possible to replace more of the original photographs, many of which have suffered in the re-printing. These contrast sharply with the high quality of the few new ones, particularly those by Mr Hoyningen-Huene.

It is, perhaps, doubtful whether this is the ideal book for that rather vague character 'the general reader'; but for the architectural student, for whom it was primarily written, it is an invaluable and authoritative source of essential information.

DONOVAN PURCELL.

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN AND THE FRENCH CLASSICAL TRADITION. By Wilfrid Mellers. (Dobson; 30s.)

François Couperin has almost always received scant attention or gross misunderstanding at the hands of musical historians. Mr Mellers goes a long way towards rectifying this injustice, and although other writers may add (particularly on the biographical side) or modify, it is certain that this is the first authoritative study, and is likely to remain the most important for a long time. While Bouvet's book was mainly biographical, and those of Tessier and Tiersot were only introductory, this new work considers in detail the whole range of Couperin's music, his position in musical history, and the way in which he manifests particular facets of the social and artistic conventions of his time.

In this last respect this book is of particular value, as an example both to musical and also to social historians, whose recognition of the interdependence of their studies is so often confined to a few glib and misty generalisations. One would not do justice to Mr Mellers by attempting to summarise his views; but consider, for example, this pregnant commentary on the well-known B minor *Pasacaille*:—

'Certainly there is no music which has a more profoundly Racinian quality than this *Pasacaille*, in which the rigidity of a social and technical convention (having reference to accepted standards in social intercourse), only just succeeds in holding in check a passion so violent that it threatens to engulf both the personality and the civilisation of which that personality is a part. Just as we are conscious of Racine's alexandrine holding in control the wayward passion of