

belongs. Such a museum might become the centre of a real revival by showing craftsmanship in action—especially the work of the old lathe, dominated by and not dominating its owner.

More than any hoard of pictures and statues, these platters and bowls, ladles and ginger-bread moulds, tobacco-jars, chess-men and love-tokens exhibit a way of life. It is a life essentially home-abiding. Even the long winter evenings were obviously welcomed for the fireside leisure that gave the home a chance to win back on the exacting fields and enrich itself in its turn. The woodcrafts were moreover ancillary to nearly all the other crafts: to cooking, to weaving, to lace-making as well as to dairying and preserving food. Very little has been overlooked here. The crook and the *shillelagh* are missed among the walking-sticks. A fine account of the maple-wood 'mazer' omits the 'mazard bowl' from which the sin-eater of the Welsh Marches drank when he took over a dead man's trespasses across his coffin. But the folk-lore of 'treen' deserves a book to itself.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.

ENGLISH TOWN CRAFTS. By Norman Wymer. (Batsford; 15s.)

To write up three dozen town crafts intelligently in 124 pages is an undertaking few people could do better than Norman Wymer, who rendered a similar service in his *English Country Crafts*; but only at the sacrifice of detail needed to supplement the excellent Batsford photographs. The superb picture, for example, of a lace-maker's hands adjusting her Pins, merits a paragraph of explanation which is not there. The book is written from the library rather than from the bench, but the author fails too often to see the wood for the trees. 'Way back in the 6th and 7th centuries they (the people of England) might be heard chanting their weird Latin chants that Pope Gregory had brought to Canterbury' hardly indicates the glories of Plain Song; nor is the 'religious fervour' of the early guilds adequately explained by saying that 'the members of these fraternities would stick together through thick and thin, praying for one another's souls on every conceivable occasion, holding masses in homage to their dead, and raising funds to provide the most exquisite funeral palls in their honour'. A craft involves exactness in detail and should be written of in exact language.

H. D. C. P.

INSIGHT AND OUTLOOK: An Inquiry into the Common Foundations of Science, Art and Social Ethics. By Arthur Koestler. (Macmillan; 25s.)

The growth from self-assertiveness to society-service has roots deeper than deliberation, for living processes display tendencies to form wholes apparently closer to the nature of things than any private impulse to kill; indeed parallel motions exist in the organic world. From such principles of integration, illustrated with a wealth

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