

wit; whose wizardry in black and white bespoke a fantasy of colours?

And this offering of his best presents us with a problem as enigmatic as his character itself. For despite his unusual genius Beardsley was by no means generally accepted as the ideal illustrator of books. Mr Walker, in an admirable preface packed with atmosphere, perhaps gives us the clue when he points out that he was no mere hack. All his work was a commentary on the text; all his caricature a commentary on life around him. Was this his job? Certainly contemporaries were shocked, and even today he makes us feel uncomfortable. Can it be modesty? or a sudden defence of charity? Or is it simply that we do not like the truth?

B. BURNS.

WOOD ENGRAVING. By George E. Mackley. (National Magazine Co.; 15s.)

For those wishing to undertake the exquisite but exacting art of wood engraving a teacher is necessary to demonstrate the technique with the actual tools and materials. If the beginner is unable to get to such a teacher then Mr Mackley's book will be of the greatest help in his brave attempt to teach himself. Besides being a good artist the author is also an excellent teacher. So often the expert unconsciously presumes that what is obvious to him is clear to his pupil and so he fails to transfer essentials from his own to his pupil's mind. There are other good books on wood engraving, e.g., by Clare Leighton, John Beedham, John Farleigh, Iain Macnab, etc., but so many have an exasperating habit of being silent just at the point where we need information.

The great advantage of this book is that it is so extremely thorough, explaining, with admirable clarity and conciseness, just those things the beginner wants to know—principles, history, choice of equipment, technique, a chapter on Bewick and some modern engravers, bibliography, a selection of examples of modern work, and even details about societies and exhibitions. He also gives addresses where materials can be obtained. He gives a wealth of those helpful and often essential details which the self-taught artist would take years to discover for himself—if he ever discovered them at all.

G. COLMAN.

THE GUEST-ROOM BOOK. Assembled by F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; 10s. 6d.)

This latest bedside book, 'for highbrows, middlebrows and lowbrows', contains nothing very new, but it has Chesterton, Beachcomber, Alfred Noyes, Eric Gill, Ronald Knox and all of *Murder in a Nunnery*, that delightful fusion of the nunnish and the felonious. It has been tested in exacting circumstances by the present reviewer, and can be recommended as an appropriate gift to all who have to spend their days, as well as their nights, in bed.

I. E.