

vided a clear account of the growth of insistent demands for state aid to the aged.

It is interesting to read that the matter was first brought to public notice and kept there by a clergyman, Canon Blackley, who for the first time receives here the credit which is his due. He held to his views in the face of opposition from the Friendly Societies (what a misnomer !) and the Manchester liberals, incomprehension from the economists like Marshall, and indecision from the Trade Unions. The fruits of his labours, as of those of Joseph Chamberlain, are to be seen in the legislation begun in 1908 and concluded in 1924.

Contributory pensions are dealt with in an equally exhaustive fashion, and commentary and analysis are continued to include the Emergency Provisions Act of 1939 and the new legislation of 1940. The prospective reader should be warned that the book is by no means easy, but it should prove invaluable as a work of reference for all social workers who are called on to make claims for pensioners.

With regard to the wider issue of the changing age distribution and its reaction on the financial burden of the nation, there is an able preface dealing with population trends and budgetary problems by Mr. W. B. Reddaway. Finally, the scope of the work is extended to include a summary of pension schemes in other countries, where one learns of the anomaly that there is a reciprocal arrangement with Eire for the payment of health insurance but not for old age pensions.

JOHN FITZSIMONS.

CHARIOT OF WRATH by G. Wilson Knight. (Faber : 10s. 6d.)

Mr. Knight here shows Milton occupied with a problem of mating power and moral goodness. It was a problem which Milton tried to solve politically and only succeeded in solving poetically. It is a problem which Mr. Knight suggests as facing us to-day and indeed as being endemic in the world, as though ineffectiveness was a weakness to which good men are especially prone. He touches on some new form of alliance between Church—the Roman Church—and State—the British State, as a possible modern solution. But he is more concerned to revive in individuals a sense of royalty which will become for them and so for the nation and the national cause a fount of power. At first sight it might seem strange that he should go to Milton of all English poets for an imaginative awakening in this particular direction. Yet it is convincingly shown that Milton, however furious an adversary of prelacy and of a tyrannical dynasty, was himself desirous of rousing in all Englishmen an awareness of regal worth and capability in their several selves.

This book is a close-pressed heap of Miltonic interpretation, metaphysical and political speculation, historical disquisition and psychological diagnosis. The heap is too closely pressed to make for easy reading, but it is a rich heap. It would be more productive if further

attention had been paid to the nature and origin of the problem itself. It is the presence of certain unresolved and hardly noticed obscurities about the natural power of goodness and the nature of the goodness of power which, while they keep the argument moving and indeed make the scheme of the book into an argument, at the same time cast a shadow on the royal splendour which the author is reflecting in the mirror of Milton.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

BRITISH DRAMATISTS. By Graham Greene. Britain in Pictures Series. (Collins; 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Greene traces the development of drama from Holy Week services and mystery and miracle down to the present day. His presentation is lively, with flashes of brilliance; his judgments are sometimes debatable, as with Otway, for example, and still more; Congreve, but he keeps well to the fore the idea of what drama should be, the expression of the life of a people, and for that reason alone the book forms a valuable introduction to the dramatists themselves such as might well be used in higher form work in schools. The illustrations help: interestingly chosen and reproduced.

One main criticism: 'We confuse the issue when we talk of Shakespeare's greatness as a poet'; but the rest—the action, characterization, accessories—is surely *for* the poetry, the 'extended metaphor', and determined by it; and the reversal of the order is what leads to decay. Mr. Greene might perhaps have made more than he does of contemporary experiments; but is not their importance precisely in this, that they attempt to recover the vitality first of the *word*, and thence, by consequence, of the stage?

G.V.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION by H. G. Wood. (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.)

This book is in the Current Problems Series. The strenuous effort that is called for in order to see and analyse comprehensively the real problems of our times, in the spheres of religion, economics, and sociology, etc., evokes always unstinted admiration when we find the call being answered. Professor Wood attempts in six lectures to assize the relative values of the state 'isms', of science and scientific humanism, and of the unadulterated teaching of Christ, in helping us to form for ourselves an idea of the forces which alone are able, when translated into the concrete, to guide society aright.

We could not quarrel fruitfully with the conclusions to which the author comes. With the general bent of his own religious and intellectual outlook we are in hearty and affective agreement.

Such publications may prove within a small circle a unifying strengthening power, but we cannot help feeling that this effort is too