

Blackfriars.

even by the beginner traces the growth of modern theories from their small beginnings. The first part of the book deals with the material world, and here the fundamental ideas of motion, force, gravity and wave motion are discussed. The second part deals with the atomic structure of matter, and shows how the atomic theory developed from a consideration of the properties of solids, liquids and gases. The structure of the atom itself is the subject of the third part, and from a study of magnetism and electricity, electrons and radio-activity, the electronic structure of the atom is demonstrated. The final section of the book deals with the physics of the aether, in which are discussed the propagation of light, and optics generally. The book concludes with a chapter on the aims of modern physics, with some speculation regarding future developments.

This book will appeal to the non-technical reader, who will find the principles of the science expounded in plain terms and without the use of unnecessary technicalities. And we would specially recommend it to students of philosophy, as providing an admirable explanation of the physical aspect of many problems over which science and philosophy are apparently in conflict.

J.P.M.

PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE. An Essay in Constructive Criticism.

By Leo Richard Ward, C.S.C., University of Notre Dame.
(London : Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1930 ; 7/6.)

This book is an important one, if only because it is a serious effort to present St. Thomas in modern dress to an English-speaking public. It may be hoped that it will at least serve to dispel the illusion that Thomism is so much ado about bygones, and has nothing to say about the problems with which modern philosophy torments itself. To the mere scholastic its modernity may seem something of a scandal. Not only is the medieval Latin of St. Thomas translated into the raciest modern American, but his doctrine is presented according to the approved manner of modern American scholarship. This may jar on conservative tastes ; but it must be humbly acknowledged that Thomism is still inarticulate in the presence of its English-speaking contemporaries, and that no experiment in method, however revolutionary, may be prudently sneered at until proved ineffectual.

Modern American scholarship tends to suffocate itself with thoroughness. Extravagant wealth of quotation is apt to stifle original thought. The extent of Fr. Ward's acquaintance with modern writers, and the ingenuity with which he makes use of

them, are truly astonishing. But he is no mere virtuoso of the card-index. He is a very serious thinker, and a singularly intelligent disciple of St. Thomas. He is fully alive to the fact that the 'problem of value' is largely a verbal one arising from the very ambiguity of the word. Philosophy necessarily begins in the vague—and for that reason a non-committal word like 'value' has its use—but it must not end there. In an opening critique of contemporary contributions to the subject, Fr. Ward shows that for the most part they lead nowhere. It is only possible to be extricated from the initial fog by a clear grasp of the *situation*. In this, modern philosophies of value have failed; and so, more often than not, they conclude in tautologies and despair of definitions. Fr. Ward finds the reason in that 'in current philosophy there is a pervasive jumble of value, valuing, valuation, awareness of value, and values.'

These diverse elements which constitute the 'value-situation' are carefully disentangled, and the second part of the book is occupied with an 'Outline of Constructive Theory.' It is excellently done. Careful to check his progress at every turn by reference to St. Thomas, Fr. Ward constructs his philosophy on the analysis of empiric action. 'Action is the pragmatic proof of value, its demonstration.' This pragmatic line of approach has the advantage of throwing into relief the common-sense of the Thomist philosophy of value; but this advantage is somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that it obscures the full metaphysical setting of value as an *a-priori* postulate of Being. The purely metaphysical bearings of St. Thomas's thought on the subject are but lightly hinted at in the concluding chapter. It would have been illuminating had the author treated at length of the Divine volition as the source of instrumental values, and shown how the common contention of contemporary thinkers that 'value is made by valuing' holds good if transferred from human to Divine valuation. But it is ungenerous to complain of omissions in a work which goes so far in unravelling the most chaotic of prevalent muddles, and we may hope that Fr. Ward will make the more purely metaphysical aspect of the subject the theme of a further volume.

V.W.

THE MIRROR OF THE MONTHS. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. (London: Elkin, Matthews & Marrot, Ltd.; 6/- net.)

This little book, in which the natural characteristics of each month are made to illustrate the mysteries connected with them by the liturgy or Catholic custom, is more ambitious than at first appears. It attempts, indeed, to synthetise the whole