

family likeness to one another, each of which aims at complete clarity and carries conviction as much by the light, almost playful yet incisive probing into its topic, as by formal argument.

This is why Hume the philosopher always remains elusive. It is now nearly fifteen years ago since Professor Norman Kemp Smith taught us that we cannot get near to Hume's mind without appreciating the decisive moral concern in his thinking, and its far-reaching results. The traditional estimate of Hume's work—typified, at its best, by T. H. Green's introduction to the *Treatise*, at its worst by Beattie's attack on Hume during his lifetime—becomes almost irrelevant in this perspective. His work may be described as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his predecessors' mistakes, as a radical challenge to the rationalist tradition in philosophy, or as a springboard for Kant. There is, of course, truth in all these views of his work; but it is not the truth about it. This was perhaps best seen, in his own way, by Rousseau, when he observed that 'He (Hume) has seen from all points of view what passion has let me see only from one'. Professor Mossner's biography is welcome for its insistence on the range and many-sidedness of Hume's interests: for these are the concrete background of the key-concept of his philosophy, that of human nature.

R. A. MARKUS

SCIENCE AND RELIGION: A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP. By C. A. Coulson.
(C.U.P.; 2s. 6d.)

OXFORD'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ORIGINS OF MODERN SCIENCE. By
A. C. Crombie. (Blackwell; 2s. 6d.)

MAN ON HIS NATURE. By Sir Charles Sherrington. (Penguin Books;
2s. 6d.)

Professor Coulson's Rede lecture for 1954 may disappoint admirers of his earlier work. Too much has been left out in these arguments for the similarity of religious and scientific activity; they do not convince as did his Riddell lectures, where differences were not minimized. It is true, for instance, that a theoretical physicist resembles an artist in his need of trained imagination, for otherwise he would not hit upon the theoretical explanation of his observations. But it does not follow that he does 'just what the artist and the poet and the saint are doing'. A scientific theory and a work of art are called 'true' in different senses, since verifying the one is not very like appreciating the other, and this difference is no less important than the similarity between the activities of those who produce them. Even greater caution is needed before trying to assimilate religion. Professor Coulson speaks of having to introduce the 'concept of God' in order to 'do justice to feelings of awe and worship', without realizing that for a historical religion this is not

even a partial truth. The real trouble is that here he lacks the space to clarify his ideas about such fundamental notions as faith and revelation, especially in their relation to natural reason. Perhaps one day he will examine these ideas at leisure in a full-length study; what he has already done is sufficient proof of the interest it would have.

Dr Crombie's brief but vivid sketch of science at Oxford concentrates on the two main periods. He describes first how the studies inaugurated by Grosseteste culminated in the fourteenth-century Merton school, whose importance is only just beginning to be appreciated; secondly, in greater detail, he speaks of that brilliant group of men including Boyle, Wren, and Wallis (how pleasing to find a Dr Ent among their number) whose meetings led eventually to the formation of the Royal Society. It is all done with just that amount of anecdote needed to hold the attention of a British Association audience. Certainly they must have appreciated Dr Crombie's recitation of the passage from *Kubla Khan* with which he illustrated the Poincaré theory of scientific hypothesis that, as usual, ended his talk.

Sherrington's Gifford lectures for 1937-8 have at last been canonized in a Pelican reprint. On the whole his thought has worn pretty well, though curiously enough, it is the philosophy which seems more dated than the science. Great physiologist as he was, he had that feeling for his subject which enabled him to popularize it successfully, and his descriptions still live. But now we have all become more capable of linguistic analysis it is easier to see how many of the puzzles about body and mind which Sherrington constructed for himself were merely due to muddled thinking.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE EARLY IRISH STAGE. The beginnings to 1720. By William Smith Clark. (Oxford, Clarendon Press; 30s.)

Mr Clark's book deals with the history of colonial English drama in Ireland from the beginnings to 1720. It is chiefly concerned with the history of one Dublin theatre, the Smock Alley Theatre, which lasted from 1662 until well into the days of Grattan's Parliament. It was founded by John Ogilby, Wentworth's Master of the Revels in Ireland, and continued, after his death in 1676, under the management of Joseph Ashbury, who nursed it through the troubled times of the Revolution of 1688 and gradually developed it into a Dublin institution, patronized by the Government and extending its activities to the provincial towns.

In its general outlines, this theatre's history follows the lines of the important English theatres of the same period. From these it took its plays, most of its players, and its policy. Anglo-Irish playwrights, such as Southerne, Congreve and Farquhar, used it as a springboard into the