

THE UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE. Reflections on the Universities of Cambridge and London. By George B. Jeffery. (C.U.P.; 3s. 6d.)

Very many University teachers today are uneasily conscious of the problems into which Mr Jeffery probes in this thoughtful little book; they will see their own misgivings reflected in it. Mr Jeffery knows his academic world and is much concerned for its welfare; and, since his intelligence is both strong and discreet, his diagnosis is valuable; though he does not seem to be so sure of the remedy as of the disease. This disease might be described as a lack of intrinsic order; this is not Mr Jeffery's term, but it represents, I think, his meaning. Round the academic bee-hive buzzes a vast swarm of distinct 'subjects'; and the average don is so busy trying to master his own particular bee and get its honey to those who want it and pay for it, that he has practically no time to enquire into the ultimate purpose of the hive. The particular jobs, however, are done pretty well as a rule: and masses of honey are produced. But next to nothing is done to relate the product to the consumers, other than quite superficially. In other words, the knowledge produced by the modern University is not ordered, as knowledge, in a scale of value corresponding to any intrinsic or natural order in the minds that want it; except quite superficially. Whether minds, or knowledge itself, have such an intrinsic order is a question that the system does not seem to presuppose and certainly does not encourage. The result is that those who keep the system going have not really got their hearts in it as it stands; they feel that for all its external efficiency it is inwardly chaotic.

This is a sharper statement than any that Mr Jeffery makes; but it is, I think, borne out by his sober reflections on the history of London University and on his own experience of it and of Cambridge. He traces in fact a process of disintegration; the dividing of knowledge from religion and social life with the loss of the old collegiate system, the multiplication of jealously divided departments, the growth of excessive deference to the 'expert'. A University, he says, must be 'prepared to stand up to its experts'. As to remedies he is tentative; but believes that some more 'philosophy' in the curricula would be an excellent thing. It would indeed.

K.F.

ENGLISH IN EDUCATION. By H. Blamires. (Bles; 10s. 6d.)

The author of *Repair the Ruins* has written on a matter which is still the subject of much discussion. In common with many other people, Mr Blamires believes that the discipline, when it is discovered and put into operation, of English language may eventually fill the gap which is growing larger by the steady withdrawal of modern studies from the Classics. The problem is how to find and still more how to impose the

discipline without destroying a love of literature. Undoubtedly the problem is exaggerated nowadays; it is easy to forget that children like discipline (i.e. just and intelligent control), however much they appear to resent it. It is not the discipline or even the hard work involved in learning poetry that turns the child against it in later life. It is the unimaginative presentation of the work that causes revulsion. This danger did not beset the old Classical discipline; true, there was the spade-work of declensions and conjugations, but if that was done at a sufficiently early age the child was capable of satisfying some at least of his adolescent poetic instincts with Horace, Ovid, Homer and Plato. In the teaching of English the problem is reversed; it is in the fifth and sixth forms that the child's mind is most likely to be fogged and twisted, largely as the result of the efforts to turn him into a little literary critic. Mr Blamires rightly deprecates this and draws a clear distinction between the enjoyment of literature and the criticism of literature. In developing this idea of the enjoyment of literature Mr Blamires comes to the heart of the matter.

The encouragement of pleasure in reading is no hedonistic cult, no art for art's sake doctrine. He explains clearly the relation of literature to life: 'The crying need of our growing generation is not that they should be put on their guard against the tricks by which the cunning play on the emotions of others, but rather that their hearts should be strengthened by the reception of sturdy, unselfish and compassionate sentiments'. It will be obvious that, highly as he esteems the Leavis school of criticism, Mr Blamires suffers no illusions about the limitations of its esoteric teaching. Yet it must not be imagined that Mr Blamires is unaware of the need for linguistic discipline. That is his first postulate: from their earliest years children must be taught to read and use words. If that sounds a superfluous suggestion, ask any tradesman or businessman whether his apprentices can read and write satisfactorily. Mr Blamires has many suggestions to make, though all teachers will ask for more, as to how a child should be made a master of words. But, most important of all, this book does underline the connection between literature and life and therefore does uphold the true nature of Christian education. No doubt many teachers will ask for more 'practical' hints, as they are called. But the unspoken conclusion of Mr Blamires' thesis is that the teacher of letters will influence his children by the principles of his own beliefs and practices. And that is a serious thought.

GERARD MBATH, O.P.

THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL. By Rosa Luxemburg. Translated by A. F. Schwarzschild. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 35s.)

Rosa Luxemburg's place in the history of the German workers' movement is secure, if only because of her part in the founding of the