

or ocean power depending, some almost entirely, others to a less extent, on the ease, cheapness and certainty of water carriage, and on a certain knack of the sea, bred of familiarity and use". It is strange to reflect that in 1941 the lesson has not been learnt that it is the British Navy, and not the sea, which has provided the "power of protection" to Great Britain and many another land. The disadvantage of Mr. Fairgrieve's interpretation of geographical control may be seen in his attempts to keep pace with the activities of man. In 1920, so great had been the material efficiency of Germany that "almost the united strength of the whole world" was required to overcome it. Yet "though the conflict ended as it did, that does not alter the geographical position of Germany nor the characteristics of her people". (2nd Edition, p. 224). Surely, then, one would have expected a warning that the War of 1914-18 would be repeated as soon as that "material efficiency" was again strong? But Mr. Fairgrieve is no prophet: he remarks, in the present edition, that "material efficiency . . . has been the cause of war, and we should be rash to conclude that a final fixed state has been reached, for there has been no alteration either in the geographical position of Germany nor [*sic*] the characteristics of her people". Is this a real warning to us of the inevitability of events? If so, it ought to be pressed with greater vigour.

Any writer who attempts to deal with world history and world geography in all ages in less than four hundred octavo pages invites criticism even if he does not deserve it. It is possible to quote many misstatements, or at least to express doubts on many of the positive assertions that are made. Thus the statement made in 1920, and repeated verbatim in 1941, that the sea-powers of France, Italy, and Portugal are "in league with Britain" scarcely expresses the facts. Magellan never "sailed round Cape Horn" nor did Napoleon "keep all his troops in the north" of Spain in the Peninsular War. One cannot readily accept the implications of many of the sketch maps nor appreciate the value of arrows liberally supplied on many of them. Yet the fact that this is an eighth edition of Mr. Fairgrieve's book must be taken both as a measure of the popular appeal of the subject and as a tribute to the author, whose pioneer work in geography should never be under-estimated.

J. N. L. BAKER.

ROMANTICISM AND SCIENCE

Natural Science in German Romanticism

By Alexander Gode-von Aesch. Pp. xiii + 302. (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1941.) 20s. net.

HISTORIES of German literature usually distinguish a Romantic School of writers whose activities began in the closing years of the eighteenth century and continued until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. The more obvious characteristics of these authors consisted of a certain antagonism to classical antiquity and to rationalism. They preferred the medieval and the mystical. They glorified the German past, and they fostered German nationalism and State-idolatry, the bitter fruits of which the world is now tasting, and not for the first time. More or less intimately associated with the Romantic School were certain famous philosophers—

the brothers Schlegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and the arch-totalitarian Fichte. In the circumstances it was to be expected that German Romanticism would not be lacking in world-views of some sort. To find any unity or harmony in these world-views would be rather difficult in any event; and Mr. Gode-von Aesch has increased his difficulties by including in the German Romantic movement some writers, like Goethe, Herder and others, who are not usually regarded as belonging to it. Sometimes, indeed, he seems to wander away altogether from the historic Romantic School, and to discourse about a Romantic world of thought without specific reference to individual representatives. At times, in fact, the reader gets the impression that the author has put together in his volume a number of separate essays which are not sufficiently interconnected to constitute a systematic exposition of the theme designated in the title of his book.

The speculative ideas embraced by the various representatives of the German Romantic School showed no originality. They were all taken over from ancient philosophy or medieval theology. Pantheism or panpsychism, the conception of man as a small world (microcosm) or of the world as a kind of colossal man (macroanthropos), the idea that love is what holds the universe together, and so on—these are all old thoughts; and they are not made either better or worse by being put into verse. This does not necessarily detract from the merits of the German Romantics. It is no mean achievement on the part of literary men to give effective expression to world-views, even if they do not originate them. In the volume under review the philosophical speculations of many more or less Romantic authors are described, illustrated and analysed with some critical acumen; and all those who are interested in the study of German Romanticism will find much helpful material in this book. If its title had been "Philosophy in German Romanticism", its contents would have been described accurately, and no reader could have complained with justice that he had been led to expect something different.

The prominence given to "Natural Science" in the title of the volume is unfortunate. Of science, as the term is commonly used in English-speaking countries (that is, knowledge based on verification by experience), there is next to nothing in the thought of German Romanticism. Scientific terms like magnetism, gravitation, etc., it is true, occur with considerable frequency; but they are usually associated with non-scientific speculations, not to say extravagant fancies. Thus, for example, we are told that "animal magnetism proves beyond a doubt that we have . . . a soul which consists of the divine spark". Again, the attraction and repulsion of material bodies are identified with love and hate; and Empedocles is consequently proclaimed to have anticipated Newton. But it is unnecessary to multiply such examples, since it is admitted that "German Romanticism excelled in taking seriously all sorts of absurd quackery". In a sense, of course, there is plenty of romance in the history of science; but romancing is not science; and it is rather misleading to refer to such romancing as "Natural Science". In this connexion it may interest the author to be informed that, contrary to his assertion, Newton did *not* refuse to theorize about the causes of gravity; what he did refuse was to regard such unverifiable speculations, including his own speculations, as a part of science.

A. WOLF.