

Our Bookshelf.

Anthropology and Archæology.

- (1) *The Circle and the Cross : a Study in Continuity.* By A. Hadrian Allcroft. In 2 volumes. Vol. 2 : *The Cross.* Pp. vii + 454 + 4 plates. (London : Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1930.) 12s. 6d. net.
- (2) *The English Parish Church.* By A. R. Powys. (The English Heritage Series.) Pp. xix + 165. (London, New York and Toronto : Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1930.) 3s. 6d. net.

(1) IN the first volume of this work, which was published separately, the author made a study of the tradition of the pagan circle. In the second, which appears after his death, he has turned to the cross, the early Christian church in Britain and Ireland, and traces its relation to the antecedent circle. His thesis is that paganism and Christianity, both being cults of the dead, the converts to the new faith continued to worship at the old holy places, the mounds and burial-places of the dead, which became the site of the Christian church, and to use them as the place of interment and of assembly for the discussion of the affairs of the community and for games, feasts, and fairs. On a review of the evidence, the author makes out a strong case for carrying this continuity much further in detail than has been done before. The identity of the places of worship of Christianity and paganism has been frequently argued ; it is supported by the letter of instruction from the Pope to Mellitus permitting the use of pagan shrines for Christian worship, even if other evidence did not point in the same direction. Mr. Allcroft has greatly extended the field in which continuity of practice and belief must be allowed. On certain points, however, he has pressed his theories rather far, as he himself would have been the first to admit. His assumption of a widespread Celtic influence in the area of the Saxon church solves many of his problems, but it would be hard to prove.

(2) In "The English Parish Church" Mr. Powys has given an account of the church as an institution in the rural life of the past, for the benefit of overseas visitors and those of our own public whose interest has been aroused by the efforts now being made to preserve any relics of an earlier day. Unlike Mr. Allcroft, he holds to the manorial origin of the parish church, and makes the early Saxon church his starting-point. His chapter on the secular uses of the church building may profitably be compared with the treatment of the same subject in Mr. Allcroft's book.

A Book of the Basques. By Rodney Gallop. Pp. xii + 294 + 16 plates. (London : Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1930.) 15s. net.

MR. GALLOP views the Basque with the eye of a realist. He heartily condemns imaginative attempts, on insufficient acquaintance, to portray him as a romantic relic of a vanishing race. Instead, he finds him a reserved, unimaginative

individual, with a strong sense of humour and a pronounced bias towards independence, very markedly shown in his attitude towards his Spanish neighbours in past history. While it is true that the Basque is vanishing, it is not the race but the culture that is disappearing. A vigorous commercial and industrial activity carries with it development on lines that are purely Spanish. It is remarkable that this energy shown by the Basques on the south side of the Pyrenees is not to be found among the French Basques.

Mr. Gallop does not profess to solve the philological and ethnological problems of the race. For the benefit of his readers, he summarises the theories which have been put forward, just as he describes the country and some of the salient events in Basque history, in order to provide a background for and an insight into Basque character. His main interest is the primitive culture of the people, and particularly their songs, plays, music, dances, legends and superstitious beliefs. All these he describes in considerable detail and analyses with penetrative insight. These chapters of Mr. Gallop's book will repay detailed examination. It is evident that the Basque has a great power of assimilation as well as of improvisation. The result is that, while borrowing from outside sources (the origin of some of the folk-music is to be recognised at once as some popular air from another country), the element borrowed has been moulded to conform to a perfectly definite racial type. On the other hand, the folk-dances present many features of a very primitive character, which Mr. Gallop, without doubt rightly, ascribes to a primitive spring ritual.

The Bronze Age. By Prof. V. Gordon Childe. Pp. xii + 258. (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1930.) 8s. 6d. net.

PROF. CHILDE'S book on the Bronze Age is modest in appearance ; but that is no criterion of its merit. He has given his readers what might well be termed a complete handbook of the period, having in view the needs of the beginner and that useful person, the general reader. He takes up the story of pre-history where it was left by Mr. M. C. Burkitt in "Our Early Ancestors", and begins with the discovery by early man that certain kinds of stone are susceptible to treatment by heat—the discovery of metal working. From this germ he traces the development of Bronze Age culture, highly elaborated in technology and art and relatively advanced in its system of commercial and international communication.

The general sketch of cultural conditions is followed by a section on the typology of the Bronze Age, in which the various classes of objects of material culture are passed in review and the development of each within the period is followed up. Finally, the history of cultural groups and cultural movements is traced in so far as this may be deduced from the material provided by archæological discovery.