

succeeded in his purpose. Patrick Geddes is probably most widely known as the joint author with J. Arthur Thomson of "The Evolution of Sex" and "Outlines of General Biology", and Mr. Boardman's study should indicate to a fresh generation something of the vitality, the stern common sense and realism, the breadth of scholarship which marked Geddes in his wanderings as student or as professor, and brought him into more creative enterprises than any other man in the three decades preceding the outbreak of the War of 1914-18. His adventurous spirit stands out afresh from these pages, and the appeal of the book to youth is enhanced by the picture of his pioneer enterprise in starting a students' hall of residence at the University of Edinburgh or of his subsequent contribution to the renovation of Edinburgh Old Town. Prof. Geddes' services in adult education, as an apostle of town-planning and the undoubted parent of the regional survey, his unceasing warfare on specialization, all find a place, though one would not draw from this book quite the impression of Geddes as inspiring a new and creative conception of social service to which Mumford paid tribute in "The Condition of Man".

But it is essentially a portrait rather than an interpretation that Mr. Boardman gives us, and the record of the stages and the manner in which the young scholar of Perth Academy and the student under Huxley at the Royal School of Mines battled his way to the chair of botany at University College, Dundee, might well be clearer in places. Somewhat confused, too, is the record of the myriad activities, such as the civic surveys of Dunfermline and Dublin, his direction of "The Masque of Learning" in London and Edinburgh, his influence on the Town Planning Conference Exhibition in London in 1910, the Indore report on Town Planning and on university reform, which he pursued for thirty-one years from that anchorage. The relevance of those activities and ideas, especially in education and in the field of university reform, to current discussions is obvious, and there is much in the book that is stimulating and suggestive—not the least in the finely sketched picture of Geddes' relations with his son Alasdair and the demonstration of the practical value of his educational theories.

When all that is said, the book, admirably produced and printed though it is, is somewhat disappointing. Within the compass of five hundred pages, one expects something more substantial, and the perceptive preface contributed by Mr. Lewis Mumford, himself a distinguished American disciple of Geddes, cannot redeem the deficiencies of scholarship or critical appraisal of the significance of Geddes' life and thought and his influence on education or on regional planning. It is not sufficient for Mr. Boardman to disclaim any pretensions to a definitive biography: his skill and industry in reducing to the present limits the scattered, imperfect and almost unmanageable records of a remarkable career call only for admiration; but having done so much, Mr. Boardman should not have been content merely to record this constant interpenetration of the general and the particular, the philosophical and the scientific outlook, the universal and regional which characterized Geddes, and late in life tended to engender boredom.

The real defect of what purports to be a serious study is not, however, this lack of scholarship—and be it noted we have here yet another expensively produced book shorn of the few pages necessary to

supply complete bibliographical information—it is a defect of technique. Fiction has its place in the imaginative interpretation of history, as Margaret Irwin, for example, has shown; and there will always be readers to whom the picture of Montrose will be conveyed more effectively through the medium of such a book as "The Proud Servant" than in such a brilliant study as John Buchan's "Montrose". Both methods have their place, but that place is not in the same book, and Mr. Boardman's fatal mistake in this volume has been the combination of fictional and straightforward biographical technique. Whatever picturesqueness his lapses into fiction may introduce, they confuse the narrative. It is unfortunate that Mr. Boardman should have been tempted into the use of a device which mars a serious study.

R. BRIGHTMAN.

## TIMBER RESOURCES OF BRITAIN

### The Wood from the Trees

By Richard Jefferies. (London: The Pilot Press, Ltd., 1945.) Pp. 143+16 plates. 9s. 6d. net.

THE contents of this book can be briefly stated. There are three clearly defined sections, the first of which deals with the main forest resources of the world, the methods of preparing timber, and the pre-war and possible post-war flow of timber from exporting countries to Great Britain. In the second section Jefferies describes the role and uses of timber as an implement of war and speculates about the probable fate of timber resources in invaded and other countries. Despite the author's real interest in the uses, distribution and potential value of wood, however, it is clearly apparent that the theme and the *raison d'être* of this book lie in the third section.

Here the *motif* is the imperative necessity for the greater development of timber resources in Great Britain. This is repeatedly brought out and might have gained greater emphasis if it had been stated once or twice less often. One reason for the previous neglect of our trees, declares the author, is that private owners have hitherto not realized the true value of wood. Since the State also has not been particularly diligent in its afforestation programmes, we have been faced by two wars in an unprepared condition and have had to divert considerable shipping space to bring in a bulky commodity, much of which could have been grown at home. Therefore, continues Jefferies, who is no doctrinaire politician, neglected forests of Great Britain must be taken over by the State and become part of a planned forestry programme. Besides already existing woodlands, schemes of afforestation should be drawn up for the several million acres of rough grazings which are not specially favourable for agricultural development. All this, and much more, is persuasively argued, and, even if it fails to influence Government policy, should at least stimulate some owners of private forests to put their wood in order.

"The Wood from the Trees" would have carried greater weight, however, if, in addition to his plea for home-produced timber, Jefferies had been more revealing about the kind of trees he advocated and the relative amounts and geographical distribution of hardwood and softwood he would grow and his reasons for so doing. The book is attractively finished with clear and relevant photographs and some helpful 'isotype' diagrams; no reason is given for the absence of an index.

T. H. HAWKINS.