



Costume Institute
of the Metropolitan
Museum of Art.

pose in mind, but often style won out. For example, lapels on military jackets were designed to keep the chest warm, but they "speedily atrophied into decorative flaps." Thanks to art, tight-laced waists, necks collared in millstone ruffs, and blue-jeaned legs have all seemed "comfortable, beautiful, and natural in their time."

AMOSKEAG: Life and Work in an American Factory-City. By Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach. Pantheon reprint, 1980. 394 pp. \$5.95

The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, which during the early 1900s was the world's largest textile plant, made the city of Manchester, N.H. At its peak, Amoskeag employed some 17,000 people, two-thirds of Manchester's workers. The company's absentee Boston owners modeled Manchester on the factory town of Lowell, Mass. In 1860, Manchester's labor-force was 27 percent foreign (mostly Irish), and by 1910, 35 percent of the workers were French Canadians. Hareven, a historian, and Langenbach, an architectural historian and photographer, spent four years researching the company's records and talking with more than 300 aging Amoskeag factory hands and managers. Some 35 interviews have

been assembled here, together with photos. The "self-contained world" of Amoskeag lasted for a century (1838-1936). Company welfare programs effectively discouraged unionization until after World War I. Even those most affected by Amoskeag's gradual decline (due to Southern competition, outdated machinery, management inefficiency, and—after unionization in the 1920s—high wages) look back on their days at the factory with great fondness. Ernest Anderson began working at Amoskeag in 1917 at age 14. "A lot of [the millyard] is torn down today," he says, "but . . . I can see those mills, how they flourished at one time, and I don't feel as old as I am—it's as if I was just walking through . . . ready to go to work again."

THE GOOD WORD AND OTHER WORDS. By Wilfrid Sheed. Penguin reprint, 1980. 300 pp. \$3.95

Novelist Sheed has chided literary critics who pounce on a book's "deep flaws" and show little patience with experimenters. His own appraisals are informed by an author's empathy with fellow craftsmen and a discerning eye. George Orwell, he reflects, "wrote best about the things he hated. When he tried to write lyrically, it came out stilted and anonymous." Others whose prose Sheed examines are Edmund Wilson ("forthright to the point of gullibility"), Walker Percy (he typifies "the old case against symbols: if you get them, they seem obvious and artificial, and if you don't, you miss the whole point"), Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald ("together, they make one hell of a writer"). Sheed skewers the literary ratings game: "When a reviewer says that Malamud is second only to Bellow, it means he isn't really thinking about either of them. When he's reading Malamud, he's thinking about Bellow, and when he's reading Bellow he's thinking about Roth."