

wonder, the knowledge that being is mystery. Unlike the scientist who can 'possess' his knowledge, the philosopher must go on wondering and seeking wisdom. Hope is his *raison d'être*, and without it, without belief in the supra-human world which inspired all the great philosophers of our civilisation, without a window on theology, philosophy itself ceases to be possible and becomes the kind of intellectual and scientific discipline which characterises it today. Dr Pieper's aim is to restore the *philosophia perennis* to a place of importance for educated men who think, and he achieves this with a style, precision and clarity of expression that are both stimulating and pleasurable.

ROLAND HILL

THE COMMON PURSUIT. By F. R. Leavis. (Chatto and Windus; 18s.)

It is Dr Leavis's achievement to have been largely responsible for creating the critical taste by which he himself is now appreciated, and consequently it is with some justice that a new publication by him can be claimed as an 'event' in the world of literary criticism. His achievement has not by any means been an easy one, and if it is remarkable for one thing more than another, it is for the integrity and mental stamina which have enabled him to carry out a plan of work with such purity of intention over the last twenty years, in spite of almost continual denigration for at least half of that time.

Reading through *The Common Pursuit*, however—the majority of the essays in which have previously appeared in *Scrutiny*—one has an increasing sense of irritation arising from the fact that the contents have been simply transferred from the pages of a periodical to those of a bound volume, for which, moreover, the specific claim is made (on the dust cover) that it has 'a unity', 'an arrangement', 'a sense of development', so that 'the total effect is in fact to define a position, a conception of literary criticism'. That such a conception does emerge is, I think, true, but it is certainly not through 'the unity and arrangement' of the material, but rather through repetition and force of expression. The essays I have particularly in mind where pruning could profitably have taken place are, 'In Defence of Milton', which seems to me to exhibit just that kind of academic back-biting of which Dr Leavis has so often (and rightly) felt himself a victim, 'Henry James and the Function of Criticism', which surely adds little to what was already implicit in the chapters on James in *The Great Tradition*, and the collection of essays on D. H. Lawrence which might well have been reshaped and merged into a single essay. This lack of arrangement is all the more disappointing because the points which Dr Leavis is concerned to make have a value which is deserving of a considered presentment.

In the more purely 'literary' studies on Milton, Hopkins, Swift, Johnson and Mr E. M. Forster, Dr Leavis shows, as one would expect,

his mettle as a critic of rare distinction. The essay on Milton seems to me to be a finer, and one might add a more temperate, piece of work than the earlier study in *Revaluations* (1936), though perhaps the unduly generous references to Professor Waldo are rather marred by over-eagerness to adduce an 'accepted authority'. The essay on 'Johnson and Augustanism' does much to amplify Dr Leavis's earlier commentary on the eighteenth century, and the summary of Johnson's achievement (p. 104) reveals a power of generalisation which has not been a characteristic of Dr Leavis's criticism; unlike that of Mr Eliot's.

It is when we turn to the essays on D. H. Lawrence that we find Dr Leavis's criticism most unsatisfactory. It is in his dealings with Lawrence that he is continually exposed to the invocation of ultimate criteria, and here that precision of thought that serves him so admirably in detailed local analysis falters, so that he can write: 'I have to record the conviction that the reaction against the world of William Clissold (shall we say?) represented by Mr Eliot's critical writings is, at any rate largely, of the wrong kind. I put it naïvely no doubt, and I will go on to suggest that Lawrence's reaction against the same world (see his review in *Phoenix* of H. G. Wells and relate it to the *Fantasia of the Unconscious*) has much more of rightness in it.' (p. 284.) 'Of rightness', it never amounts to more than that; and if we suggest that it should, it is not because of a failure to appreciate that literary criticism is a specific discipline of intelligence and philosophy another, but because it would seem that if the literary critic is to escape from a world of words he must, in the last analysis, relate the experience which emerges from the discipline he has rightly set himself to some scheme of values which is more precise than 'rightness', 'moral seriousness', and 'spiritual health'. Even in making this point, however, it is difficult not to feel that one probably wouldn't have seen the position in this way if Dr Leavis hadn't supplied, or at least sharpened, the tools of critical analysis, such is the debt of modern literary criticism; it is a debt which I can find no better words to describe than those which Dr Leavis uses of Mr Eliot, 'it is matter of having had incisively demonstrated, for pattern and incitement, what the disinterested and effective application of intelligence to literature looks like, what is the nature of purity of interest, what is meant by the principle . . . that "when you judge poetry it as poetry you must judge it, and not as another thing".'

IAN GREGOR

IN VALLOMBROSA. By David Mathew. (Collins; 10s. 6d.)

There are so many aspects of Dr Mathew's writing that call for admiration—its range, its consistency, its example of industry and wisdom and unfailing resource—that a reviewer can easily be deflected from a simple judgment about the book he has before him. He can