

ible in Mr Eliot's earlier work. Indeed, the French background is altogether too lightly sketched. There is little indication of what was attempted and achieved in France in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Rimbaud, for instance, is not even mentioned. Such omissions would be pardonable, were there not the design to relate Mr Eliot's work to 'tradition', to 'the mind of Europe', and to assess his technical achievement.

In considering the poems of religious preoccupation Mr Maxwell rightly insists on the Puritanical element. Rather than a *religious* poet, of course, Mr Eliot is a metaphysical poet. From the religious angle, he appears as a somewhat tenuous voice, probing the problems of the individual soul, questioning and full of disquiet. There is none of the vigorous affirmation of Paul Claudel, for instance, whose genial faith is world-embracing and who emphasises not 'the empty desolation', but joy which is '*une réalité poignante et . . . tout le reste n'est rien auprès*'. This is by no means to decry Mr Eliot's poetry but to help place him in perspective as a poet of religious orientation and to relate him somewhat to one aspect of that 'mind of Europe' of which so much is made, in vague terms, in Mr Maxwell's first chapter.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

THE TRAVELS OF IBN JUBAYR, translated by R. J. C. Broadhurst. (Cape; 42s.)

In all the quasi-mathematical range of what is termed 'Arabic Literature' it is perhaps the travel-narrative that comes nearest to fulfilling our instinctive need for a criticism of life. From it, almost alone, we may often derive a direct reflection of the medieval Muslim's unguarded view of the world and his place in it. Instead, for example, of the innumerable rehashes of abstract (and usually ill-informed) anti-Christian polemic, we may learn what an individual Muslim thought of an actual Christian he met, often in dramatic circumstances: it might be the master of a ship, or simply the pedlar who swindled him over a loaf of bread the important fact is the occasional exhalation of that breath of 'actuality' which seems to belong as of nature only in Christendom. (In Christian culture alone is time so touched by eternity as to yield a secular art and literature which are often sublime.) Of no Arabic travel-narrative is this remark truer than of that by Ibn Jubayr, a Spanish Muslim visiting the Middle East in the time of Saladin. His keen eye and his remarkably personal style make this a work of unique value and attraction to all who are concerned with the abiding reproach of Islam: to see ourselves as others see us and to see them as they see themselves. This is a great part of the exercise of charity.

That I have noticed a number of errors and careless slips in this

translation, the first in English, is no reflection on the gallant effort of the respected amateur Orientalist who made it. The original text, which bristles with problems, was edited a hundred years ago, and the only scandal is that no English professional Arabist should have produced a translation in the course of the last century. Brigadier Broadhurst has made a translation which is not only sufficiently accurate, but endowed with considerable literary merit of its own. This needs to be said, for he is over-modest in his prefatory remarks. His publishers, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme in suggesting that the work has the *cachet* of rigorous scholarship and was prepared more or less under professorial supervision (at least the relevant scholar's name might have been spelt correctly!). One must protest, too, at the use of the word 'edited' on the dust-jacket: editing and translating are precise and independent tasks.

The work is provided with two excellent maps.

G. M. WICKENS

SELECTIONS FROM THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI. Edited with commentaries by Irma A. Richter. (The World's Classics, Oxford; 5s.)

CLASSIC ART: THE GREAT MASTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. By Heinrich Wölfflin. (Phaidon Press; 30s.)

"It takes away from the beauty of the flowers anyway", I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course", he would say. "We are concerned with what I may call the *mechanics* of flars."

This sad twentieth-century dialogue, in which James Thurber protests against the distastefulness of examining flowers through a microscope, is called to mind by force of contrast upon reading Leonardo's notebooks. How Leonardo would have relished the microscope!—since for him the beauty and the mechanics of the flowers, and of the whole natural universe, were one and the same. 'For in truth', he writes, 'great love springs from the full knowledge of the thing that one loves; and if you do not know it you can love it but little or not at all.'

To understand was for Leonardo almost more important than to create. A scientist's scrutiny of nature and a philosopher's grasp of artistic method were his conscious concerns. Hence the combination, in his pictures, of minute delicacy and grand structural sureness; hence too the small number of the works in which his experimental interest carried him through to a conclusion. Dr Richter's admirably edited selection from his notebooks preserves a just balance between his scientific and artistic preoccupations, and is readably classified by subject-matter. Under Leonardo's artless and laconic guidance we are thus gracefully privileged to cross the threshold of his marvellous intellect ('Nature cannot again produce his like' cried Francesco Melzi at his death) and peer down its lofty and infinite perspectives.