

him full credit for that which does endure, the Code, the system of education and local government which his incomparable energy created. In a life based mainly upon the correspondence, as the most reliable source of information, there has not been scope, presumably, for a large discussion of that energy, that width, brilliance and persistence of administrative and military decision that astounded the world for two decades. But Mr Thompson has made a very fair division of the different activities of that career, and has stated their phases very clearly, while keeping a firm grasp of his central theme, the rise and fall of a great man. Despite an occasional dig at the Catholic Church, he deliberately places the summit of Napoleon's career at the Elevation of the Mass in Notre Dame, the day after signing the Treaty of Amiens. And the finest figure in the book, the one to whom the greatest significance is attached, is that of Pope Pius VII, whom Napoleon so persecuted, and who lived to pray for the repose of Napoleon's soul.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

LEISURE THE BASIS OF CULTURE. By Josef Pieper. Translated by Alexander Dru. With an introduction by T. S. Eliot. (Faber and Faber; 10s. 6d.)

A world of 'total work' is pressing in upon modern man in which real leisure and philosophy become impossible; for to have leisure is to be calm, receptive, and at one with oneself, and to be a philosopher is to transcend the workaday world and bring the whole of being into play. This is the theme of two short essays which have been well chosen to introduce the thought of one of the best-known contemporary German philosophers to English readers. He shows how the Kantian identification of knowledge with discursive activity, outlawing contemplation, changed the original concept of leisure, derived from the Greek *skole* and the Latin *scola*. St Thomas, with the ancient philosophers, held that the essence of virtue consists in the good rather than the difficult, that truth, like grace, was a gift, but the modern world made effort its idol. Carlyle, changing the emphasis of St Benedict's *ora et labora*, said that to work is to pray, and Stalin demanded that the worker must be paid according to the work done and not according to his needs. In such a world leisure becomes practically the same as idleness, a form of non-activity, a mere pause in work, whereas it is really the fundamental condition of human freedom, inseparable from its original religious significance as a day of rest and worship. And just as the functional process has led to the death of leisure, so it has destroyed philosophy by identifying it with scientific activity. Bacon's 'Knowledge is power', Descartes' philosophers as 'the masters and owners of nature' and Marx's formula that philosophy ought to alter the world rather than interpret it—all dispense with the essential element of philosophy:

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,