

His religious and ecclesiastical knowledge appears somewhat inadequate for his theme: and such statements as that 'With the coming of the idiorhythmic system and private property, the path to God of unadulterated mysticism was complicated by works and ethics' are quite baffling. (Nor is it 'idiorhythmic' that is puzzling—some explanation of that is given on page 57.) D.A.

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE. By Elspeth Huxley. (Chatto and Windus; 18s.)

Perhaps the title of this comprehensive account of a journey through East Africa is somewhat deceptive, for it does not deal, or only incidentally, with the absorbing subject of African black magic and witchcraft. However, the reader cannot complain for he is forewarned; nor will he wish to complain after a careful study of what the author has to say on a subject which, in fact, proves to be as absorbing as jungle sorcery. On the whole Mrs Huxley is concerned with the new Africa and its civil administration; a subject less splendid, perhaps, than lions but 'more potent in this turbulent and groping age which is rolling over Africa'. Mrs Huxley is well equipped to write of the new Africa, since she was born in Kenya and has long been familiar with African problems. Her journeys through Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar and Uganda produce a litany of diverting names—Malindi, Kilima Kiu, Lyamungu, Kongwa, Mwanza, Ukiriguru and many others. They produce, too, much information, which is always interesting, often amusing, and sometimes disturbing.

The many photographs illustrating the author's journeys are in the conventional style but they add further attractiveness to a book which is, in itself, well worth while. KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

GREECE: MOMENTS OF GRACE. By Ashley Smith. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 15s.)

According to the publishers' 'blurb' this latest study of Greece, which, incidentally, is dedicated to Mr Graham Greene, 'comes like a breath of fresh air into a stifled room; it cleans a landscape varnished over by sentiment—gives not the "meaning" of the landscape, but that first fine moment of revelation, its being, and its incredible magic'. The 'moments of grace' are those dazzling moments of ecstasy when the author contemplates the sempiternal beauty of Greece. These are, inevitably, personal and private moments in his experience. It is, therefore, not surprising that the reader should at first feel embarrassed as he reads, in colourful prose, of these ecstatic moments.

Although the author denies that he is in love with Greece he writes with the tenderness of a lover. After the initial embarrassment, the reader can surrender himself to some lovely descriptions of the Grecian scene. There are, of course, observations on the political scene in Greece, for the author was there during the elec-

tions. Since moments of ecstasy are unlikely in politics, the reader is, happily, spared a political commentary.

One closes this book no longer embarrassed but filled with admiration for the daring of a man who is not afraid to reveal his love for beauty and the enchanted moments it gives him. His own rich prose is supplemented by many remarkably beautiful photographs by D. A. Harrisiadis of Athens.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE GREAT TRADITION. By F. R. Leavis. (Chatto and Windus; 12s. 6d.)

Every reader of Dr Leavis's new book will do well to ponder the quotation from D. H. Lawrence's letters with which it begins. 'I always feel as if I stood naked for the fire of Almighty God to go through me . . . One has to be so terribly religious to be an artist.' It should be laid beside George Eliot's account of herself to Cross (although Dr Leavis has not quoted it): 'She told me that in all that she considered her best writing there was a "not-herself" which took possession of her . . . and she believed was responsible for the good effect'. This is the first distinctive quality of the English novel, a 'marked moral intensity' which is by no means the same thing as aesthetic intensity. The great English novelists are certainly concerned with form and style but not as ends in themselves; they are utterly antipathetic to Walter Pater. That is Dr Leavis's contention, and thus he pricks the bubble of fame that surrounds the eighteenth century novel and all that 'enlightenment or aestheticism or sophistication that feels an amused superiority' to standards of right and wrong and simple human values. That can only lead to triviality and evil and is a very different thing from the 'reverent openness before life' which marks Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad. Here again distinctions are necessary: life is not the same thing as promiscuous living. George Eliot is supposed to have suffered crippling limitations as an artist because of the provincial boundaries of her life (all art belongs to Bloomsbury). Dr Leavis will not have this. The depth and reality of the artistic conception spring not from the size of the experience but from the 'reverent openness' with which the artist faces it, and this implies 'moral interest in human nature'. So Dr Leavis finds moral intensity in Jane Austen (whom he does not deal with in this book), George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad in an outstanding fashion because they are passionately concerned about the meaning and purpose of human life and use their considerable technical talents to explore this question. There lies Dr Leavis's pre-eminence as a critic: he does believe in objective standards. Perhaps he is unduly harsh on the 'lower grade' novelists (though he does make his position clear enough early in the book) and perhaps something of the splenetic temper of his writing is regrettable (though again at least half of it is as salutary as it is entertaining). Nevertheless one is profoundly grateful for criticism that probes