

perfected in glory. At the other extreme we know better the helplessness of man, the degradation and irrationality of sin: *Sein-zum-Tode* is more significant for us than for the existentialist. But existentialism is a beginning.

It is important to turn away from our atheism (the apathetic atheism of the Catholics, as well as the militant atheism of the Communists) and look to the only possible source from which reality can be given to the essence. And that turning will be the entry into life 'most good and eternal', existence on the highest plane. We are back again at the primacy of contemplation. Perhaps it was the author's intention to direct our steps to the house at Bethany.

EDWARD QUINN

INDIAN ART ESSAYS. By H. G. Rawlinson, K. de B. Codrington, J. V. S. Wilkinson and John Irwin. (Faber and Faber; 7s. 6d.)

The general and lively interest in Indian art recently aroused by the exhibition held at Burlington House was accompanied by an equally strong feeling that here is something which, though strangely compelling, is expressing an essentially unfamiliar beauty. Obviously this apparent ignorance should not act as a deterrent debarring the spectator from a purely aesthetic enjoyment of the works before him. But that it is a limitation cannot be denied, and the immediate aim of this small book is to endeavour to eliminate at least some of those problems. It consists of essays by four authorities on various aspects of India, opening with a brief exposition of the main trends of Indian history—a map here would have made the text easier to comprehend! Although the writers are to be congratulated for having succeeded in presenting a subject of immense complexity in a lucid and very readable manner.

The tremendous range and variety of artistic achievement (sculpture, drawing and the native crafts, weaving, pottery, jewellery, etc.) fall into perspective and become related to the ever-changing religious, political and sociological background of India. Unity is given to the multifarious foreign influences that were brought to bear upon the indigenous arts of the country. A fundamental element in Indian art is a delight in representing natural phenomena. It is to be found in the art of prehistoric India, for example in the seals discovered in the Indus Valley. Also, the gradual assimilation of the cults of the soil into Buddhism when it began to take shape as a religion of the people led, artistically, to far greater freedom of expression. This meant an abundance of scenes depicting animal forms in a variety of new and exciting ways. The inherent grasp of rhythm which underlies oriental art is not lacking in the vital and exuberant reliefs on the Stupas. Again it is evident in the carvings on the medieval rock-cut temples. In spite of strong

foreign influence during most of the principal periods in the country's history it has always been modified by this national characteristic. And these have been varied, including Persian and Hellenistic.

The climax in painting was reached in the Mughal school during Akbar's reign, when the manifold refinements of Iranian court art were fused with this quality. J. V. S. Wilkinson wisely inserts a short description of the main traits of the Persian school, and continues with a fascinating account of the development of the Mughal school under this influence, mentioning too the religious tolerance of this monarch which resulted in his giving audience to some Jesuit missionaries. There follows an account of the splendours of Jahangir's court (which were to prove so detrimental to national prosperity), the underlying decadence and the ever-increasing European infiltration, until in the following reign the school came to a sudden but not untimely conclusion.

In view of the length with which the Mughal style was treated—and necessarily so—it seems rather regrettable that the Rajput schools have received an inadequate tribute, for they represent an important aspect of the more indigenous schools of miniature painting. Besides, the work reveals in its finer instances much poetic and lyrical charm, coupled with sensitive understanding of line and an individual use of colour, which is perhaps characterised by the frequent depicting of nocturnal scenes, bringing in a more sombre and mysterious note, incidentally, contrasting vividly with the sensuous, and at times riotous, delight in colour displayed in some Mughal miniatures.

The sculptures, on the other hand, are indicative of the 'primitive' side of the Indian temperament. The robust virility derives its inspiration from the tangible realities of the earth. Not a sublimated nature, but the nature of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, pulsating with primeval vigour. In direct opposition is the dignified tranquillity typifying some of the sculptures completed throughout the Graeco-Buddhist period.

All these seeming contradictions are skilfully welded together in John Irwin's essay, which well repays study. Unfortunately the plasticity is lost in a number of the drawings that supplement the text, e.g. Figs. I and XI.

I spoke at the outset of the immediate purpose of this book, but it possesses much more than a momentary value. And for this reason it is to be hoped that it will bring a previously little-known art before a wider public.

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A KIERKEGAARD ANTHOLOGY. Edited by Robert Brettall. (Cumberlege: Oxford University Press; 30s.)

Many who can afford neither the price nor the time for Kierke-