

drink and rollicked their way through their eternity.

Many eventually disappeared into the mountains, or if their long lives ended, their bodies vanished from their coffins. Here no doubt we find the core of truth in all these stories—the seekers after truth, abandoning everything in their search, lead lives so withdrawn from the world, so absorbed in the eternal, that the man of common clay must needs build legends around men so incomprehensible to him.

L. OUWERKERK

ISLAM ET CHRETIENNE (Impressions de Voyage). By Paul Denis, O.P.
Liège: La Pensée Catholique; n.p.)

This is a little book of essays on contemporary religion and life in the near east. Among the most interesting and informative are those on the future of Catholicism in Turkey, and on the Palestine problem. Père Denis makes no attempt to offer a solution to the latter, but he states the facts in a very vivid manner and ends by making a horrifying picture of what the Holy Land may shortly become. Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings (including Bethlehem) will be internationalised, but what of the rest of the countryside which after centuries of Arab domination has altered very little since our Lord's time? The immigrant Sionist Jews are largely materialistic in outlook (in over 400 colonies founded in the last 20 years, only 11 possess a synagogue). Will the day come when the sea of Tiberius is surrounded by villas and bungalows, fashionable beaches and floodlit open-air, dancing halls?

M. PENMAN

THE STATION. ATHOS: TREASURES AND MEN. By Robert Byron.
(John Lehmann Ltd.; 12s. 6d.)

Robert Byron was cut off untimely in the war of 1939-45, and this is a reprint of his second book, originally published in 1928. Mr John Lehmann has added it to his Library of Art and Travel series; it is a well produced volume, with numerous illustrations that are very good.

The Station is essentially a travel book: it adds little to our knowledge of either the history or the life of The Holy Mountain, but it gives a most vivid (and 'vivid' is the word) impression of the beauty of Athonite country, buildings, decoration and other art. Byron was only twenty-two when he wrote it, and accordingly it is rather juvenile in parts: the piling-on of epithets of colour becomes a little wearisome, and 'liquid eyes mooning from his beard' is a bit too much. But 'a kind of cold, misty light, shadowless and unbegotten, such as floats about London railway termini on Sunday mornings' is well observed of the atmosphere of many Byzantine churches.

Mr Christopher Sykes in his introduction to *The Station* says all that need be said about Byron's enthusiasms, exaggerations, dislikes and prejudices, which are sufficiently illustrated by the book.