

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the core of truth in all these stories—the seekers after truth, abandoning everything in their search, lead lives so withdrawn from the world, so absorbed in the eternal, that the man of common clay must needs build legends around men so incomprehensible to him.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 CHRETIENTE (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.

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-