

translation, the first in English, is no reflection on the gallant effort of the respected amateur Orientalist who made it. The original text, which bristles with problems, was edited a hundred years ago, and the only scandal is that no English professional Arabist should have produced a translation in the course of the last century. Brigadier Broadhurst has made a translation which is not only sufficiently accurate, but endowed with considerable literary merit of its own. This needs to be said, for he is over-modest in his prefatory remarks. His publishers, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme in suggesting that the work has the *cachet* of rigorous scholarship and was prepared more or less under professorial supervision (at least the relevant scholar's name might have been spelt correctly!). One must protest, too, at the use of the word 'edited' on the dust-jacket: editing and translating are precise and independent tasks.

The work is provided with two excellent maps.

G. M. WICKENS

SELECTIONS FROM THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI. Edited with commentaries by Irma A. Richter. (The World's Classics, Oxford; 5s.)
CLASSIC ART: THE GREAT MASTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.
 By Heinrich Wölfflin. (Phaidon Press; 30s.)

"It takes away from the beauty of the flowers anyway", I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course", he would say. "We are concerned with what I may call the *mechanics* of flars."

This sad twentieth-century dialogue, in which James Thurber protests against the distastefulness of examining flowers through a microscope, is called to mind by force of contrast upon reading Leonardo's notebooks. How Leonardo would have relished the microscope!—since for him the beauty and the mechanics of the flowers, and of the whole natural universe, were one and the same. 'For in truth', he writes, 'great love springs from the full knowledge of the thing that one loves; and if you do not know it you can love it but little or not at all.'

To understand was for Leonardo almost more important than to create. A scientist's scrutiny of nature and a philosopher's grasp of artistic method were his conscious concerns. Hence the combination, in his pictures, of minute delicacy and grand structural sureness; hence too the small number of the works in which his experimental interest carried him through to a conclusion. Dr Richter's admirably edited selection from his notebooks preserves a just balance between his scientific and artistic preoccupations, and is readably classified by subject-matter. Under Leonardo's artless and laconic guidance we are thus gracefully privileged to cross the threshold of his marvellous intellect ('Nature cannot again produce his like' cried Francesco Melzi at his death) and peer down its lofty and infinite perspectives.

We cannot, of course, do more than guess at the moment when his intellect and his deeper faculties touch and give out the white flash of creative inspiration, in the light of which systems and philosophies are seen as irrelevant except in so far as they have propelled the artist towards it. But a fresh view of Leonardo and his High Renaissance peers may be had from the bracing eminence occupied by that G.O.M. of Central European (and therefore of all twentieth century) art history and criticism, Heinrich Wöllflin. Much further enlightenment results from this stereoscopy. Wöllflin—whose still-verdant *Classic Art* was first published in 1898, and is now re-issued by Phaidon with the scrupulous excellence which that source connotes—here masterfully unfolds the *Stilentwicklung* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy as exemplified by Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Fra Bartolommeo, and Andrea del Sarto. To each of these he devotes a monograph about the length of a short lantern lecture, and almost as well illustrated: his conclusions are summarised at the end. The author's good manners allow us to feel his immense learning not as an oppressive weight but as the unobtrusive support to a humane personality: so that this is, in the best sense, a popular work. The art of which it treats, however, has in recent decades become something less than popular (even before the days when Van Gogh's sunflowers superseded the Sistine Madonna as standard lodging-house decoration). Wöllflin's advocacy of it, always critical and never in the least degree sentimental, has therefore a topical force. He provides, indeed, a wholesome antidote to the blinkered neo-medievalism which has become an *idée reçue* in certain Catholic circles, and is overdue for revision.

CHRISTOPHER CORNFORD

ASPECTS OF PROVENCE. By James Pope-Hennessy. (Longmans; 18s.)

The travel book that one reads with greatest sympathy is one that calls up a country one knows already. One enjoys finding in the imagination of another the prototypes of one's own memories. Someone who knows and loves Provence will derive this kind of enjoyment from James Pope-Hennessy's book. The obvious is there, though there in obvious terms, and also a great deal that is not obvious. Mr Pope-Hennessy's thesis is that Provence is not the land of soft enjoyment, oranges and olives of Mignon's song—once the signature-tune of Radio Nice—but a land of contrasts, of a 'violent and potentially cruel people. . . . Foreigners think this is a gentle country but in reality it is harsh and fierce', a discovery which the young Racine made long ago and recorded in the letters he wrote from Uzès, just over the border in that Bas-Languedoc where race and countryside are Provençal in all but name. Through this land, with method but without exhausting completeness, the author takes us, adorning