

manuscripts remain an unparalleled treasure of an unbroken line of artists from Anglo-Saxon times. From these sources Mr Oakeshott has been able to reconstruct the sequence and to illustrate his thesis with over fifty plates—some coloured—which reproduce eighty-seven illuminations from 650 to 1450 A.D. The latter date has been chosen as the point of conversion from pattern and symbol to the naturalistic technique of the renaissance; and within this period the author distinguishes the age of innocence and the age of learning—for the revival of learning in the twelfth century is reflected too in English art. It is interesting to watch the development of this, which we may surely be permitted to call the 'pure' art of symbol, from the solemn and intricate patterns of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon beginnings to the light-hearted choreography of the figures surrounding the tenth and eleventh century script and then on into the new symmetry and far greater realism introduced by the scholastic revival. 'The pinnacle of achievement' in English art is reached in the twelfth century when the formal rhythm of the Byzantine influence combines with the new learning to reveal the spiritual realities underlying at once the Scriptures and current events. Thus a variety of nationalities and temperaments in parents and ancestors begets a unique child of great and subtle beauty.

The student will find that the scholarship of the appendices and notes on the plates greatly assist the general contours described in the text and represented in the excellent illustrations.

C.P.

RIVER DIARY. By Dorothea Eastwood. (Wingate; 12s. 6d.)

*River Diary* is not a topographical and historical account of a fascinating stream, the Usk, but just what the title says: a diary from May to November kept by a poet, painter and botanist who, with her husband and young son, camped in a fishing-hut at Trostrey pool, some way below the now non-existent 'Clytha Arms', already so familiar to the Blackfriars boys at Llanarth.

A diary is necessarily a personal thing; yet some readers (and not male readers only) will feel that the book is in spots rather too subjective, playful and allusive: and it is surprising to read such nonsense as 'the unsmiling gaze of her mysterious Celtic eyes' from a writer of Mrs Eastwood's quality. But her own eyes don't miss anything, whether things, persons or circumstances, and she conveys what she sees with a skill and precision that does not often fail like that. And her interests are not 'selective'—hills and dingles, trees and water, flowers, birds, beasts, insects, fishes, and humans. Yet she seems at times a little aloof with humans: it is significant that at a sheep-auction she should long for Sotheby's and its expensive dealings in *objets d'art*, even if only 'for the moment'.

To those who do not know the Usk valley, *River Diary* will certainly be an inducement to go there. Those who know it will find themselves turning the pages hither and yon to see what Mrs Eastwood says about this, that and the other, from Ffrwdgrech and the Eppynt to Usk town.

D.A.

MORALS SINCE 1900. By Gerald Heard. (The Twentieth Century Histories: Andrew Dakers; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Gerald Heard gives us an impressionistic picture of the changes in manners and behaviour of the past fifty years. He sees that rationalism and materialism are expressions of a *hubris* which has already produced frightful disasters and even raises the question of the survival of human life on this planet. Mr Heard has a synthesising mind, and he succeeds in combining a great deal of miscellaneous and often arbitrarily selected information in such a way that we are presented with an extraordinarily telling picture of a restless and technically versatile society lurching from crisis to crisis with little sense of direction. Some of his comments, in particular those on over rationalistic approaches to problems of sexual relations and to questions of eugenics and public hygiene, will please the Catholic reader, though his remedy for our ills—the development, through techniques elaborated by Indian mystics and American psychologists, of a ‘higher’ consciousness—will seem to them unnecessarily vague. Incidental remarks about Catholicism are not very perceptive. His greatest weakness is that he substitutes ‘absolute values’ for the living God and, in consequence, a cautious and conditional optimism for the virtue of hope. He resembles a little the physicist or chemist with a taste for amateur philosophising in that he is too eager to seize upon the latest hypotheses in the sciences and draw from them philosophical conclusions of startlingly wide scope. The grammatical blunders, misprints or misspellings, and horrid neologisms that abound throughout the book provide an unnecessary obstacle to its being readily understood.

J.M.C.

PASCAL'S PENSÉES. With an English Translation, Brief Notes and Introduction by H. F. Stewart, D.D. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 21s.)

Pascal crosses the serene sky of the *Grand Siècle* like a sudden cloud, charged with the thunder and lightnings of Sinai. He has a prophetic gift of profound insight into man's estate and redemption, and the power to epitomise doctrine in brief, unforgettable phrases. His apology is one immense ‘argumentum ad hominem’, emphasising the