

influence of the drug to that of visionaries in general. Mr Huxley is, however, wrong in assuming that there is such a thing as a 'typical' mescaline experience. This does not seem to be borne out by the facts at least as they are revealed by experiments in this country; and it is quite untrue to say, as Huxley does in *The Doors of Perception*, that mescaline has the power to produce specific results, the most striking of which are alleged to be greatly intensified visual impressions and a heightened sense of the reality and meaningfulness (*Istigkeit* as Huxley calls it) of natural objects in the outside world. The effects of the drug on the present reviewer, for instance, were almost diametrically opposed to those of Mr Huxley. Colours, so far from being more intense, tended to fade; and the movements and patterns which the drug imposes on normal vision seemed to be at best no more than interesting and at worst outrageously silly. Other mescaline-takers have had reactions of intense fear, and this is far more common than Huxley would have us believe. It does, then, seem a trifle far-fetched to attempt to explain the experiences of visionaries by a single mescaline experience which—so various are the effects of the drug—can have validity only for Mr Huxley himself.

The essay under review adds little to what Huxley has already said in *The Doors of Perception*, and it is no less prodigal of sweeping generalizations than the earlier work. We are informed, for instance, that 'Heaven is *always* a place of gems'; yet the heaven of the Koran is quite devoid of such decoration. Huxley is, no doubt, right in saying that visionary experience, whether spontaneous, or produced by drugs, or by fasting, will vary between the blissful and the horrific according to the character and moral predispositions of the subject, but he is simplifying unnecessarily when he alleges that the *purpose*, rather than the possible effect, of bodily mortification is to obtain such experience. To suggest, as he does, that mescaline should be accepted as a more practical and more modern substitute for asceticism shows the essential frivolity of his approach to religion.

R. C. ZAEHNER

A MOZART PILGRIMAGE. By Nerina Medici and Rosemary Hughes. (Novello and Co.; 30s.)

Of the various books which have been published in English to commemorate the bicentenary of Mozart's birth, none brings us so closely into the presence of the composer as this one. In 1829, Vincent and Mary Novello met in Salzburg and Vienna people who had known him intimately and had lived with him: his sister, his first love, his widow and son and several close friends, such as Abt Stadler. They dwelt three days in his native city, 'in a complete trance', and spent one

further day there on their way home from Vienna where they had sojourned nine days. The immediate purpose of this journey was to present Mozart's sister, Baroness von Sonnenburg, with a gift of money from English well-wishers, but the ultimate aim was to discover all that could be found out about the musician who was the Novellos' idol. And indeed they discovered quite a lot, to their immense satisfaction. All those who had known him were ready to open wide their book of memories and to supplement its gaps with invention, if need be. Constance appears in their diaries as a stately but very approachable old lady, of the bluest blood, completely devoted to the memory of her first husband, to such an extent that we are left wondering how she ever came to acquire a second. Aloisia Lange, who had spurned him on his way back from Paris, speaks of his love for her 'until the day of his death'—a sentiment for which there is no other evidence; she is on surer ground when she owns that she herself much regretted not having returned his love at Mannheim. Sophie, her sister, who had already underlined her own importance at the time of his death in a letter to Nissen, now stresses still more that importance, emphasizing that 'Mozart had died in *her* arms' (Novello's underlining). Only the bed-ridden Marianne was too afflicted with blindness and paralysis to play any part. Novello was admitted to her bedside and while her nephew explained to her the purpose of the Englishman's visit, the enraptured pilgrim 'held her poor hand in *his* and pressed it with the sincere cordiality of an old friend of her brother'. She was not quite seventy-eight and had only another three months to live.

It was difficult to believe that the helpless and languid figure which was extended before us was formerly the little girl represented as standing by the side of her brother and singing to his boyish accompaniment'

in the water-colour by Carmontelle which was hanging near her bed.

Time was short and Vincent had drawn up a questionnaire. Some of his enquiries had been answered by Nissen, and he possessed, so he proudly told the biographer's widow, 'the very first copy which arrived in England', but he knew very little German—'kann nicht Deutsch', Nannerl sighed to Mary—and he had not read deeply in it as yet. So he served up his questions.—What was Mozart's favourite instrument? The organ.—His favourite opera? *Idomeneo*, because he was so happy at the time it was being written and staged.—He 'particularly disliked the hurried manner in which some orchestras accompanied his operas' (what would he have said of the champagne-and-whipped-cream style in which his quartets are often performed?)—Why did he never leave Vienna? Because he was so fond of Joseph II

(a tall one, this).—What were his favourite books? Here the answer is tantalizing.

‘One of his favourite authors is at present in her possession, and which she most frequently peruses. It is in nine volumes but being forbidden fruit in the Austrian states she did not name it—I suspect some of the French revolutionary works.’

One entry throws some light on the mysterious minuet in D, K. 355.

‘Madame Mozart was partial to some minuets by a person named Mann, and Mozart with his usual obliging sweetness of disposition said, “Well, as you are so fond of minuets, I will write you one”, which he accordingly did.’

Abt Stadler added a trio. Constance tried to find it to show to her visitors but failed. The detail of the added trio identifies this minuet with K. 355 but unfortunately does not give us its date. Both Vincent and Mary noted in their respective diaries that the ‘agitation’ that Constance suffered when giving birth to her first son ‘and her cries are to be traced in several passages’ of the D minor quartet, especially the minuet (a part of which she sang to them). This obstetrical interpretation of a masterpiece has had a long life.

There is probably no other place where Mozart’s second son lives as fully as in these diaries. The Novellos saw a lot of him; it was he who introduced them to his aunt. Of his father he could tell nothing at first-hand since he was only five months old in December, 1791. He was devoted to music and to his father’s memory but complained that the name he bore was a burden because so much was expected of him.

The pair were great collectors of relics and they left Salzburg enriched with a tuft from Mozart’s hairbrush, an acquisition about which Charles Lamb was to tease his friend after his return.

If everything relating to Mozart, and indeed to music and musicians, were omitted from these diaries, there would still be left many interesting details. The Novellos were sensible observers of all they saw, although this pair, who had only one English parent between them, were as stubbornly English in their outlook as if they had been called Smith. Vincent was nearly as interested in architecture and painting as music and noted his impressions of every church he entered. Their record is among the most fascinating travel stories of its time and even unmusical readers, with some skipping, will find much to delight them, most of all, perhaps, in the personality of the diarists themselves.

The Novello spouses wrote the diaries. Nerina Medici, their great-grand-daughter, transcribed them and has told the story of their discovery after years of oblivion. It is Rosemary Hughes who has written the book, for what we have is much more than the text of the diaries. Miss Hughes introduces, comments, lights up, completes as the pair

move along their way, and she has added copious learned notes on all the manifold topics touched upon by the versatile and observant authors. To her indeed is our gratitude chiefly due for this enchanting volume which Mozart-lovers will read, like Vincent in Salzburg, in Miss Hughes' words, 'in a state of bemused beatitude'.

CUTHBERT GIRDLESTONE

BLACK PEARL. By A. and E. Sheehan. (The Harvill Press; 16s.)

This sounds like a novel but it is, in fact, a biography, for Black Pearl was a real person, 'the hairdresser from Haiti'. And there he is on the blue dust-jacket, a negro in a very high collar about to dress the hair of a ghostly-looking lady reminiscent of Madame de Pompadour. The autobiography, the indiscreet memoirs, of a fashionable *coiffeur de dames* might not be unusual. A biography of an ordinary hairdresser is and suggests the subject was an unusual person. This is true of Pierre Toussaint, born a slave in Saint Domingue (now Haiti) nearly thirty years before the French Revolution. The repercussions of the latter led to Pierre's being taken to New York by his owners who had him trained as a hairdresser. He was an exemplary Catholic, a man of great charity and nobility of character. He became a legend in his lifetime and, even now, more than a hundred years after his death, is the inspiring subject of an edifying biography.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

MODERN FRANCE. By F. C. Roe (Longmans, 21s.). Professor Roe provides, in three hundred pages, an informed and well-written 'introduction to French civilization', making even such mysteries as French parliamentary practice intelligible to English readers. But it is astonishing that religion apparently plays no part in the France that Professor Roe describes, and, apart from a passing reference to the 'Schools question', the Church is not mentioned.

I.E.