

rare quality of some minds can be correlated with the infinitely complex network of cells and fibres in the cerebral cortex is over-sanguine, perhaps even misdirected. Not even the electron microscope with its immense powers of magnification can be expected to reveal anything relevant to this question, or to show in the brain of a genius any features outside the normal range of variations from individual to individual. Genius will not be caught in the anatomist's net, even though we allow that the mind's optimal activity demands the integrity of the brain.

Sir Russell believes that Swift's equivocal relations with Stella owe their origin to Swift's emotional immaturity, and he thinks the only mystery about Swift is that there should have been thought to be a mystery. 'Emotional immaturity', like 'sadism' and many other easily used terms out of the lush vocabulary of the psychiatrists, has become a general purpose word, a plaster to conceal gaps in our understanding of human nature in its infinite diversity. It provides a term, but not an elucidation, and Swift remains not less a mystery after it has been uttered.

These essays are charmingly written, and are at their best when the author is nearest to his own subject, clinical medicine. Mr Norman Smith's head and tailpiece drawings are delightful.

F. M. R. WALSH

MÉMOIRES INTÉRIEURS. By François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 21s. 0d.)

In a memorable little book Romain Rolland showed us that a *Voyage* can be *intérieur*. Could *Mémoires* be *extérieurs*, such as the *Boulevards* which surround Paris? In spite of its puzzling title, which also recalls Hugo's *Mémoires d'une âme*, this book is not an autobiography, not even an account of the writer's inner life.

'To write is to remember, but so, also, is to read.' Mauriac has chosen this winding pathway to tell us about himself. The ageing writer returns to books which have charmed or even repelled his youth and examines his present opinion of them. Through the medium of his successive readings, we are presented with a subtle and moving portrait of Mauriac as a child, as an adolescent, as a young and now as an old man: 'In my written criticisms, I follow, from book to book, the shadowy figure of what once I was . . .'. From chapter to chapter he seems to move constantly between the 'unbearable' pressure of the bustling city and the sweetly tormenting memories enclosed in the country house of Malagar, near Bordeaux, where he spent and still spends most of his summer holidays; yet, as he drives from one place to the other, he is aware of watching the same play 'which has one single character, for, from the very first line, it is myself who is speaking to myself'. Here and there, he is welcomed by books waiting to be read or re-read, and sometimes he feels inclined to leave the new for the old ones.

Thus he boldly compares Baudelaire and Musset, not so unfavourably to the latter, who enchanted him as an adolescent, whereas he came under Baudelaire's spell as a young poet. Amongst Nerval's works, he still prefers *Sylvie* to *Aurelia*. The Goncourts' *Journal* used to please him, yet now he lets drop from his hands the first volume of these gossip-tellers. To Balzac, to

Flaubert, to Proust, his life-companions, he remains faithful, reads and will read again *Wuthering Heights*, *Middlemarch* and Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. But, although interested in D. H. Lawrence's character, he has only scorn for 'that ridiculous prophet' and his novels he cannot read more than half-way, just as he did before, and so do Robbe-Grillet's attempts towards the non-psychological fail to interest him.

For he is well aware of the change of perspective he has undergone as a reader. While he was busy writing novels, as a young man, he used to long for the evening when he could take refuge in the stories of the masters. But, he remarks, these novels or rather their characters, for us, live only as long as we give them a setting within ourselves, for as young readers we feel we have something to learn from their experiences. 'Now it is the writers, rather than their books, who still for me have the gift of life.' Gide, brilliantly compared to Spartacus leading a slave-revolt in the Roman order, belongs to this category of writers whose lives seem to him more interesting than their works, though one might feel justified in taking the opposite view. (Valéry, he tells us, never read anything Mauriac wrote, he was too much involved in his own thoughts.) It is on this business of writing and expressing oneself that Mauriac's reflections are the more arresting, as he repeatedly refers (pp. 80, 103, 220) to the craving for survival from which springs the impulse for writing, this childish dream of retaining for posterity something of our transient and familiar images, sentiments and thoughts, which he now looks upon with severity, even disgust, 'a sign that the last and final detachment is now at hand'. Withdrawing from the books he himself, as he says, has 'secreted', he reflects in a humorous way upon the writer's fate: 'A writer is, fundamentally, a man who has lost his shadow, or, rather, when he has outlived himself and is nothing but an old mill churning out words, he has become a shadow who has lost his man'. No fear need be felt that Mauriac will do so as he displays for us such wisdom and attempts so courageous a re-valuation not only of books but of attitudes to life, from which, it seems to me, we can all draw benefit.

J. B. BARRÈRE

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY. By A. H. Armstrong and R. A. Markus. (Darton, Longman and Todd; 15s.)

Controversy started very early between the Christians and adherents of Greek philosophies; but another 'dialogue', more fruitful the authors think, went on in the mind of any Christian who had some philosophical culture. The authors believe that the same sort of dialogue occurs today in the minds of Christians who read Greek philosophers. This book, written half by each author, is a device to produce such a dialogue artificially, each author having thoroughly discussed his contribution with the other.

It does not read like the result of conversation, not even of two men's conversations with themselves. Nowhere does the reader feel that an argument is going on but rather an historical account, presented with the simplicity of two masters, of the philosophical ideas which Christians selected for their own use and adapted, or rejected. In tracing the Christian development of Greek philosophy Professor Armstrong is inclined by and