

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however, has in recent decades become something less than popular (even before the days when Van Gogh's sunflowers superseded the Sistine Madonna as standard lodging-house decoration).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

his own impressions with those of earlier travellers, and strengthening impressions with history, biography and hagiography. His sensitiveness to colour and touch are keen; we are all conscious of the intense light that strikes us as we pass the thresholds of Valence or Sisteron, but what a feeling underfoot of Provençal houses is called up by 'the wide, shallow treads of the staircase', or of the mistral by 'the wind which tears at your hair' on the roof of Tarascon castle! The country is grasped from within and the book is blessedly free from the amused aloofness with which centuries of British travellers have written about the foreigner and his ways.

C. M. GIRDLESTONE

SCOTLAND OF THE SAINTS. By D. D. C. Pochin Mould. (Batsford; 21s.)

In the last twenty years a notable series of Batsford books has done much to save the topography of Scotland from the ravages of the undisciplined imagination and the rhapsodic pen at whose mercy it has so long been exposed. In the present volume, Dr Pochin Mould ably maintains the Batsford tradition of excellence both of text and illustration in her consideration of Ichalumchille, St Columba's Iona, and the other sacred sites of Dalriada and the western Highlands.

In so far as it is this limited area which is the subject of the book, the title is misleading. Yet the book itself avoids that unpleasing impression of a collection of dead flotsam and jetsam heaped up on provincial shores by the tides of a larger history, which one so often gains from the regional study. In this, of course, the author is helped by her subject itself, since it was from these western regions, and Iona in particular, that the main tide of Scottish history was to flow. Nevertheless, to manoeuvre this tide successfully, as Dr Pochin Mould does, avoiding both the shoals of sentimentality and the rocks of special pleading (whether confessional or merely antiquarian) is a difficult task. All who love Iona will welcome her fine portrait of Columcille, founder no less of the Scottish nation than of the Scottish church.

R.T.

MONTEVERDI: CREATOR OF MODERN MUSIC. By Leo Schrade. (Gollancz; 21s.)

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI: LIFE AND WORKS. By H. F. Redlich, translated by Kathleen Dale. (Oxford; 21s.)

That two major studies of Monteverdi should have appeared at the same time and at the same price is an event of some importance. In this case it is also, for the reviewer, an event of some difficulty; for these books, though very different, have each their own virtues and their own weaknesses, so that it is hard to recommend one at the expense of the other.