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dialogue and, indeed, whole chapters where he appears to be writing a deliberate and painstaking pastiche of Mr. Hemingway's prose style—a style of which it is as easy to adopt the mannerisms as it is difficult to acquire the terseness and strength. Yet *Riot* is no mere effort of imitation. The story of a violinist who, by losing a finger, loses the art that had given his life its meaning, who marries one woman, loves another and returns to his jealous and unhappy wife on the last page, it is an interesting and, at times, a moving work. If Mr. Hunter can escape from his early model, he should develop into an unusually good story-teller.

Story-telling is Mr. T. H. White's main preoccupation; and a "rattling good story" in the Surtees manner is what he attempts to give us—*Earth Stopped* being Jorrocks freshened up here and there with a dab of new paint and a few modernist figures to brighten the foreground. Thus, among Lord Holdhard, the Countess of Scamperdale (a direct descendant of the famous Lucy Glitters) and other personages whom Surtees would not have failed to recognise, he has introduced Pansy, a fashionable photographer, Mr. Marx, a Communist, and Miss Aggie Gible, "the most photographed debutante for forty years," an obvious straggler from *Vile Bodies* or *Decline and Fall*. The result would be exhausting rather than exhilarating, were it not redeemed by a certain equestrian dash and gusto.

PETER QUENNELL

## GREEK LITERATURE

**A History of Classical Greek Literature.** By T. A. SINCLAIR. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

The ordinary reviewer of a work like this approaches it with a measure of diffidence, often verging on fear and trembling. The author is an expert, and the critic an amateur. Nevertheless, if he is intelligent and tolerably instructed, he can tell a good book from a bad one, and may, without presumption, offer his modest opinion. That opinion will be given from the point of view of one who, in Macaulay's phrase, "reads Plato with his feet on the fender"; who takes the *Odyssey* with him on holiday as the best sea-side "thriller"; who never tires of the Seventh Book

of Thucydides or of the *Apology* of Socrates; but who does not haul his Liddell and Scott from the shelf more often than he can help.

Judged from this aspect, the book seems a marvel of compression and erudition. There can be scarcely a fragment of Greek lyric which has escaped Professor Sinclair's notice, and he knows all that has been unearthed from the rubbish-heaps of Oxyrhynchus. Here it is particularly valuable; for the new light thus thrown on the history of Greek literature, broken as it is, has inevitably modified our view of it. A large part of a new satyric play, for instance, added to the old *Cyclops* of Euripides, enlarges our ideas of that remarkable *genre*. Here, then, the student has before him an accurate summary of modern knowledge, which at the same time discriminates carefully between fact and conjecture.

In appraising literary merit Professor Sinclair is notably independent: his views are his own. Thus he is not one of the blind eulogists of Aristotle's *Poetics*. "Not all that Aristotle says is equally valuable; and there is much that is only half-discussed or not at all: the work has given rise to more questions than it can answer." Above all, Professor Sinclair is no narrow devotee of pure classicism. His book points forward, "Let us not, like Aristotle, look backward only, but turn our eyes from Athens to Alexandria, from the great names of the classical period to the great names of the Hellenistic Age, nor forget that Greek literature did not die but won fresh life when her cities fell." Callimachus, Theocritus, and Lucian, to say nothing of the New Testament, are in their way as well worth reading as Aristophanes or Demosthenes.

Where brevity is so important, I think that Professor Sinclair might have saved space by omitting, *inter alia*, his analyses of the various books of Homer or of the plays of Aeschylus. People who read these, whether in the original or in translations, either find such analyses provided or can draw them up for themselves. The space thus saved could have been used in fuller explanations of the present state of the Homeric Question, or in the suggestion of parallels from other literatures; for the time has gone by when it was considered enough to treat Greek literature in isolation. How can you appreciate the *Iliad* without comparing it with *Beowulf* or the *Nibelungen Lied*? After Professor Chadwick's *Heroic Age* it is impossible to think of Achilles apart from Gunnar, or of Nestor apart from Njal: and Professor Murray, in his *Rise of the Greek Epic*, has shown how the Pentateuch may illuminate the Epic Cycle. One would have liked to hear some Sinclairiana on these points.

It seems to me that Professor Sinclair is at his best when dealing with the drama. Here his remarks are always suggestive, and (as indeed throughout the book) there are constant little hints which show that he has marked and weighed the discoveries and opinions of other scholars. His sympathies are wide, and, while plainly stirred by the grandeur of Aeschylus, he does full justice to the genius of Euripides. Hardly less admirable is his sketch of the rise and growth of Greek prose, from its tentative beginnings to its culmination in Isocrates and Plato.

The book is astonishingly accurate. I have observed but one incorrect date, and that an obvious misprint—the death of Xenophon is put "about 455" instead of "about 355."

Altogether, it is one for which we have reason to be grateful, and it is a worthy member of the series to which it belongs.

E. E. KELLET

## RECIPES FOR LOVELINESS

**Flower Decoration.** By CONSTANCE SPRY. *Dent*. 12s. 6d.

Gold and ruby and silver everlasting-flowers, aspidistras on the bamboo stand in the front window, dead plumes of pampas grass as bedraggled as winter ostriches at the Zoo, cowslips in milk-jugs, great purple and white asters in tinsel vases won on dart-stalls at country fairs, yellow and pink primroses and purple and white wild-violets floating together in blue pudding dishes, white paper roses in winter and little orange tea-roses and big white cabbage-roses in summer, wild flowers and wild grasses, white lilies and dark plum-coloured and white geraniums and the everlasting maidenhair. Thus, the flower decorations of my childhood; and, I suppose, of many another childhood too.

It seems a long way from those modest and no doubt ill-assorted flowers to Mrs. Spry's book, with its glorious Heem's frontispiece, its elegant photographs and its altogether exquisite and subtle flower arrangements. But is it? The childhood flowers have been set down at random, almost without thought, as they

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occurred to me. Yet they all have honoured places, except the aspidistra and the cowslips and the paper roses, in Mrs. Spry's book. Even the pampas grass is there and the violet, and the maidenhair. More than that: the everlasting-flowers have come back to fashion, and with them the scented geraniums and the pink and blue primroses. What the poor once set on their whatnots and slate mantelpieces, the elite and the rich employ in the fashionable drawing-rooms of to-day. Is there a moral? It would be possible to add many other decorative objects to the childhood list: not only flowers, but onions, tomatoes, marrows, seed-pods hung on the ham-hooks to dry, and even rhubarb. Strangely enough, all these are in Mrs. Spry's book, too. Not that her book contains only remnants of Victorian and Edwardian flower-fashions. If there is an exotic and expensive flower she has not mentioned it is, no doubt, an oversight. Her pages are cornucopias of strange fruit and blossoms. She talks of stephanotis and gardenia and bougainvillia and Nankeen lilies as others talk of pinks and daisies, and she uses them in turn with a prodigality that is slightly staggering.

Thus her book, though it contains the flowers of the poor, is hardly meant for the poor. Without any malice, I think it is exclusive. But in all other respects it is admirable—and much needed. The use of flowers for internal house decoration does not seem to go back much farther than the nineteenth century, and in a sprightly and engaging preface to the book the late Sir William Lawrence remarks: "When I say that the present practice in flower arrangement is on the level of English cookery, I have said it." To which one must add that though the English have never been renowned for their cooking, they have been renowned for centuries, and deservedly, for their taste and love of flowers. In Japan the art of flower arrangement is symbolic, almost religious and very ancient. But in England flowers seem to have no symbolism, religious or otherwise, except for the dead. Why is it? Judging by Mrs. Spry's book, there is no reason why this ever should have been, and still less why it should be so to-day. Women take exquisite care, as Mrs. Spry remarks, with their clothes, their furniture, their finger-nails, their food, their busts. Why not with flowers? And anyone who feels inclined to agree with Sir William

Lawrence or who sticks his or her flowers into any kind of vase without previous thought, would do well to get Mrs. Spry's book. Some of her arrangements are masterly: as for instance, the arum lilies—symbols of death if ever there were—arranged in a fine, severe black marble vase in the photograph on page 145. The wax-white, slightly reflexed trumpets, on short stems, closely packed together, are wonderfully living, a revelation. But if Mrs. Spry is an artist, she is also full of common sense, never dogmatic and rarely effusive. She is conversant with every material phase of flower arrangement: substance of petals, their form, colour, scent, restfulness, brilliance, simplicity, their colour effect in shade and sunlight and artificial light, and even their psychological effect on women and men. Red appears to delight men. Is that significant? Finally, she has included a short chapter on white flowers, symbols of blameless lives and melancholy associates of death and marriage: on which my only comment is that there are seven white flowers in my childhood bouquet.

My objections to the book are two. First that it would have been much more instructive to have the photographs, excellent though they are, coloured like the Heem's frontispiece. And second that the book appears to be designed for millionaires—though that is no reason why the poor should not steal both it and its recipes for loveliness.

H. E. BATES

## SHORTER NOTICES

**The Musical Companion.** Edited by A. L. BACHARACH. *Gollancz*. 6s.

The greatest delight of being rich, it has been said, is that one may command one's own private string quartet. It may be said without offence that the principal delight of sitting at the head of a powerful publishing house must be that one can, if one is public-spirited enough, earn more than the ordinary gratitude by the issue of such a magnificent book as this, of 750 pages and at so modest a price. The very inclusiveness with which it has been planned and the authority of its execution prevent anything remotely approaching just appraisal. An excellent introduction is formed by Book I, written by Mr. W. R. Anderson, dealing with the A.B.C. of music. The chapters on Notation, The Fundamentals of Music, Form and the Orchestra are excellent and exactly what is required by the music lover who desires to obtain some definite knowledge of the art he admires. Too often books aiming at teaching "appreciation" fail to proceed from an exact musical basis. Book II, dealing more extensively with The Orchestra and Orchestral Music has been provided by Mr. Julius Harrison, while Professor Dent has contributed Book III on Opera. Book IV on The Human Voice by Francis Toye and Dyneley Hussey is followed by Mr. Edwin Evans' splendid account of Chamber Music. The Solo Instrument by Mr. F. Bonavia gives an admirable introduction to pianoforte and stringed instrument music. Finally, there is a charming essay from Mr. Blom on Performance and Listening, of much wider interest than the title suggests.

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