Philae (not entirely impertinently, I hope, for you will come upon Philae here), and would almost call the writer 'scroobious and wily'. It is all very well for her to take her place up a palm when the weather is calm and survey all the ruins of Philae, or Timgad, or Babylon, Xanadu, Troy, Baalbek, Ninfa, Persepolis, a *kyrielle* sufficient to set even a moderately sober head ringing. 'A bad case of ruins to the head', she would say drily as one is seized with a powerful spell, and so the reader has to keep trying to account for the enthusiasm felt while Miss Macaulay leads him on from one field of ruin to another, strewn with heaven knows what inchoate lumps of masonry and recumbent columns, while from this she conjures up visions which the modern mind can scarcely assimilate: oh, the roofs of silver and cedarwood, the bright marble pillars, the gold at the gates, the floors of mosaic, the pools and lemon groves and statuary! But Miss Macaulay's eye is upon one. One must try to justify oneself.

As she herself points out, it is partly the duality which is so striking, the past splendour and the present destruction. Not very often, I suppose, does the mind have the chance to wallow simultaneously in the *Apollinische* and the *Dionysische*. 'Wallow' is the right word, too, for this is the perfect book for reading in bed before sleep, whether one speculates intellectually on the Pre-Romanticism that comes out so clearly in the cerebral eighteenth century's passion for ruins, or gluts one's innate lust for iconoclasm by considering what modern buildings one would love to ruin, or—most obscurely and perversely, though the author drops hints of such a thing—begins to see oneself in every ruin everywhere, the very image of the mortal state, of the theologian's 'wounded splendour' or the Shakespearean 'O ruined piece of nature!', and so feel oneself voluptuously and elegantly mouldering into those fragments of foundered porphyry and alabaster, those marble columns fallen, a limb here and a limb there in the dissolution of impending sleep, the broken architrave of the mind ruined in the disorder of dreams, while slumber and oblivion wait for one's own inspirited architecture, briefly or for ever.

It seems impossible to keep the rhapsodical out. Confess the perversity then, but enjoy the pleasure, for the book is well named: it is pleasure all the way through.

ELIZABETH SEWELL

RIVIÈRE. By Martin Turnell; ERNST JÜNGER, A WRITER OF OUR TIME. By J. P. Stern; SARTRE, ROMANTIC REALIST. By Iris Murdoch; MISTRAL. By Rob Lyle. (Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought). (Bowes and Bowes; 6s. each.)

This remarkable series keeps well up to its high standards with discerning essays on Rivière and Jünger. Mr Turnell dwells on Rivière's

early debt to Gide, a discipleship which made it a hard struggle for him to accept the notions of good and evil and moral effort imposed by the Church. 'I cannot wish myself different. I feel too much surprise, too much delight, too much interest in every feeling that comes to me. I do not think about its quality or its value. . . . It is there and that is enough.' This attitude, which shocked Claudel, leads Mr Turnell to cast doubt on the value of Rivière's pragmatic defence of the faith and his largely autobiographical novels. But his passionate distrust of systems was justified in the 'finesse and intellectual suppleness' of his criticism; he did more than anyone to establish the view of Racine as a poet who excelled in displaying 'the pure or direct contact between feelings' and his classical conception of literature as 'an amusement for decent folk' helped to clear a field for criticism as an independent discipline.

The cool penetrating acerbity of Mr Stern's fifty pages on the theorist of 'total mobilisation' reveals a critical mind of unusual temper and range. Jünger began life as a youthful commander of shock-troops in the first war, wrote excellent descriptions of war in *The Storm of Steel* (1920) and, after indulging in technocratic theories (c. 1930) and skirting the fringe of Nazism, emerged in 1945 as a figure in international *belles-lettres* and an idol of impressionable youth. Mr Stern's assessment of his philosophic and stylistic pretentions confirms what Rivière wrote in 1918 on the *néant intérieur* and sheer insensibility of many Germans. His judgment on contemporary German: 'a language replete with grossness, pretentiousness and abstraction' depends on his definition of abstraction as a 'defection from live experience'. He enquires as to why contempt, rather than hatred or pain, should be so frequently expressed in writers of our time, and finds the answer in the failure to respond fully to 'the living detail of divine creation'.

Miss Murdoch writes as a philosopher rather than a literary critic; she occasionally voices a doubt about the value to literature of Sartre's objectivity and up-to-date omniscience, but she is too much preoccupied with the beauties of phenomenological thinking to press this point home. Mr Lyle approaches Mistral more as worshipper than critic; he does not find it absurd to describe a bulky dialect dictionary as 'a triple mystery of love, patriotism and genius'. We wonder why Mistral addressed his 'shepherds and farm-hands' in a language more intelligible in the philological seminars of Germany than under the mulberry-trees of Provence, and long to ask just how his idealised peasantry differs from those 'stylised heraldic beasts', the worker-soldier-technocrats of Ernst Jünger. But on these topics Mr Lyle will not be drawn.

C. A. ROBSON