Reviews of books

and Tehran, 1943 (1961) and Vol. I, General, 1943 (1964), which contains the basic documents on the Moscow Conference of October 1943 (pp. 513-781). No student of the war period and of American policy can afford to neglect these very important documentary collections.

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The sub-title on the dust-cover of this very garrulous book is the high-sounding one of "A Literary Companion." Alas, readers whether English or Greek or otherwise with any critical regard for literature will quickly tire of Mr. Anderson's "game of words" (99) and his "romp and ramble" (217). The notebooks he opened on his Ionian voyage (21) tempted him into a scissors-and-paste compilation with bits of Greek scenery thrown in. Not that the local colour is wrong. But the literary quotations again and again are an ill match to the Greek background against which he flaunts them. He is honest enough to admit the possibility of being charged with having "a ragbag of a mind" (22) and yet seems sure his type of book will draw the enthusiasm of philhellenes to this assortment ill-digested though it is. Perhaps Mr. Anderson thinks of himself when dealing with Greece as equal to Proust "whose impressionism worked by metaphor and made sea appear land, land sea: the dolphin propensity of the true artist" (57). Were this book provided with an index we should find in it names both familiar and unfamiliar: Spenser, Spender, Kazantzakis, Joyce, Richard Jefferies, Rose Macaulay, (all within Book One, i.e. the first chapter) as well as Corvo, William Percy, Oppian (translated by F. L. Lucas), Philip of Thessaloniki (in the Palatine Anthology), Heidegger, and Alkiphron.

One may gather that two Greek writers in particular appeal to Mr. Anderson—Kazantzakis (cf. p. 111) and Kavafis. The latter's "Caesarian" is cited (137) where in the second line of the translation the is redundant (the Greek expression is στήν ιστορίαν). The views of Kazantzakis about his compatriots have obviously stamped themselves on Anderson (as they have on other foreigners also) and an example is to be found on p. 31: "Greeks, cunning devils with rapacious eyes." A pity such facile generalisations about nations have to be invented. Another one is to be seen on p. 33 where our author cites Robert Liddell: "for all their great qualities, the Greeks had no interior life." This
is almost like saying that no Englishman likes learning a foreign language and that all French people eat their meals out of doors!

As the book abounds with quotations its author might have helped his readers by achieving a uniform system of identifying the passages and indeed of printing them. The indentation (eg. on p. 23) is often untidy. One cannot always see at a glance whose views are being given: on p. 63, for example, any reader might be pardoned for being confused over names—Winckelmann, Hegel, Pater—or Anderson?

In a book of this kind an Englishman may be expected to keep his eye open for facts of interest to his fellow-countrymen. Among the minor blessings perhaps that Greece owes to Great Britain are the playing of cricket still in the Island of Corfu (70) and the drinking there of what in name at least is of English origin—tzintzin birra (72). The present reviewer finds the Greek menu on p. 73 much to his taste: marithes, tomato salad, barbouni and Fix beer, preceded by ouzo and mezethes. Anderson’s preference for peponi to karpousi (106) is not uncommon among Englishmen.

The Hermes of Praxiteles (Anderson doubts whether it is an original masterpiece—“more likely a copy” p. 165) exerts all its expected charm but the smile is found to be “bland,” and the infant Dionysos is dismissed as an encumbrance. Anderson should look at it again: first from the left, then from the front, and finally from the right.

Some blemishes have been observed: Ventians for Venetians (57), monastery laying white (82 lying), volcanic larva (ibid-lava), ullulations (88), Messalonghion (90), zenee (103 ξένοι), Anthony (115), Aristotelos (151), kiton (164 χιτών), Ionnina (168- Iannina/Ioannina). Anderson indulges in the impossible plurals pefkas (200) and peripteras (202). If the obscenity wrapped up in Demotic on p. 221 is really necessary then the noun must of course be συκότι.

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The author of this book has good credentials for taking an English reader on “a journey in search of the Mycenaeans.” He is a keen amateur archaeologist and a prolific writer with a score of works to his credit. In this his latest venture he sets out to pay tribute to the scholars whose pioneering has opened up the field of Mycenean research and to Michael Ventris in particular.