

REVIEWS

THE NEW IRELAND. By J. B. Morton. (Sands: The Paladin Press; 3s. 6d.)

It has often been said that the English will never understand the Irish, and, as Mr. Morton points out, this is not altogether surprising when we realise between what entirely opposed philosophies and ways of life we are trying to effect an understanding. It is most unlikely that a people whose religion is little more than that of commercial prosperity and "Big Business" will ever truly understand the ways of their neighbours whose whole activity in the spheres of economics and politics is conditioned by Catholic principles of social justice and charity and whose peasant culture is rooted in the ancient Faith of the West. However, there is much in Mr. Morton's essay that will make for understanding and indeed sympathy; for we have here, briefly, the intensely moving story of a nation which has resisted assimilation, defied long drawn out tyranny, and refused, in the face of unbelievable persecution, to sell its soul. We have the story of a nation which has at long last by almost miraculous means risen anew to give example and hope to a Europe weighed down under the despairing philosophy of materialism.

The short, objective survey of Anglo-Irish relations given in this book is sufficient to humiliate the Englishman; and it is this same humiliation (inevitable if the full facts are known) which has in the past made the ruling class in England unwilling even to discuss the end of the Partition—that artificial arrangement the sole purpose of which is "to keep in subjection a Catholic minority for the benefit of a corporation of religious bigots." The commercially prosperous England with her terrific sense of an almost divine right to her Empire must now seek, if she is prudent, the friendship of the nation she persecuted, the nation which "with patience and consummate skill has advanced towards full sovereignty." England needs that friendship of Ireland and now, after years of attempted co-ercion, she realises that the only possible association must be an association of equals. For the Irishman we thought a devil-may-care roysterer now shows himself in truth a man of passionate sincerity and of a dignity more common in ages less materialistic than our own.

Mr. Morton presents an interesting summary of the achievements of Fianna Fail whose policy and legislation, under the leadership of Mr. de Valera, have culminated in the enactment of the Constitution of 1937—one of the most significant documents of our time. The basis of this Constitution is "applied Catholic social teaching" and more particularly those principles of social justice given in the Papal Encyclicals. We are shown how this Constitution "seeks to abolish those abuses which have

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so far dogged the steps of industrial capitalism—abuses which spring from the hellish idea that a man employed in industry is a machine for increasing dividends, and is entitled to no more than his pay.” Perhaps the most useful pages of this book are those which describe the sane Irish attitude to the monstrosity called “industrialism” and to the heresy called “progress.” The distributist nature of the new economy is strongly emphasised, for “the Irish Government has never lost sight of the fact that Ireland is an agricultural country, and that the life best suited to her people is a life based on an equitable distribution of property.” Legislation on agricultural matters has freed the Irish farmer from the machinations of the “anonymous usurers who play with the necessities of life to satisfy their own bestiality.” Mr. de Valera told his people that this legislation would probably involve the foregoing of certain things and that “they would not have an easy time.” “But his hearers belonged to a nation which has known less of luxury than any other, has learned to be happy with very little in the way of goods or money, and has immense reserves of spiritual strength to draw on.” “It can at least be said that since Fianna Fail came into power no Irish man or woman need endure the agonies of destitution, which so many other countries have begun to take for granted, as the natural accompaniment of industrial capitalism on a lunatic scale.”

The last chapter deals with Ireland and her relations with Europe and emphasises her value to the League of Nations. Perhaps she has been too ready to trust the integrity and single-mindedness of the great Powers, but at least to this collection of international adventurers she has shown a courage and sincerity which has not passed unobserved despite the cynicism and cowardice of her more pretentious neighbours.

BERT WATTS.

MISCELLANEOUS

ORDRE REEL: Paul Chanson. (Les Editions du Cerf; 12 frs.)

156 pages of dialogue, some of it as curt and rapid as that of an American talking film, put forward the principles and the organisation of an economic order which proposes to supplant capitalism and overleap the fascist-communist dilemma. A sufficiently tall order in practice. In theory Paul Chanson's thesis touches with extraordinary clarity and skill on certain precise points of difficulty in preparing “cet ordre nouveau d'inspiration chrétienne auquel nous devons tous travailler.” Fundamentally supple; contingent and relative with regard to economic institutions, *Ordre Réel* is determined “par les réalités