

W. B. YEATS: THE TRAGIC PHASE. By Vivienne Koch. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 10s. 6d.)

A CELTIC MISCELLANY. By Kenneth Jackson. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 18s.)

The *Last Poems* of Yeats give us much insight into his mind at the end of his days; into his moods, his convictions, his craft of verse. He is 'making his soul', looking back on his life, questioning himself, wondering what effect his work has had, sure only of the power of intellect and spirit, of the need of still trying to solve the riddle of existence. Inevitably the recurrent themes of his earlier poetry pass before him: Cuchulain, Maud Gonne, the Greek artificers; the old man's eagle mind takes a last look at them. He undergoes moods of rage and lust; he finds that decrepitude does not bring despair; he hears a voice from the caverns bidding him rejoice; he knows that God is form. To artists he leaves this vision and the conviction that they must express Ireland's vital and varied life in their work.

In her book Miss Koch selects a dozen of these poems for close critical analysis. Her avowed aim is to keep each poem at the centre of her focus and to prevent what so often happens, the straying of psychological and historical haeres from the vertical roads of the margin across the horizontal ridges of the text. Her method is not a new one but it is one which needs constant use with a poet to whom words alone are certain good. On the whole it proves useful here in helping us to enjoy the poems within their own frameworks, rather than to understand them with reference to things outside them. In places, however, Miss Koch's belief that the general direction of these poems is determined by Yeats's feelings about sex seems to blur her focus, notably in her examination of 'The Wild Old Wicked Man', where Yeats's statement that he is 'mad about the hills' is seen by her as a way of expressing desire, whereas it plainly is intended to convey the sense of loneliness.

I think that she is also mistaken in her opinion that 'An Acre of Grass' is a self-dramatising poem or that it is in any sense didactic. It has direct lyrical intensity and is much more immediate than the previous poem; and the words 'My temptation is quiet' set the tone of a very different mood and attitude. In general, however, many readers will find her approach to these poems refreshing.

Professor Jackson's book is an anthology of translations from the six Celtic languages; the bulk of the originals are Irish; there are several from the Welsh, notably some fine renderings of the poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym, and from Scottish Gaelic; and a handful from Breton, Cornish and Manx. The quality of the selections is excellent. The characteristics which remain in mind after the book has been closed are

varied: delight in fantastic exaggeration; lyrical impressionism with a fine sense of colour and of the concrete; keen satire and ironic humour. The editor's introductions to each section of the book are particularly valuable in removing misconceptions as to the nature of Celtic literature; misconceptions which derive partly from MacPherson, partly from the romantic and mystical colouring found in Yeats and the early writers of the Irish Literary Revival, that 'overcharged colour of the Romantic movement' which Yeats later discarded from his verse. Professor Jackson is perhaps a little harsh on such writers, for, however defective their knowledge of Celtic literature, they accomplished much. Perhaps a Welshman rather than a scholar speaks in his justifiable protest that 'a Welshman can hardly publish a book of the most realistic and cynical short stories without some reviewer tracing in them the evidences of "Celtic mysticism" and the like'. This anthology will do much to reveal the true nature of that literature.

ROGER MCHUGH

THE NEW SOCIETY. By Peter F. Drucker. (Heinemann; 15s.)

From the title one might be inclined to think that this is another 'brave new world' type of book. Far from it. As the author himself rightly says, 'This is an anti-utopian book. It aims throughout not at the ideal society, but at a *livable society for our time*'. In only one respect does this work remind one of the Huxley classic of the early thirties: the author divides industrial society historically into Before Ford and After Ford. 'The true revolutionary principle (of our time) is the idea of mass production. Nothing ever before recorded in the history of man equals, in speed, universality and impact, the transformation this principle has wrought in the foundations of society in the forty short years since Henry Ford turned out the first "Model T".' It is the author's contention that the basic problems of industrial society, the problems which have come into being with the assembly-line form of production, cannot be solved by changing the 'system', i.e. the superstructure of political organisation, but must be solved in the enterprise itself.

He distinguishes in the enterprise three aspects. It is at one and the same time an economic, political and social institution. The new factor, and the source of most of the major problems in our society, is that the first of these must take precedence of the other two. The law of the enterprise is profitability. In other words, the enterprise must survive and it must serve society.

Mr Drucker demonstrates how this principle can be satisfied while preserving the status and function of the worker. His solution, which is most attractive and practical, is too long to detail in a review, but the basis of it is the division of the enterprise into the economic society,