

dispassionate analytic studies, fully controlled by either the literary-critical or the philosophical discipline, or both—though there are many examples here of shrewd ‘objective’ insight. In so far as he is not registering, in more or less autobiographical terms, his specific personal response to their work, M. Mauriac treats them somewhat as novelist’s characters—perhaps sometimes too much, as Mauriac characters. Thus his central stress in the Molière essay is on the relation, incestuous or quasi-incestuous, between Molière (‘the tragic Molière’) and his illegitimate daughter, and he seems less concerned to evaluate the significance, historical or intrinsic, of (for instance) Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Flaubert, than to bring out their psychological (and theological) interest as ‘cases’. There is, of course, nothing objectionable *per se* about this mode of approach, but in some places certain obsessions of M. Mauriac’s own—obsessions which have done a great deal to deflect, or even stultify, his own talent as an artist—introduce a disturbing vibration, all the more dangerous because of the absence of any clear-cut discipline controlling the study. The best of the essays, in my opinion, is that on Pascal, brief and historical-question-begging as it is (e.g. Pascal’s authorship of the *Discours des Passions de l’Amour*, on which much of the essay’s force depends, is asserted without discussion). It should be read along with that of T. S. Eliot. The articles on the Guérins do not, to an English reader, seem to improve markedly on Arnold’s, and those on Loti and Barrès will not probably convince those who do not already share M. Mauriac’s high estimate of these writers.

The disturbance of judgment I have referred to (it is evident here in the embarrassingly personal resonance) comes out most clearly in the piece on M. Mauriac’s only non-French hero, who is Mr Graham Greene. If Mr Greene be indeed equivalent in interest and significance to (say) Pascal, the (surely necessary?) demonstration would have to be done with some degree of critical detachment. M. Mauriac shows none: he is responding far too wholeheartedly to such un-free preoccupations of Mr Greene’s work as are nearest to his own. It seems apposite to quote Saint-Simon’s remark about Fénelon’s impulsion towards Madame de Guyon: *leur sublime s’amalgama*.

There are some well-reproduced portraits, among which stands out arrestingly the wistful sensuous face of Molière.

W. W. ROBSON

IRELAND AND THE IRISH. By Charles Duff. (Boardman; 15s.)

THE EMERALD ISLE. By Geoffrey Taylor. (Evans Brothers; 12s. 6d.)

There is much in common between the two books listed above. Both are by able writers and mature critics, who—oddly enough—both come from ‘Ascendancy’ Protestant families in Sligo.

Both are discerningly proud of a country that doesn't apologise for holding to the old ways—religion, the land, family life, individual independence. Neither of them is going to waste time raking up recent 'troubles' of any kind; though Mr Duff uses half his available space setting the historical stage for an imaginary English tourist who is then given a choice of ten centres, three in the North and seven in Eire, from which to explore the country. His is probably the better introduction to give a stranger starting out on his first visit.

Mr Taylor's book is the one that the lover of Ireland will want to keep. To begin with he is quite honest about Irish Christianity, which is all 'Christianity with a difference'. It is not only the Catholic who, however travelled, finds the climate trying. It is the unfortunate Anglican doing his best to hit it off with the Church of Ireland. It is the sober Presbyterian from Glasgow endeavouring to tune in to the Orange war-drums.

Both authors are candid about the Republic's main economic disability—a universal one, but peculiarly dangerous to Eire. Those who make the biggest money are not those who do the country's vital work. This is Mr Duff's verdict, and a sound one. Both writers give you an account of professional cultures. Mr Taylor is acceptably wanting in reverence for established idols; Mr Duff, as a schoolboy, knew Joyce. Neither gives its due to the admirable amateur drama, which—in the Dublin-Wicklow-Wexford area at any rate—does so much for creative enjoyment.

Both authors have collected what one may call the stock illustrations, which are fascinating if you have never seen them before.

The somewhat impish Mr Taylor, who enjoys dredging history for unlikely hauls, makes Bishop Berkeley, as the prophet of Sinn Fein, enquire whether a nation that can be clad in wool and eat good bread (pot-oven bread, not the Dublin baker's loaf of today), beef, mutton, poultry and fish, and keep out foreign imports, 'ought much to be pitied'?

HELEN PARRY EDEN

WILLINGLY TO SCHOOL. By Hubert Van Zeller. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

Most of this book is a sketch of life and people at Downside School about thirty years ago: a subject unlikely, one might suppose, to interest those who don't remember that extravagant and debonair world. Yet the supposition would be partly foolish. Certainly, Old Gregorians (of that vintage) will devour the book, even if they find its cheerfulness a little selective. But everyone who likes wit and kindness blended would enjoy this 'parade of personalities rich, diverse and not infrequently weird' (I quote the dust-cover). Moreover, this is something of an historical document: first-hand intimate memoirs of a little world within