

uncommon. As Mrs Wood writes: 'The normal relationship is an unspectacular one of give and take'. Her study goes far towards filling a gap of which historians of English monasticism have been increasingly aware in recent years; but is it merely carping criticism to suggest that the spiritual factor might have been given greater weight?

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THE IRISH AND CATHOLIC POWER. By Paul Blanshard. (Derek Verschoyle; 18s.)

This is a much more worthwhile book than either of its two predecessors. In *Freedom and Catholic Power*, and in *Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power*, Mr Blanshard's theme was the ultimate incompatibility between the Church and Democracy. In the present work, written to meet an Irish Jesuit challenge, he takes the Republic of Ireland as an actual Catholic democratic State, described in terms of what its own citizens say of it; and he also takes these citizens themselves, the Irish people, as the missionaries of a spiritual empire long-since busy colonizing in all the English speaking-countries. This is a much more realistic way of driving home the original warning. It is also much more psychologically persuasive. For there are those who, left cold by arguments about abstract Catholic theory, can be made to sweat by descriptions of concrete Irish practice.

Not that Mr Blanshard is wittingly unfair or designedly misleading. His good faith and prophetic zeal are patent: indeed, whenever he gets on to his now-familiar plaint against countries 'whose laws provide for no divorce, no birth-control, and no public school system', he is a redoubtable puritan of a kind. The subtlety of implications, which marred the two earlier books, is left this time to Mr Montgomery Hyde's Introduction, which has some strictures upon the kind of propaganda of which it is itself a neat example. (Incidentally, Mr Hyde seems to think that, if Torquemada has gone, so has the Holy Office.)

True, there are occasions when Mr Blanshard cannot resist having it both ways—as when (on one and the same page) the Irish clergy appear wanting in not discouraging gambling, and yet, when they do discourage alcoholism (*via* the Matt Talbot case), slightly comic. And there are still some extravagant highlights, such as the 'atmosphere of genteel terror' that pervades the country (albeit on page 56 'speech is so free that it easily passes over into physical violence'), or the fact that 'the Irish Republic is the world's best show-piece of Catholic tolerance in a Catholic society, and that is one of the reasons why the Vatican *permits* a demonstration of liberalism in Ireland'. Occasionally he baffles us altogether, as when he leaves us speculating as to which of

two things he disapproves of the more, as a good democrat: the lawlessness of the 1922 rebels, or the ecclesiastical power of the Irish bishops who excommunicated so many thousands of them. Yet in the very act of reflecting, as the reader will at many points, that his insights would have been sharper had he stayed in the country even longer, we recall that he has answered *that* at the very beginning, and most engagingly: 'Nobody can write a book about Ireland which the Irish will like'. Nor (by the same token) an English review of one either, written for a Welsh editor.

The historical sections, on Catholicism in Ireland and on its rise in the United States, are remarkably fair. So is his earnest attempt to disentangle the religious from the political elements, and both from the nationalistic. On a number of major thorny issues one can love or (alternatively) loathe his verdicts without thereby warping one's understanding of his main burden:

'I found the Maria Duce leaders [Fr Denis Fahey and all that] earnest, sincere, frustrated, provincial, and profoundly uncultured—resembling the least literate superfundamentalist leaders in the southern States of the United States.'

'To an outsider the appeal to ancient history in the dispute over Irish Partition is as dated as would be a claim to the ownership of Florida by a tribe of Seminole Indians.'

'Northern Ireland's workers . . . are inclined to reason: "Why should we weaken our tenure as British citizens by dividing the Unionist vote when we can get the benefit of British socialism without the risks of surrendering our country to Catholic power?"'

'Northerners think that the Southerners, if they are as ardent in opposing Communism as they say they are, should join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation unconditionally. "To suggest that Ulster is an obstacle in the way is a transparent pretence. . . ."'

One does not have to be an adversary of the Church to see something disedifying in a censorship which behaves as fantastically as Mr Blanshard's chapter shows. Nor to wag one's head at the obscurantist attitude that unseated the Catholic Minister of Health in 1952 during the Social Security scare. The Irish bishops were but echoing then the arguments whereby their forerunners a century ago would have banned anaesthetics. A century hence, the one unhappy episode will be appraised throughout the Church as the other already is. The Catholic world learns: too slowly for the liberals, but it learns.

The range of subject in this book is wide. It covers Clericalism, Censorship, Education, Morality Laws ('Sin and Crime in a Moral Nursery'), the Partition Question, the Irish cultural empire abroad, and the future of the United States if the 'Irish pattern' comes to

predominate there. Mr Blanshard's obsession with divorce and birth-control persists. So does his fantasy that the Church is *in essentia* a power-engine, politically controlled in every country by the Vatican and Vatican expediency. If he is right, how odd it is that the Church has not contrived some specious formula for condoning other people's birth-prevention, to hasten the very day he dreads, the day when the Catholic Church will take over the United States by democratic majority vote.

As to the case for the American public school, so vital to United States politicians, and so ably defended on educational grounds by Dr James B. Conant, no argument could move an English middle-class voter less. He devotes a whole chapter to it, concentrating on the social and national divisiveness of 'segregated education'. It is well done, and full of valuable information. But one would like to hear (say) a Belgian on its overtones, coming from a country where the language-division is deeper still and yet the national divisiveness of it nil.

One change which a Catholic United States would certainly make in American life—the question of racial discrimination—the book does not discuss. We can only assume, from his silence, that he would not be against this change: for otherwise, being Mr Blanshard, he would assuredly have said so.

Mr Blanshard is the higher critic who begins where the other exegetes leave off. It is no answer, to him, to say (as in our apologetic we do) that Ireland is a country in which the Church, having all the power which in some other countries she misuses, *does* justly and with complete impartiality to all. It is no reply, either, to point out that the staunchest defenders of the Irish Constitution and administration are the Protestant minority. For Mr Blanshard tells us these things himself, and most emphatically, and yet his charge against the Church remains: that it is no less a danger to freedom than is naked totalitarianism.

There is in fact no answer at all. For the conversation has been proceeding in divergent directions from the start. Mr Blanshard represents that latter-day form of liberalism which believes in subsidizing fully those (but only those) who would let everybody else do any mortal thing they liked. Accept that kind of position, and how *can* the Church be right? The issue is as simple as that. At one point Mr Blanshard himself canalizes it: 'In perspective the segregated schools of the Irish Republic can be rated good or bad according to the observer's attitude towards denominational aims in education'. But if haply he had said that at the outset of his first researches into the Church, we might by now have been the poorer by the lack of three very stimulating books.

And this present one in particular. Certainly the Irish character has mellowed him where Papal documents could hardly hope to. Or the *Tylwyth Teg* have got him. In this book he is actually so whimsical as to offer the defendants their own let-out: 'It is possible that the climate has had an even more serious effect on Irish character than British imperialism or Catholic faith'.

A. C. F. BEALES

WELSH AND SCOTTISH NATIONALISM: A Study. By Sir Reginald Coupland, with a Foreword by Professor Jack Simmons. (Collins; 25s.)

I have only once qualified for the adjective 'cute'. 'So you actually speak Welsh', an American said to me. 'You must be cute! And in what way does it differ from the other dialects of English?' The ignorance of the average Englishman concerning Welsh and Scottish affairs might not reach quite those levels, but nevertheless one meets with it every day. It is not merely an ignorance of a set of historical or cultural facts; it is an indignant surprise that there should be any assertion of rival 'nations' within this island.

Sir Reginald Coupland's book is an attempt to explain this problem in the light of the thesis that the nation and the state are not identical units, and that within the framework of one state several nationhoods can, and, in our case, should, flourish.

'Yet it cannot be said that a nation can only come to birth in the cradle of a state and cannot live without its aid. Political combination on a slighter scale has sometimes been enough. The Welsh nation has maintained its existence despite the fact it acquired statehood only in a very loose form and only for transient periods. . . . The Scottish nation was embodied at an early stage in a national state, which grew steadily in strength as time went on; but at the outset of the eighteenth century the Scottish state disappeared . . .' (p. xvi).

Thus it is that Scottish nationalism is primarily historical, Welsh nationalism primarily cultural in inspiration and appeal. The two situations are different because their historical origins are different, and common cause is joined mainly on the negative appeal of throwing over the English hold over their countries.

It is easy enough to dismiss all this with a superior shrug of the shoulders. Why should we rake all this up at a time when the whole emphasis is on the international and the universal as the only means of attaining to a stable world peace? Such an argument is either *simpliste* or the kind of impatience that comes from a failure to understand outside one's own world of accepted situations and inherited prejudices.