

accident that their verse has been preserved. A gem such as 'The Scribe in the Woods' is a colophon in the Priscian MS at St Gall, while the well-known Pangur Bán—'The Scholar and his Cat'—occurs among the marginalia of a manuscript in the monastery of St Paul at Unterdrauberg, Carinthia.

Their period saw the height of the anchoretic movement in Ireland, and the blackbird sang with a new note in the woods above Loch Laíg. In centres such as Tallaght of Maolruan, Swords and Finglas the native culture had met the Latin tradition of the Church on relatively equal terms. The resulting synthesis gave to Europe its first vernacular Christian literature. Understandably therefore more than half of the present anthology is given to 'Monastic Poems'—the composition of monks and hermits, and the verse ascribed to St Patrick, St Colmcille and St Ita.

The second part, 'Secular Poems', indicates that the spiritual awakening of a people was as varied in its manifestations as it was intense and passionate. 'Liadan and Cuirithir' has all the bitter-sweet of the world's great love-songs, while the ebb and flow of the Atlantic echoing throughout 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare' adds power and poignancy to that almost incredible anticipation of Villon's genius in *Regrets de la Belle Héaulmière*. Included here too are the best of the Fiana poems with their evocation of May-day, skimming swallows and whispering rushes and the sea asleep.

Enough has been said to show the importance of this book, and how it brings home to the reader the variety and richness of early Irish poetry.

AUGUSTINE VALKENBURG, O.P.

IRISH JOURNEY. By Halliday Sutherland. (Bles; 15s.)

When, in 1955, Dr Sutherland paid a flying visit to Ireland in deference to admirers who had been pressing him to write a book about the country, it was by no means his first visit. But if the distinguished author was too preoccupied on these earlier occasions to gather anything more than a superficial impression of Irish life, he clearly had even less time to spare on this latest and more leisurely visit. Indeed, the impression one gets from the resulting *Irish Journey* is that Dr Sutherland could have written it just as easily without ever setting foot in Ireland. For granting that he spent days in Dublin and in the West, and that he swept through south-west Munster to Cobh, Killarney and Doneraile, his book is at the most only a vehicle for the expression of many preconceived ideas about things Irish. A title such as 'Ireland Debunked' would therefore be less pretentious than *Irish Journey*.

I do not know whether or not people in Ireland care to think of their country as 'debunkable', but I am quite sure that they do not take kindly to debunking by hit-and-miss journalism. For myself, the kindest thing I can say about *Irish Journey* is that its most credible pages are six (pp. 85-91) given over to statistics and a report on unmarried Irish mothers in London provided by the Crusade of Rescue; even though the arithmetic on page 85 is singularly slipshod, the basic figures paint an alarming picture. For the rest there is the odd medical aside which seems to be expected of the author, a rehash of the Honor Tracy saga, a tedious chapter on the banning in Ireland some twenty years ago of an earlier book of the author's, a passion for hearsay, and some windy reasoning. There are, however, some gripping stories, the best of which appear to be left-overs from earlier 'travel' books; but many of the 'native' tales have very long beards.

But there are, nevertheless, some memorable passages, if only because they are in egregious bad taste. 'I walked along the path', Dr Sutherland writes of a visit to a home run by nuns in the West, 'and was mobbed by over a score of the younger children. They said nothing but each struggled to shake my hand. Their hands were clean and cool. Then I realized that to these children I was a potential adopter who might take some boy or girl away to a real home. It was pathetic. Finally I said, "Children, I'm not holding a reception." . . . At the Dogs' Home, Battersea, every dog barks at the visitor in the hope that it will be taken away.' *Molto simpatico*, no doubt.

LEONARD BOYLE, O.P.

ALL IRELAND. By Stephen Rynne. (Batsford; 21s.)

This is a book about Ireland by an Irishman. It is ostensibly addressed to the tourist or intending visitor. There is a tour of the country in the background which provides the framework for the book, and there is a selection of beautiful photographs chosen with the most delicate taste to show not only the outlines of beauty spots but to convey the atmosphere of the countryside and even the subtleties of the weather. It is altogether a most charming book which cannot be too highly recommended to anyone who wishes to know or to feel the Irishness of Ireland.

It is only fair to say that Mr Rynne frequently 'keeps a straight eye on the scenery' and lines up enough of the conventional 'sights' to justify calling the book a book for tourists, but his heart is not in 'the whole silly business of demanding castles and waterfalls in combination with clean hotels and moderately priced meals'. His eye is for the people, his ear for the tune of their speech and, what is frequently more important, the tone of their silence. He is full of sympathy