

a new view of the dreaming spires. It civilises the Meadow in the root sense of the word and gives Oxford some "Backs." It puts St. Clement's and St. Ebbe's on the map for future development and preserves the ancient city. It is only a mile long and has only one bridge, and that over the Cherwell, and is by far the most economical thing to do.'

Writing as one with no authority in such matters, I agree with Mr. Dale on the reasonableness and desirability of the scheme. But against his too lyrical enthusiasm I would suggest in the first place that the quality of the work done is unlikely to be a continuous delight; we may learn much from Inigo Jones, but we cannot revive his workmen. Secondly, were the scheme carried out, Oxford generally would still be far from achieving the unity of—say—a typical eighteenth-century town.

Nevertheless, I wish his project well. How far his arguments will prevail with those in power is another matter. Neither Town nor University is notably pervious to reason, though the Gown likes to believe it is. The worldly-wise thing would be to talk a good deal about reason while actually stressing authority (i.e. the opinions of eminent men, English and foreign, with conspicuous degrees) and the danger of ridicule (from the eminent men aforesaid and socially important people). Such obliqueness might persuade.

W.S.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF ENGLAND AND WALES. By H. O. Evennett. (Cambridge University Press; 3s. 6d.).

It is an excellent thing that the *Current Problems* series sponsored by the Cambridge University Press should extend its hospitality to a Catholic statement on Catholic schools. Mr. Evennett has done the work with tact, thoroughness, clarity and success—given of course that the thing required here and now was to provide solid information for non-Catholics rather than material for Catholic discussion. Information there is in plenty, historical and statistical, with a lucid explanation of the present crisis for Catholic schools. ('Though the Government proclaims "Equal educational opportunity for all," its policy spells in practice "Unequal financial support for different religious views."'). There are also many skilful asides, removing, one hopes, certain common misunderstandings of Catholic things.

For Catholics themselves it is a most urgent matter that the Catholic places of education described and appreciated here should also be places of Catholic education in the fullest sense. For Mr. Evennett's purpose it would have been inopportune to examine the work and aims of our schools in the light of first principles, but he rightly allows a place for self-criticism (pp. 101-2 and 121-3), and there is food for thought in his reflection: 'In theory, at least, the Catholic faith should be able to provide that common background between

boys of all classes which will not exist in their social outlook and habits.' Much remains to be done in ridding ourselves of complacency, and first principles in the matter of education are not as yet staled by familiarity. To take one point only—St. Thomas says briefly: *A pater filii accipere debent non solum esse per generationem sed disciplinam per instructionem.* What does that mean for us to-day? Is it not usually held that a Catholic father sufficiently does his duty if he chooses this school rather than that to educate his sons—in so far as politics and economics still permit any choice? And is this merely doctrinal development?

W.S.

THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE. Studies in Modern French Literature. By Wallace Fowlie. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.).

DE VILLON A PEGUY. By Wallace Fowlie. (L'Arbre, Montreal.).

A book like 'The Spirit of France' really does more harm than good. The title is promising, the subject is promising, the publisher's blurb is more than promising: the latter might be about a different book altogether, for it gives special mention to Léon Bloy whom the author does not mention at all. The book reads like a verbal translation of a jerky, hop-skip-and-jump conversation between a group of slick young Frenchmen rather impressed with their own cleverness. It contains information, but leaves no mark on the memory but irritation.

The French book has an endearing preface by Henri Focillon, and a disarming dedication in which the author's love of France is simply told. In these sentiments I am wholly with him. His French is very good indeed, not perfect: the effect is somewhat childish. It is a little surprising to learn that Péguy, the militant dreyfusiste, was 'exempt from political cares' until 1905. Good intentions are not a substitute for verification of facts, and approximations invalidate the good intentions and leave us unconvinced. What a pity.

R.B.

IRISHMAN'S DAY. By John Boland, M.P., South Kerry, 1900—1918. (Macdonald; 5s.).

This is a book which will be valuable in years to come. It is valuable now, for many of us will recall, if only from our newspapers, the persons and things which made news and history in our ears if not under our eyes. Newspaper-cuttings, Hansard, and several books more human still are used, the author tells us, as the hard bones of an interesting disquisition on Parliament and its manners, customs and daily business, witnessed at first hand by a Chief Whip of the Irish Party and filtered through a humane and temperate mind somewhat resembling the special calm of Maurice Baring. Front Bench manners seem admirably to disinfect the record from partisanship and give it the impartial tone of a good historian.