

way that they would of a neighbour'. Who in modern Europe has, for example, a devotion to St Remigius, St Willibrord, or St Boniface which could compare with Irish devotion to St Patrick and numberless other primitive saints? It does not particularly matter that the historical facts should, in this devotion, be heavily overlaid with fable. The truth remains that there is a sufficient sense of continuity with the past for its remote heroes to abide as the embodiment of contemporary religious feelings and aspirations. In nothing is this continuity more marked than in the extraordinary, perhaps unique, appeal that work in the foreign missions has for the Irish. One can see from the earliest beginnings this openness to the roads and seaways in the very situation of the monastic sites like St Enda's monastery at Killeany, or Clonmacnoise on the Shannon. As Dr Mould makes so clear, they tend to be chosen at focal points for intercourse, places in which the Celtic rhythm of missionary sorties and quasi-eremitical retirement could be maintained. The admirable illustrations, particularly the double page 50-51, help one to picture the settlements in the days of their occupation when even the books were not in presses but hung in satchels on pegs as though a man would take them, like his hat, before leaving. It is curious that the last time so itinerant a way of life—we are told St Cuthbert lived it—was used in England to much purpose was in the missions of John Wesley, and his achievement bears witness to the fact that in the intervening years it had lost none of its effectiveness.

If there is any weakness in Dr Mould's book it is in its comparisons with other contemporary Christian cultures, and especially in her estimate of the influence of the Irish abroad. But while the learned will be happy to find a number of things to quarrel with, it can be safely said that this book will give much pleasure to those who know how to make the right reservations. What these are may best be gleaned from the delightful stories gathered together in the last chapter on Celtic vision and romance, some of which, in Dr Mould's own words, 'like the sea-cat in the story of St Brendan, fattened enormously in the rich pastures of Irish imagination'.

ÆLRED SQUIRE, O.P.

CHARLES PÉGYU: *THE PURSUIT OF SALVATION*. By Yvonne Servais. (Cork University Press; B. H. Blackwell, Ltd.; 25s.)

This is a serious and substantial book, being an exposition of Pégyu's life and work until 1909, in which year he underwent the period of deep depression from which he emerged with the highly idiosyncratic status of a fervent non-practising Catholic. It is part of Mlle Servais' purpose to show that the elements of faith were always latent in him and in chapters XVIII and XIX especially she traces the gradual development of his Christian belief. The subtitle of her book reveals its underlying thesis, Pégyu's pursuit of salvation for mankind passing from the purely temporal sphere

to the eternal, with no lessening of concern for the temporal welfare of the needy.

The exposition of Péguy's views is no doubt an arduous task and, if Mlle Servais' book is free neither from repetition nor from tediousness, it must be said that these are also undeniable characteristics of the writer she treats. It is a scrupulous and painstaking exposition, based on a thorough knowledge of the texts. Those who have never had the courage to complete the reading of the first *Jeanne D'Arc* will find in chapters IV and V a full account of this long play. Those unfamiliar or only slightly acquainted with the life and work of Péguy will find in these pages a dependable narrative giving the essence of what he was and what he stood for, an uncompromising defender of moral values and a constant seeker after truth, faithful always to his discoveries, to the successive phases of his thought. With regard to Péguy's ultimate religious position, Mlle Servais shows a commendable fairness, a complete freedom from any tendency to overstatement.

The aim of Mlle Servais seems mainly expositive. She reproduces or summarises what Péguy himself wrote and any criticism that she makes is in very vague and general terms. Indeed, in the earlier chapters especially, she creates the impression of a man near-perfect, in undisputable possession of a monopoly of rightmindedness. To the foreigner Péguy can never make the appeal that he does to certain of his countrymen. Apart from the fact that he has to be understood against a detailed background of purely French political and social issues, his patriotism seems too chauvinistic, his religion too racial. It is difficult to sympathise fully with a religious-patriotic conception which, even though with intentional whimsicality, makes God say, in *Eve*, that he is not sure whether love of country does not come before love of himself, and in *Le Mystère des saints Innocents*, that he is a Frenchman.

It is a fault of Mlle Servais' book that the events and personalities of the period are seen almost entirely through the eyes of Péguy. It is true that she refers now and then to his exaggeration and to his injustice, but she makes no serious attempt to correct his perspective. What she writes of Renan, Taine, and Jaurès, for instance, shows too close an identification with Péguy's polemics. Those to whom Péguy was hostile are treated in too cavalier a fashion. However, this book is obviously not intended to offer a critical view of Péguy and it must be regarded as exposition designed for the reader of English, who is here provided with an authentic distillation of Péguy's discursive thoughts and an appreciative underscoring of his moral integrity. The later chapters are, to my mind, the best, particularly those dealing with the religious orientation of this dauntless founder of the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*.

ERNEST BEAUMONT