

faculties, it is possible for an undergraduate in the faculty of Archaeology to follow a course covering in detail just what is set out in this book in the barest outline.

It cannot, of course, but be an outline, or even a series of impressions as to what the lecturer, or writer, in question thought most important to tell his non-specialist audience. Eight essays to cover a period from 2,000 B.C. to A.D. 1066, not to speak of some remarks on our even more distant ancestors, the first approximate date for whom is 600,000 B.C.; it ought to result in confusion through trying to say too much in a confined space, or else a complete falling apart. The result, in fact, is one of both clarity and cohesion. All the writers are expert in their field; and all simplify with the authority that only the expert can have.

Individual praise or criticism can only really be a matter of personal taste: Dr Daniel's summary of the prehistoric peoples inhabiting this country from the earliest times is masterly; and Mr H. B. Blair writes with charm, even, of the six hundred years of Anglo-Saxon and Norse influence and rule. But it does seem a pity that the account of the Christian Celtic West could not have contained more about Wales.

One is grateful for the index, and the illustrations are excellent, although it would have been pleasant to have had just one photograph in colour of one of the exquisite pieces of *La Tène* art. More seriously, in a book like this, written by scholars but essentially 'popular', they would do better not packed together at the end, but scattered attractively and in their appropriate places throughout the text.

RACHEL ATTWATER

A SHORT HISTORY OF IRELAND. By J. C. Beckett. (Hutchinson's University Library; 8s. 6d.)

This is a notable addition to a well-established series. Within two hundred pages Mr Beckett (Lecturer in Modern History in the Queen's University at Belfast) has managed to present a balanced and up-to-date account of Irish history from the earliest times to the present day. The bulk of the book is given over to post-reformation history, presumably because more work has been done on that period in recent years than on pre-reformation history to which only a small portion of the book is devoted. Yet this is not to detract from the value of what Mr Beckett has written on the early period: the account is calm, objective and informed; and when dealing with the medieval Irish Church does not, so far as I can see, subscribe to some of the excesses of the O.U.P. *History of the Church of Ireland*. I hope, however, that when he says that 'there is no satisfactory history of the Roman Church in Ireland' (p. 193: Reading List) he does not thereby imply that the *History of the Church of Ireland* which he has listed a few lines before is a satisfactory history of that Church.

The post-reformation section is compelling, and much that is the product of recent research has been unobtrusively worked in. Some of the religious glamour with which the native chieftains are usually surrounded is gently dissipated; but the strong Catholic feeling of the masses which was maintained so strikingly by the 'poor friars beggars' and worked on so successfully by the Jesuit missionaries, is allowed its full value. Mr Beckett handles the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with great skill, and having picked his way warily through the events of the last fifty years brings his survey of Irish history to a close with reflections on the current problem of partition, which, though obvious, have not been faced up to fully on either side of the Border. Partition, he thinks, does not depend upon a physical boundary which can be removed by political action; it depends upon very important differences in outlook between two groups of people: and though these differences may be accentuated by political division they will not necessarily disappear as a result of enforced political union: 'The most fundamental difference is probably that of religion. In the republic the Roman Catholic church has a special position assigned to it by the constitution, and though this is rather a matter of prestige than of formal authority the church does exercise an enormous influence on all departments of life, especially on social legislation and on foreign policy. The protestant population, only seven per cent of the whole, has no choice but to accept this position. In an all-Ireland state the protestants would number one quarter of the total population and the friction would be dangerous, if not disastrous. The real partition of Ireland is not on the map but in the minds of men.' Such a viewpoint need not be dismissed airily. Rather the way in which it is met should bear some relation to the sincerity with which it has been put forward.

LEONARD BOYLE, O.P.

GREAT MEN. By François Mauriac. Translated by Elsie Pell. (Rockliff; 15s.)

The 'great men' are all, with one exception, French writers; the French writers being Pascal, Molière, Voltaire (of the *Remarks on Pascal's Pensées*), Rousseau, Chateaubriand, the Guérins, Balzac, Flaubert, Loti, Barrès, Gide, and Radiguet (of *Le Diable au Corps*). It would be unfair to say that this book tells us more about M. Mauriac than about the subjects of his essays, but I think its chief interest can truly be said to lie in the ways, various and complex, in which it brings out M. Mauriac's relation to what he sees as the French tradition in psychological-philosophic-religious writing; his relation, in fact, to what French literature is so peculiarly strong in: its *philosophes* (if the word can be dissociated from the limiting eighteenth-century suggestion). This being so, we must not expect

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