

highly inflammable state of Europe's politics could do little beyond employing secret agents to keep watchful eyes on the Jacobite movements, and report continually on what went on round King James III. One of these agents was a gifted scoundrel, Philip von Stosch, an antiquarian of some repute with an art collection which left him nearly always in debt, who was only too glad to accept this secret assignment at the comfortable salary of £400 per annum. From 1721 until 1731 he faithfully reported all he could learn, but in doing so raised the suspicions of the Jacobites who he declared threatened personal violence, so that he was glad of this excuse to leave Rome for Florence. There for the next twenty years he managed to retain his salary by keeping up a correspondence with friends at Rome and retailing their news to the English minister at Florence, Sir Horace Mann, who forwarded it to London. It was, however, but poor stuff, and Mann's great friend, Horace Walpole, declared 'its only use was to amuse George II'.

A much more influential agent was found in Cardinal Alessandro Albani, nephew of the very Pope who had invited the Old Pretender to Rome and brother to Cardinal Annibale Albani, one of the Jacobite prince's most devoted supporters. From 1743 until 1774 he kept up a continual correspondence with Horace Mann which the author has traced in the Public Record Office and used for this well documented book. Alessandro's motives in helping the Hanoverian government were not entirely selfish. A far-sighted politician, he had very early in his diplomatic career become convinced of the hopelessness of the Jacobite cause, but was wise enough not to oppose it openly either during his uncle's reign or in those of succeeding popes, until Clement XIII on the Pretender's death in 1766 refused the royal title to his son Prince Charles. Alessandro, whose almost life-long cardinalate extended from 1701 to 1779, was a completely worldly prelate and a man of irregular life, but his affable temper and winning personality brought him many influential friends and enabled him to become a successful art dealer, for as the author says 'to his own great advantage the cardinal had noticed that the Romans had the antiques and English gentlemen the money with which to buy them'. Much of his collection is now at Windsor having been sold to George III to provide a dowry for the cardinal's natural daughter, the Countess Lepéri.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

MY IRELAND, by Kate O'Brien; Batsford; 25s.

Miss Kate O'Brien had already made a considerable name for herself as a playwright, when she made a greater name for herself in 1931 with the publication of *Without My Cloak*. It was realized that a new and original Irish writer had appeared, with a clear vision and wide human sympathies, and more important still, that she knew about Irish life. George Moore was a man of talent, but he always seemed to see this country through his Ebury Street window, while his anti-clericalism was heavy-handed and lacked sincerity. The new novelist had

her subtle anti-clerical streak, but it was of a subtlety beyond the vision of Moore, and brought home to one Chesterton's dictum that it is necessary to be a Catholic in order to be anti-clerical, because only a Catholic knows what to be anti-clerical about.

Here the novelist takes a holiday from fiction and leads us on a journey to parts of her native land, but this is a travel book with a difference. In the years before the war she wrote a book called *Farewell Spain*, and this might be called *Farewell Ireland*, for it is written as if by an exile, with a nostalgic and appealing melancholy; only a few weeks ago I read a vivid and very much at home article by her in an Irish newspaper, describing Avila in 1962, so to Spain she must have returned, and the saint who gave the ancient city its fame would certainly appreciate her descriptive skill.

*My Ireland* describes the book fairly well, for the author does not set out to write a guide book; she tells us about the Ireland that she knows, and her ideas on this subject, starting with her native city of Limerick, so full of history and fine architecture, then on to Connemara which has won her heart and Belfast which has rather surprisingly won her head, and which she paradoxically prefers to Dublin, as if to reassure us that we shall find no platitudes in her pages. With constant good conversation and a few but not too many first-class anecdotes, she leads us to a number of places as well which few visitors to our country, and maybe equally few Irish people, ever see.

There is a touch of magnificence in her account of the sites of the great age of Celtic monasticism, and one is aware that she has, though with open eyes, come under the spell of those mysterious years. She writes of them as she writes of Avila, but in both cases with a marked avoidance of the emotional and the intense. This short, crystal-clear passage has surely a Thomist quality in its cool conciseness: 'Clonmacnois still feels austere: the spirit of the place speaks of rule and silence. The young men must have looked about them wildly sometimes, over the reedy, golden land and over the cold Shannon waters. The cry of a swan, the bark of an otter or a greyhound would be all they would hear beyond the bells of the round towers, the voices of their lecturers and round-the-clock office-intoning from seven sanctuaries. It was an exacting life, in a calm exacting place'.

This book is a well produced, as one would expect from its distinguished publishers, though the proof-reading has not been up to standard all the time, and one regrets that it has a chocolate box picture of Killarney on the jacket, in marked contrast with the fascinating and unusual collection of photographs inside. Americanized Killarney is no more the real Ireland than the Trossachs are the real Scotland; indeed, this is no book for the conventional traveller, whether he wishes to fish or hunt, to go to the Dublin Horse Show or to stay in an expensive hotel; if he should try to follow Miss O'Brien in all her wanderings he will find himself in some rough and simple lodgings, interesting though they are certain to be. It is however the very book for those who wish to understand this rather enigmatic island, and will even reveal a few secrets to those who,

like the present reviewer, were born and bred here. It is to be hoped that the author's nostalgia will soon prevail and that she will return and write yet another excellent book about Ireland, for there are still many places to visit.

WICKLOW

A SELECTION OF ENGLISH CAROLS, edited by Richard Greene; Clarendon Press; 25s.

This enchanting collection of representative carols is far more than an abridgment of the Editor's previous great collection published in 1935. Professor Greene offers to the general reader a glossary for those whose command of Middle English is limited, detailed notes, and a full introduction of fifty pages, in which he outlines the development of the Old French carole or round dance. The social dance known as the *carole* was the favourite dance of the Middle Ages, and is still alive today in some parts of Europe: in our own country, Cornwall has preserved the May-Day celebration of the Hobby-hoss.

The carols in this collection are for the most part religious, but the editor includes a few convivial songs and the sly

Of all creatures women be best

*Cuius contrarium verum est.*

There are some magical examples of macaronic carols, both well-known and less known, including

Almyghty Jhesu, King of Blyse

*Assumpsit carmen Virginis*

and O III in One without ending

*O Deus sine termino*

The movement for 'not letting the devil have the best tunes' began long before Luther, and has continued in fields as varied as those of the early Methodists, the Salvation Army. Père Duval, Père Cocagnac, and in some recent Anglican references. The associations of the round dance, rooted as they were in pre-Christian rites and customs, often seemed to ecclesiastics at best dubious and at worst abominable, and indeed songs of a lecherous nature undoubtedly were sung in the context of the major festivals. Very few of these lewd songs survived but these few, including two which are to be found in the Cambridge University Library, show that the objectors were not being squeamish. Professor Greene shows how friars and religious, notably Franciscans, replaced such songs with pious songs which preserved the form and rhythm of the popular songs. But in the final paragraph of his introduction he also shows that this movement was much more than a ju-jitsu device for using the adversary's strength against him; it was truly a transformation more akin to baptism, and firmly rooted in the Incarnation.

The production of the book is up to the high standards of the Clarendon Press. There is one misprint: 'donner' for 'donnent' in the footnote on page 4.

MARGARET WILEMAN