

CHASING AN ANCIENT GREEK. By Douglas Young. (Hollis & Carter; 12s. 6d.)

When Mr Douglas told the man in the Piccadilly travel office that the many-coloured booklet of tickets he was receiving would take him on a chase over Europe after manuscripts of an ancient Greek poet, the travel agent remarked that this was a bit different from the usual clients—'Paris via Dieppe: third class return'. He was right; but then Mr Douglas Young is a bit different from the ordinary traveller. The tall Scot (six and a half feet) is an outstanding poet, scholar and Scottish Nationalist with a distinguished reputation in his native land and beyond. His cosmopolitan attitude to life and letters recalls the great Scots of the eighteenth century. His conversational gifts, his witty comments, would have gained him high repute in the salons of a by-gone Edinburgh. One could wish for no more agreeable guide than he, who so resembles in many ways the young Hilaire Belloc, in a leisurely tour of Europe.

Towards the end of the chase, Mr Young wonders if his wife will not be thinking that the chase after Greek manuscripts was only a specious pretext for a pleasure jaunt. It was a good pretext, anyhow, and the chase was in the end successful. The manuscripts of Theognis, a distinguished but now neglected poet of Megara, born in 540 B.C., are scattered throughout the libraries of Europe. This involved visits to Oxford, where Mr Young had spent four years of scholarly exile in its 'Latin Quarter', to Paris with its literary society recalling the days of Mme de Staël, to Brussels, the university cities of Holland, to Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, to Italy and its artistic riches.

Theognis has been neglected for centuries. The pace of the chase is leisurely. There is time for political digressions, for observations of the limitations of the Act of Union in relation to contemporary Scottish affairs. There is time, too, for a lively account of last year's International P.E.N. Congress at Venice, and for many other interesting matters. In the end Theognis is tracked down. *Finis coronat opus*, and we are given samples of his work. It has been a delightful and rewarding chase.

K.M.

THE SEQUENCE OF ENGLISH MEDIEVAL ART. By Walter Oakeshott. (Faber & Faber; 35s.)

English medieval painting, which is the subject of this beautifully illustrated book, has suffered far more than that of the southern European countries from the damage of time as well as of vandalism. It is only from the reconstructive skill of men like Professor Tristram that any idea of the earlier wall paintings can be gathered. But the