

famous among English readers. What may be called 'the black frost', traces of which can be felt in the 'Decameron', effects its work of withering and devitalising as the 'Winter' of his life sets in and he turns himself to the writing of the biography of the man who was his master, guide, and hero, though he died eight years before Boccaccio was born. By it he virtually restored to his rightful place the man that died in exile, unmourned by the men of his own city; and then he himself died in poverty mourning over the death of his dearest friend, Petrarch, and realising that 'it had all been a long, confused, and ill-directed journey in which a man mistook the lights of human habitations for guiding stars and lost the sunlight in wild forests and climbed desperately from valleys odorous with rankly ripe fruit to the barren crags, all the time missing, and feeling in torment that he was losing, the track of the fortunate pilgrims'.

N. A. W. DEANE

THE IRISH TRADITION. By Robin Flower. (Clarendon Press; 8s. 6d.)

Dr Flower did not live to complete the history of Irish literature which he, more than most men, was qualified to write. But *The Irish Tradition* will serve as a final memorial to his scholarship and to his gift of making a difficult and unfamiliar field attractive. Here are gathered together a course of lectures given at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1938 on medieval Irish literature, as well as his Sir John Rhys lecture on *Ireland and Medieval Europe* and a translation of his Irish introduction to an anthology of Irish love poetry. For the English reader the chief delight of *The Irish Tradition* will perhaps be Dr Flower's own versions of early Irish prose and verse.

*'The singing birds of Heaven greet  
The Virgin's son with music sweet,  
One whisper of their song would heal  
The agonies damned spirits feel'.*

He reveals a fresh world, and, how rarely in a scholar, matches the loveliness of that world with his own account of its and his translation of its achievements.