

PETER'S BOAT: A CONVERT'S EXPERIENCE OF CATHOLIC LIVING. By Daphne D. C. Pochin Mould, B.S.C., PH.D., T.O.S.D. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 12s. 6d.)

Miss Pochin Mould described how she became a Catholic in *The Rock of Truth* (Sheed and Ward, 1953). Now, in *Peter's Boat*, she writes of her first seven years in the Church. Six of these were spent in Ireland, and she claims herself that her formation as a Catholic 'is very largely an Irish thing'. This explains much of her book. We are taken on a tour of Catholic Ireland, and perform all the traditional acts of piety—the rounds of the holy wells, the chapels, the mountains, the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick. Miss Pochin Mould is full of a naïve enthusiasm, and she pursues her zest for 'the Catholic' even to the rosaries on sale in Woolworth's in Dublin. How different are her experiences from those of Newman! It is a pity that someone trained in a scientific discipline should lay such emphasis on external to the extent of ignoring the vital challenge that living the faith presents.

JOYCE WHALE

THE LIFE OF JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. By F. A. Lea. (Methuen and Co.; 30s.)

Mr Lea has written an excellent documentary, and it is not his fault if John Middleton Murry emerges from it as a figure of the past, and of the distant past. This definitive life, in itself a model of research and criticism, may come to be of more value as a highly competent survey of the past half-century, than as the biography of a man who could admit to T. S. Eliot in 1954, 'I feel myself to be very old-fashioned: or rather like a sort of *revenant*', and to the pages of his *Journal*, 'completely out of step with the age'. His wife is prompt with an assurance that Murry's last years were the happiest of his life, productive of work good enough to be approved by the critics who mattered, and that his 'wise and noble influence' left its mark on the village community of Theltenham. Whether, at the same time, Murry was haunted by a sense of failure, as some have suggested, is a speculation it would be idle to pursue. Murry may have felt remote, isolated—a ghost of his original self. But it was his own choosing, and he may have realized towards the end that he had always been an ephemeral prophet.

What Mr Lea achieves so admirably is the portrayal of a man who was regarded by many of his contemporaries as a psychological enigma. It was Murry himself who said that nobody could understand even his public life who did not understand his private; and his biographer remarks that if ever a man strove, not only to understand, but to record, the truth about both, it was he. In fact, most of his writing—