

Trees, Woods and Literature—9

BEECH TREE

*I planted in February
A bronze-leaved beech,
In the chill brown soil
I spread out its silken fibres.*

*Protected it from the goats
With wire netting
And fixed it firm against
The worrying wind.*

*Now it is safe, I said,
April must stir
My precious baby
To greenful loveliness.*

*It is August now, I have hoped
But I hope no more —
My beech tree will never hide sparrows
From hungry hawks.*

TO A LATE POPLAR

*Not yet half-drest
O tardy bride!
And the priest
And the bridegroom and the guests
Have been waiting a full hour.*

*The meadow choir
Is playing the wedding march
Two fields away,
And squirrels are already leaping in ecstasy
Among leafy branches.*

From *Collected Poems* by Patrick Kavanagh, published by Martin, Brian and O'Keefe, Ltd., reprinted by kind permission of Mrs. Katherine Kavanagh.

Patrick Kavanagh was born in Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan, in 1905, of small farming stock. He has described his childhood as: "the usual barbaric life of the Irish country poor." He came to Dublin ("the worst mistake of my life") in 1939 and remained there until his death, of pneumonia, in 1967.

His early writings, *Ploughman and Other Poems* (1936), the epic poem *The Great Hunger* (1942) and the novel *Tarry Flynn* (1948) are concerned with his early experiences, arising out of a life-style some of whose worst aspects are disappearing with houses such as that on our cover. Some of his later sonnets, in *Come Dance With Kitty Stobling* (1960), may be compared in their intensity and universality with the late string quartets of Beethoven.

His lines "O stony grey soil of Monaghan/You burgled my bank of youth" express the despair of Drumlin belt farmers unaware of the potential of their "stony grey soil" under Sitka spruce.

Of the two poems printed here the first is obviously written of a personal experience, and the second suggests the presence of a specimen of X *Populus canadensis* Moench. var. *serotina* (Hartig) Rehd. in the neighbourhood.

JOURNAL WANTED

The Editor is anxious to obtain a copy of *Irish Forestry*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring 1966, and would like to hear from anybody having a copy to dispose of.