

prose we are reminded of another Irishman who sang the same song in another key, Yeats's airman:

'Nor law nor duty bade me fight
Nor public men nor cheering crowds;
A lonely impulse of delight
Led to this tumult in the clouds.'

Mr Stuart writes of another sort of lonely impulse which also helps to shape the destiny of mankind.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

TWO CENTURIES OF OPERA AT COVENT GARDEN. By Harold Rosenthal. (Putnam; 75s.).

It may seem a lot of money, seventy-five shillings, to pay for a book on opera. Not this one, though. It is worth every penny. A formidable amount of research has been done by the author. There can be nothing relevant in the last two centuries of Covent Garden opera that Mr Rosenthal has overlooked. The result could well have made stodgy reading. Quite the contrary here, though such encyclopedic material calls for reading in reasonable amounts. Otherwise that after-enduring-The-Ring feeling will ensue. And there are many funny stories to enliven the pages. Not to mention opera titles which are often so droll.

Apart from the pleasure reading about great singers of the past gives to the opera-lover, this book is undoubtedly the perfect source for improving one's knowledge of the growth and development of opera in this country. Moreover, it could make one an expert in operamanship. Armed with information culled from Mr Rosenthal's researches, even the most timorous opera novice might venture to mingle with the interval crowds in the gallery bar at the Garden.

Such a monumental work as this demands much more than the praise of a reviewer. One can also express the hope that it will receive official recognition and reward.

D.G.M.