

Book Reviews

After an unpromising start, in which the heroine is described as 'literally the apple of her father's eye,' the authoress traces in the most entertaining manner the love affair between an introspective girl and a man with a mysterious past, and does not shrink from the inevitable conclusion. Her style is pleasant and lively, though at times too reminiscent of Ian Hay; and her dialogue, even in the school scenes, is unforced and natural: pleasing, if unpretentious.

S.G.U.

A TENEMENT IN SOHO. By George Thomas, with an introduction by John Oxenham. (Jonathan Cape; 5/-).

Catholics must not miss this remarkable first book. The reviewer had the privilege of knowing the author and of climbing the rotten wooden stairs to sit with him and his brother and sister in that front room overlooking Berwick Market, and of talking about the reading and writing which were the main occupation left to them since a rare muscular disease—hereditary and hopeless—had almost completely crippled them. There, in a poverty not only of money but of movement and liberty, in a state of helplessness that might have been expected to crush the spirits of any human being, they educated their own humour and their own perceptive and descriptive powers. The psychologist will find this book food for serious thought. So much can courage do. Here are three human beings, highly sensitive about their helplessness and poverty—yet the simplicity of courage has kept them free from all 'compensating fantasies,' from all the complications and distortions of the unhealthy and feeble personality. The theologian will find very little talk about the Faith these three hold—but a mention of Good Friday, of the Sister of Charity and her little prayer to St. Anthony, are memorable; and, what is more, the whole frame-work of the book is Christian and Catholic. George Thomas has an unfashionable hunger for Truth, and an almost unconscious—certainly an unselfconscious—liking for the Will of God. He writes directly and plainly of his own mental suffering when the fact of his own helplessness presses, but even when he analyses his own mind, there is something business-like about it. In the whole book there is not one strain of morbidity. Read what he writes about his father—who is a dustman, about the old Jewish woman downstairs, the old lapsed Catholic upstairs, the Chinaman who is a 'sub-tenant' there. Their mother is even more helpless than they are. Read how they cook a meal, tidy the 'front-room,'

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entertain visitors. And then remember how many times budding authors have complained: 'Well, how can I write as things are? If I could get away . . . get a really quiet room to work in . . . a cottage in the country . . .' This book was written with the distractions of cooking, wireless, quarrels that came up from the room below and down from the room above, with the salesmen shouting their wares in the market below. Now that the family has been able to move to somewhat better surroundings, will Mr. Thomas write a still better book? He must, but he will have his work cut out to do so.

C.H.

NUMBER NINE JOY ST. A medley of Prose and Verse for Boys and Girls. (Basil Blackwell, Oxford; 6/-.)

To Children of Parents who know what is good for them. House for sale—immediate possession. This wholly desirable residence is situated in Joy St., by which you will understand at once that it is not a jerry-built council house, but unique, beautiful and of the finest craftsmanship, as are all the others in that street. The architect is Michael Lynn; the master-builders Laurence Housman, Compton Mackenzie, Algernon Blackwood, Mabel Marlowe and Hugh Chesterman; amongst the decorators are Thomas Derrick, C. T. Nightingale and Ruth MacNair. What more need be said in recommendation? Well, just one thing. The last named decorator's coloured illustrations of 'Ginger' are something new even in Joy St., and they are gorgeous.

H.J.C.

THE MUSIC OF THE ROMAN RITE: A Manual for Choirmasters in English-speaking countries. By Sir Richard R. Terry, Mus.D., F.R.C.O. Pp. 293; 8vo. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 10/6.)

Sir Richard Terry has written this Manual for loyal Catholics 'whose first desire is to obey the Church's laws in spirit as well as in letter.' Fortunately, now that the liturgical revival has affected England, there are many 'loyal Catholics' to whom this book is likely to prove of the greatest service. It is not necessary to speak of Sir Richard Terry's authority; he is a scholar and a musician, and he has a wide experience of the work and difficulties that confront the choirmaster to-day.

Sir Richard believes that there is a distinct *style* of music which is the Church's own. Music which conforms to the conditions laid down by the Church (like plainsong or the