

## REVIEWS

demand is unfulfilled because it is thought more ladylike to "go to business" at a mass-production tailoring establishment.

In the chapter *No Man's Land* we have accounts of visits to the derelict areas of Tyneside. A most depressing account is given of Hebburn, but at Crook, where 85% of the population are unemployed, we have an entirely different picture—smart, architecturally attractive Council houses, clean and well-dressed children and well-kept homes. Reading these pages we begin to see the dire results of bureaucracy and delegated responsibility, the distressing phenomenon of the rapidly growing power of town- and county-councils. These bodies with their powers of veto and sanction have gradually absorbed all the privileges of church, parish and people. What is even more significant, they are destined to become large landed proprietors, they already own more valuable estates than the monasteries at the time of the Dissolution. "The commercial wangler, the demagogue and the busybody" constituting our Councils, are our future landlords.

Along with an interesting account of the rise of the purely industrial town we get a sidelight on the decay of the English village. The author maintains that in spite of all their beauty, the English villages are rotten at heart—and this because the industries of the village have gone and the place is no longer a hive, it has become dull; imported amusements from the town, cinemas, wireless and dance halls, have spread the belief that it is better to be amused than to amuse yourself.

The last half of the book is devoted to an account of the scenic beauty of the North and its wealth of historical association. The descriptions of the Yorkshire dales and the romantic Border country of Northumberland could hardly be matched for conveying something of the puissant spirit of the loveliest of England. The book is excellently illustrated with many fine photographs.

BERT WATTS.

HEIMWEH NACH GOTT. By Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren. (Herder, Freiburg i. B.; RM. 3.20 and 4.40.)

This Diary of Pieter van der Meer appears opportunely in our troubled and uncertain times. Vividly, in unadorned language and with the unsophisticated simplicity of his childlike heart, he lays bare to us the record of the most important period of a human life: the strife for truth and faith.

This man is thorough. Superficial phrases and assumptions will not content him; he must thresh things out completely. Hence his path is a long and difficult one, beset with inward

## BLACKFRIARS

struggles, tormenting and heart-rending. Van der Meer knows that there can be no relenting in the flight from Self.

Nevertheless, his unrest tears him from the rural peace of his Dutch homeland to the turmoil of Paris, where, now in real earnest, the anarchy in his soul brings him to the verge of destruction. But he has the good fortune to meet, besides many humbugs, some truly great and worthy men. Chief among them was Léon Bloy, whose clear-headedness and strength of faith, and still more the power of his artistic genius, made a deep and decisive impression upon him. So, at last, van der Meer finds his true course. Especially memorable was his first visit to the convent of the Benedictine nuns in the Rue Monsieur. But the search was not yet over. Van der Meer must still struggle with the torment of recurring doubt.

Then, suddenly, like the sun bursting through the clouds, dazzling us with its radiance, the long hidden truth burst forth from the darkness.

For man is good. And God will not fail to impart the might of His grace to him who sincerely toils to find the truth. So, after a hard struggle, van der Meer found the truth of our Church. Paris no longer holds allurements for him, nor power over him; now he can see only the human misery in her streets, the heart-piercing cry of human need. His love seeks only to tend the wounds with which men are smitten. From the depths of his soul ascends a hymn of thanksgiving such as only a sensible and intelligent man is capable of. The impression of this sense of gratitude, and the refreshing ingenuousness of the whole book, are the precious gifts that it offers to the reader.

F. R. KOE.

SHAW, GEORGE VERSUS BERNARD. By J. P. Hackett. (Sheed & Ward; 6s.)

Chesterton's G. B. Shaw was a full-dimensional human person and a writer of real human worth. The Shaw of this latest projection is only a ghost of a man and of a writer. Which means perhaps that the book has failed in part; but only in part. For it is a double purpose on which Mr. Hackett is set, to bless and to curse. He would bless the Bernard and curse the George of the G.B.S. combine. He concurs with Chesterton in regard and admiration for Bernard, the spontaneous, effective, imaginative Shaw-self. But he fails to make a living figure of him here; his Bernard remains only a vague hypostasis of a group of moral and intellectual virtues, amongst which courage, integrity, cogency, etc. Bernard needed delicate