

## **Blackfriars**

on wisdom. The gift of wisdom contains in itself understanding and knowledge (cf. P. Joret, *La Contemplation Mystique*, p. 61). For this reason it is open to question as to whether the author is correct in assigning the gift of wisdom to what he calls perfect contemplation (p. 84). Wisdom is indeed the dominant factor in the higher forms of contemplation, but it has not the monopoly. The gift of understanding superadds its penetrating action to the gift of knowledge, in the understanding of created things, and to the gift of wisdom in the understanding of divine things, (Père Meynard, *Théologie Ascétique et Mystique*). Consequently, in one and the same act of contemplation all three intellectual gifts can work in unison or successively (cf. John of S. Thomas, *De Donis*, disp. 18, qq, 68-70). If this is not the case, it seems difficult to understand how St. Thomas could have held that the gifts of knowledge and understanding will have their own proper functions even in heaven.

Following the Thomist view, actual grace is required in every supernatural act, but contrary to the opinion of Billot, it is not to be confused or identified with the impulses and inspirations of the Holy Ghost operating through the Gifts. The Gifts, therefore, do not necessarily concur in every virtuous act. It is, however, tentatively suggested that, in fact, the Gifts actually play a part in all acts of virtue which are not remiss. The theologians quoted would appear to be against this, and the arguments given are not entirely convincing (p. 89). Account needs to be taken of the distinction between a perfect act of virtue, and one that is fervent, *i.e.*, in excess of the habit of virtue, and elicited by the soul under the influence of a movement from the Holy Spirit (cf. P. Froget, *De L'Habitation du Saint-Esprit*, p. 423).

The work is to be commended as it enables the reader to view his subject as a whole. For this purpose the schemes at the end should be particularly useful.

**A.F.**

**THE LONELY TRAVELLER.** By Doreen Smith. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 7/6.)

It is a refreshing change to read a 'Catholic novel' in which the Catholic Church is not mentioned at all until page 250 or thereabouts. By this I mean that the authoress has drawn her characters with such skill that the entry of the Church on to the scene appears to be the only logical conclusion to their development.

## *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,'