

## Book Reviews

THE MENDICANT OF LOVE AND OTHER LYRICS. By Mary St. Thomas. (Dublin : The Talbot Press; 1/- net.)

These verses have certainly the virtue of sincerity, and we can well believe that the author felt and meant every word she wrote. Most of them deal with religious subjects. Texts are taken from the Scriptures, amplified, paraphrased, and sometimes given an unexpected twist of meaning. The poem entitled 'Surge, tolle grabatum tuum et ambula' is a fair example of the booklet's contents.

'You've made your bed, and on it you must lie,  
'Tis told us when we shape our lives awry—  
And oftentimes we tell ourselves the same,  
Shelt'ring the feeble will 'neath craven blame—  
But Christ, the strong and tender, says not so  
But 'Rise, take up thy bed,  
Be of good cheer and go  
The way that I have traced for thee to go.'

Perhaps there is a deeper sermon in those lines than the writer dreamed of. But every poem is full of simple suggestion, the product of a meditative soul.

A pleasant shilling's worth.

E.E.

WHISKY. By Aeneas Macdonald. (Porpoise Press; 5/-.)

The book we review would have cost proportionately one shilling and sixpence in the days when first we heard that Glenlivet was justly renowned for pure faith and pure whisky; a truth, if at most implied, not stated explicitly by Aeneas Macdonald. The meek could attain the pure in those days, perhaps never more fitly than in a still remoter station: Talisker. There the nectar of those divine people, the historical Scots, preserved among its aromata all those of the loveliest of islands.

Yes, we weigh in either hand a third of a bottle of whisky and Whisky; by Aeneas Macdonald; Porpoise Press; five shillings, wondering which will do us more good. The author himself might waver; and yet undoubtedly there are those living who would presume to decide for us the question out of hand. Others, true well-wishers, including our physician, nay, even St. Paul, would perhaps (it is a delicate decision) favour the alternative counsel.

Isolating one rubric of this rich and valuable book, the Geography of Whisky, we wonder at the four regions, each watered

## *Blackfriars*

by its river; for we know a fifth, watered by the Fiddich. If Aeneas Macdonald has any faults, ignorance is the last of them; can he have been over-awed by what he knows as well as we know?

There are those geographically and otherwise favoured who do in contentment what man was created to do with whisky; but here is a sure guide for men who have never crossed the Trent to dodge the images which deface hoardings, and (with all becoming observances) drink whisky. *Prosit.*

J.G.

SELECTED POEMS OF ALICE MEYNELL. With an introductory note by W.M. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 3/6.)

Although it is only seven years since Alice Meynell died, this volume of some forty poems comes to remind us that she is already among the immortals of song.

The present selection is in no sense what a selection usually is: a final choice of what is best among a poet's work, a final choice of what is therefore most likely to survive. For Alice Meynell's poetry is unique in that it does not admit of any graduated scale of good, better, and best. It is all of one fine quality, the best. She was the least prolific of any accepted poet; the hundred odd poems she wrote seem to have escaped from her own rich silences, taking even the author herself by surprise.

Who looked for thee, thou little song of mine?  
This winter of a silent poet's heart  
Is suddenly sweet with thee, but what thou art,  
Mid-winter flower, I would I could divine.

But all the old favourites are happily gathered here. They have lost nothing of their charm with the passing of the years; on the contrary, their depth of thought and perfection of form bring the freshness of a revelation to this superficial age.

Alice Meynell's fame, though well-founded, is far from complete. 'The whole modern world,' says Mr. Chesterton, 'must commensurably enlarge itself before it comes near the measure of her mind.' At present she is the clear voice lifted up from among the babbling multitude. The time is to come when she will be the vogue.

E.E.