

Book Reviews

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS ORDERS. By Piers Compton. Illustrated by Margot Foster. (Elkin, Matthews & Marrot; pp. ix, 224; 6/-).

Mr. Compton gives us sketches of the history of the chief religious orders, each within some twelve or fourteen pages. The founders and origins find the fullest treatment, the growth, organisation and practices, and the more notable members and houses are adequately outlined. The matter is well selected, and with it is combined some insight into the peculiar appeal of each order and its effects in secular history. The more ancient orders only are included, and the Jesuits, Oratorians and Passionists alone of modern ones find a place. The history of each in England meets with special attention. The illustrations seem out of keeping with the rest of the book, and some of the orders they do not really illustrate and none of them do they render illustrious.

O.M.

THE HIGHER COURT. A play in four acts. By M. E. M. Young. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

THE NEW J.L. Short Stories. By M. E. M. Young. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 5/-.)

Mr. Pryce-Green, his daughters, Idalia and Polly, and Ethelbert, his son, find their combined incomes slender enough; Fred, a struggling medical practitioner, is not able to support Polly, whom he desires to marry, and is forbidden the house just as she sets out for Paris; but chance and the police bring a street casualty to the Pryce-Green's flat and Fred attends him professionally. The invalid guest remains a long time and is unable to give his name; he falls in love with Idalia, but imagines she is engaged to Fred; he appears poor and ill-nourished, but proves to be a millionaire newspaper proprietor whose disappearance begins to be a matter of public interest. After his identification he proposes to Idalia and is at length accepted. But Idalia is a Catholic. She has to overcome scruples about making a mixed marriage before consenting to the engagement, and just as a happy ending seems imminent she discovers that MacManus is married and divorced: her renunciation is the climax of the play.

Anyone can see through the millionaire business; why can't Fred? Anyone can see what MacManus is driving at when he talks of Fred's engagement and the mixed marriage problems; why doesn't Idalia explain simply and at once? The fact is that the heroine is unconvincing: in spite of her vaunted matter-