

boy worker who wishes to be friendly with both sides. After committing an act which, we understand, no true worker would do, he eventually finds himself on the owners' side in the strike, but is used to point the moral, for, as he watches the owner and the manager—incarnations of grossness and weakness—he reflects 'These are the people we do it for. These are the ones.' The moral seems to be that college-boys, however willing, can never be genuine workers, and that the workers have every right to regard them with suspicion!

Mr. Cantwell borrows an irritating trick from the 'tough' American novelists, of endeavouring to describe a conversation by constant repetition of trite phrases and 'he said.' The result is unreadable and unrealistic.

But he has vivid powers of description; the fight between police and strikers is excellent, and the invasion of the factory in the rainstorm. And he has a thorough knowledge of the background against which the story is placed, which ensures convincingness all through the book, which, with all its obvious faults, can, unlike most contemporary novels, be read without a sense of wasted time.

FRANK CHAPMAN.

THE SOLID VIRTUES

CLAUDIUS THE GOD, by Robert Graves (*Arthur Barker, 10/6 net.*).

Mr. Graves has well succeeded in what seems to have been his object—to give by careful reconstruction a convincing idea of the memoirs of an imperial Roman statesman written according to the perspective of the period. He has been very thorough. Nothing known or guessed about Claudius can have been omitted and an immense amount of plausible detail has been invented. The foreword gives a roll-call of authorities and sources and states the English and American equivalents of the Roman moneys, and two long genealogies on folding sheets have been provided. Details of public works and policies, of ceremonies and campaigns, are all made palatable, and it is easy to go on reading right to the end unless you think of something you want to do. For those who

prefer reading to gardening at the week-end this book will be thoroughly welcome.

Even by more exacting standards you can at least read the whole book and retain your self-respect. The English is matter-of-fact and colloquial, and although just enough is made of the sexual incidents to send thrills down respectable spines still there is no crude sensationalism. The view of Claudius as an unwilling dictator with democratic ideals in an age without them has some present-day relevance, and his exhibition of just that pattern of excellences and defects which would isolate him, and win the contempt of inferior contemporaries, is not grossly—though it is slightly—sentimental. The most interesting part of the book, the only part with any pressure behind it, is the end, in its presentation of Claudius' tired cynicism towards the kind of affairs his active years had been devoted to, and his realization that his efforts could have contributed nothing to the ideal he had held for Rome. It is only here for a few pages that the story has any of the interest that one might have hoped for on the strength of some of Mr. Graves' poetry.

Except for this it is just part of the movement which is re-discovering the value of taking pains, being intelligible, and avoiding intellectual and emotional inflation. Control is the essence of the movement, but most of its exponents lack any force that demands control. The result is the academic, with all its virtues and lifelessness.

D.W.H.

EARLY VICTORIAN NOVELISTS, by Lord David Cecil (*Constable*, 10/-).

Lord David Cecil admits in his prefatory note that this is a slight book, and asks that it be judged as such ; so we may assume that he did not mean to offer anything new on the Victorian novel. His essays merely tabulate the merits and faults of the authors concerned—with, of course, the merits predominating.

Both merits and faults are the obvious ones and, in most of the essays, the conclusions are unexceptional though, perhaps, scarcely worth repeating when they can be found in many other