

BOOK REVIEW

ONE TWO THREE...INFINITY—by G. Gamow; MacMillan and Co. Ltd., London 1962. Price 16s. net.

Going for the second time through this excellent book in its revised form I found my interest in it not a bit flagged from the pitch to which it was raised (when I first came across it). Though in this edition no considerable fresh material has been added, I enjoyed each wit and humour with the same zest as in 1949. In those early days I had succumbed to my the bad habit of skipping over the tougher portions and enjoying the story of this popular science exposition. But in this second reading I faced bravely and scrupulously each bit of logic, till I reached the last page all out of breath. No, not because of the exertion; Gamow really takes one breath away by the amazingly clear and pointed summary of all the important outstanding problems of modern science, vividly picturized by apt analogies creating the proper perspective for the understanding through the witty comments

By the time I finished, I also had agreed with Gamow that the book did not have too serious difficulties for the layman but it was surely not for children. What was my surprise when I found that the children of the present generation are so well up in the known facts of science, that they are able not only to follow but enjoy with gusto not less than 80% of the book. This refers to a boy of 14 reading in class X of a local good standard English medium school. The 10% he did not follow consisted mainly of the section on "Riddle of Life" to which he is totally apathetic, being keen to become an inorganic chemist. Another girl a little older and interested mostly in Biology and Chemistry enjoyed the book thoroughly fortifying herself with a small lecture from me on qualitative relativity and quantum mechanics. About the section on theory of numbers and topology both of them were sufficiently imaginative to enjoy the expositions

So the book is becoming more and more a success belying the misgivings of the author that it is not suitable for children and we congratulate him and thank his publishers for bringing out this paperback edition to make it available to a large section of scientifically inclined layman and children of the modern age.

A. Bose