

IN BRIEF REVIEW

A BOOK which will find its way to many boudoir tables is "Her Majesty: the Romance of the Queens of England" (Dutton) by E. Thornton Cook. Whether it be opened or not, its costume of old rose, black, and gold is certain to enhance the value of any preconceived plan of decoration. Yet once the first page is turned, there is history made alive and a stately array of queenly figures from Matilda of Flanders, who wed William the Conqueror, down to the well remembered Alexandra who came across the sea from Denmark to share the destinies of Edward VII. One does not have to have a taste for court functions, royal intrigue, or ostrich plumes to enjoy this story of those who lived with dignity and courage, sometimes playing a rôle quite foreign to their talents; the author maintains that there "never was a wife who has not influenced her husband for good or evil", and in each chapter introduces a woman as well as a queen.

Robert G. Ingersoll was as definitely a figure of the latter half of the nineteenth century as one could find. In an age of orotund speakers, he was the great orator; he saw the Republican Party as the champion of the freed and lauded it as such long after it was the instrument of those who sought to fashion new chains for millions. His very agnosticism, outspoken and crusading, though it shocked his professing contemporaries, was not uncharacteristic of the new materialism of the age. A thorough biography of the man would be an interpretation of his times; it is sad to think that so engaging a volume as Cameron Rogers's "Colonel Bob Ingersoll" (Doubleday, Page) should be so superficial.

Those who have sat with their backs to the throng and gazed at people in the mirror lined wall of a European café find that the glass lends a fascination to the sights. Such oblique interpretations of life and the things of life, when done in literature, gain much

charm from the reflecting medium. Lewis Mumford was singularly successful in "Sticks and Stones" in using architecture as an index of American civilization. His new book "The Golden Day" (Boni, Liveright) treats imaginative literature and philosophy as a key to culture. Inasmuch as these constitute the essence of culture, Mr. Mumford is looking directly at objects—and shows that he misses the mirror. Here and there, as when Mr. Mumford uses books for children as an indication of American ideals, some of the sparkle of the former volume appears. The one book was something more than brilliant; the present is somewhat less than profound.

The plays of Luigi Pirandello have brought something new to the modern theatre with their fantastic and provoking themes. Like Hamlet or Œdipus, his characters reveal their minds amid a violent and sensational scene of action. The ground of futurism, of Sicilian literature, of the "Grotesque Theatre", from which these plays spring is shown by Dr. Walter Starkie in "Luigi Pirandello" (Dutton). It is an exhaustive and penetrating study — and a prolix one. It is, moreover, a handy book for those who want to talk about Pirandello without bothering to read his voluminous works, for it tells the stories of most of his novels and plays.

Have we a noble savage clinging somewhere up our family tree? Ought we be allowed to visit strangers' houses *ad lib.*? Why do gentlemen prefer — mushrooms to toadstools? Why do some of us prefer all of Charles Lamb — to pocket money — or a single helping of roast pig? How great our annoyance, followed by how palatable a pleasure, when we find E. V. Lucas, after all, not talking cricket but the "flittermouse" fellow we had hoped for, in one of his "Events and Embroideries" (Doran) titbits yclept "Bats"! England's leading dilettante-seem-

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