

GLOBE TROTTING THROUGH BOOKS

HOWARD RAMSDEN HARTILL, the author of *Men Are Like That* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$3.00), carried on agricultural reconstruction work in the Caucasus from 1922 to 1924 and there he came to know intimately Ohanus Appressian, of whose adventures this book tells. The scene is that land between the Black and the Caspian Seas, peopled by Tartars, Armenians and Russian Cossacks, where hatred and savagery, primitive living and age-old traditions are rampant. It is not only a story of adventure but contains also much information on customs and traditions of the people of the Caucasus. Although a sequential biography from boyhood, the greater part of the tale is of those years from 1914, through war, revolution, counter-revolution, famine, pestilence and the lowest point of destitution. The most amazing quality of the book is not in the succession of shocking and terrible incidents, but is rather in the sanity of the teller, in the understanding of hatreds and generosities, in the acknowledgment of faults, in the appreciation of virtues, wherever these are found. He knows that "men are like that" in hatred and revenge, which bring forth the worst in human nature, in a savagery far below the beasts; he knows, too, that "men are like that" in courage and kindness and unselfishness. But in his understanding he is wise enough to say "We live in a universe beyond the understanding. I have been on the scenes of massacres where the dead lay on the ground. . . . The earth in such a spot should rot, and the sky above it be black forever; but always the sun shines as warmly there, and over it the canopy of the blue sky spreads itself as protectingly as elsewhere". Well may he say "The serenity of God troubles the spirit of the thoughtful". A vivid and a fascinating book.

Jan Gordon, the author of *On a Paris Roundabout* (Dodd, Mead, \$5.00), describes his work as "the kind of book a beetle might write were it to recount its journeys made

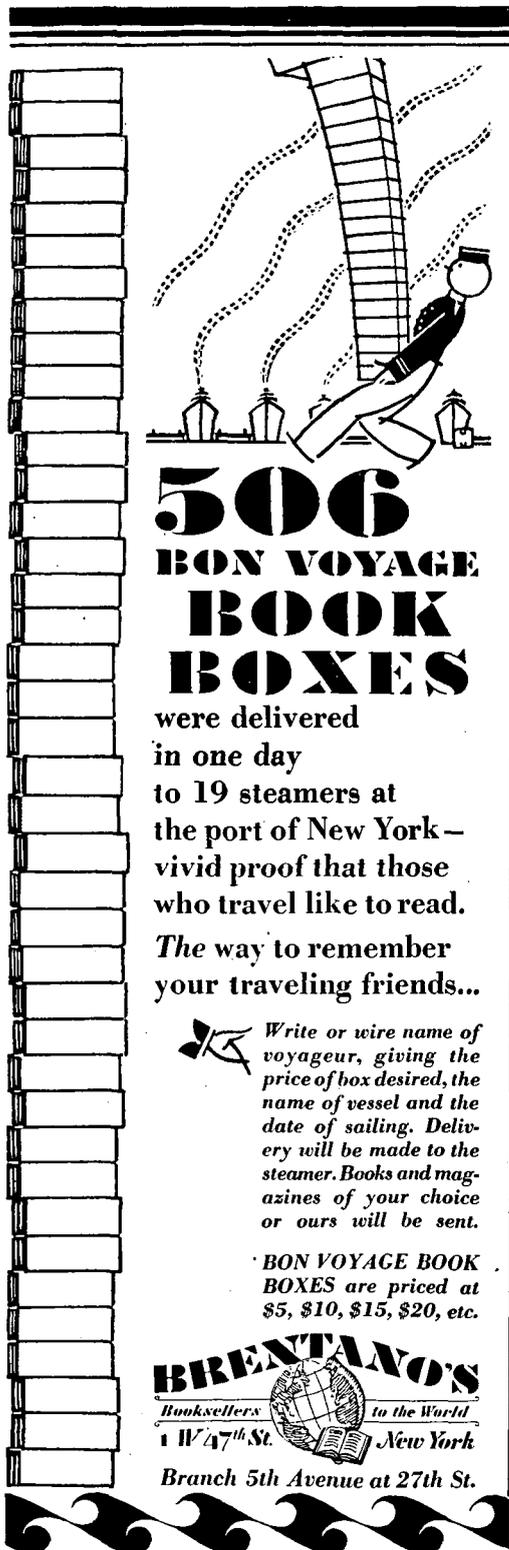
while tied to a pin". In that sense alone it is a travel book. The string allows him to wander only as far from his studio as the Restaurant Landru—the home of M. and Mme Chatelain and of the huge dog Caesar and the scandalously wicked rabbit Landru—and to take in all the innumerable fascinations of people, places and incidents in this circumscribed little world. It is a Paris never known to the tourist and also, one might say, never known to any resident who was not poor in money but rich in awareness and interest in human beings. The Restaurant Landru was first chosen because of its cheapness, but the author and his wife remained constant to it because of the quality of its food and because of a certain simplicity and variety in the lives and interests of its proletarian occupants. Here are delightful bits of gossip, and the many illustrations by the author add charm to the book. Though it may all be a blending of the actual and the typical, as the author confesses, it is such a skillful blending that to the reader it is a reality of color and interest and intimacy.

Roads to the Revolution, by Sarah Comstock (Macmillan, \$5.00), is a book of twenty journeys to some of the outstanding scenes of the American Revolution, all of which are to be reached from the three centers—Boston, New York and Philadelphia. It aims to be a companionable guide to historic places and buildings, and to sketch the events connected with the spots visited. Although not arranged in strict chronological order, it follows a general scheme that begins with Lexington and Concord and ends with Washington and Mount Vernon. The author occasionally wanders on brief excursions into an earlier period—as in the short accounts of Plymouth and the Pilgrims, the Salem Witchcraft, and early Dutch New York—but only as a historical background for the quickly sketched events of the Revolutionary period. From Boston the traveller can visit

the many familiar places within a fairly small compass, but ranging from New York he must go as far away as Saratoga and Ticonderoga, as well as along the Hudson, to Long Island and nearby parts of New Jersey. Trenton, Princeton, Germantown and Valley Forge are all included with Philadelphia. A fair knowledge on the part of the reader of Revolution chronology would add much to the pleasurable use of the book. It is all very clearly and succinctly put, and is well illustrated by many photographs. A short list of ready reference books is arranged as further aid to each journey, followed by a complete bibliography.

Safari: A Saga of the African Blue, by Martin Johnson (Putnam, \$5.00), tells a more or less connected story of the life of the author and his wife, with two hundred natives, at Lake Paradise, close to the Abyssinian border—an almost unknown region five hundred miles from the nearest civilization. Their object was to film a record of Africa's vanishing wild life, never to hunt big game. In this account are tragedy, near-tragedy and comedy, and an appreciation of the creatures they photographed. "The camel is a peevish old woman; the elephant a scholarly gentleman; the giraffe a born aristocrat; the lion a sportsman; zebras are just plain rowdies; the ostrich is a bully; the leopard an assassin." Every one of these characterizations the author has made from his own experiences, and the reasons for them are entertaining and enlightening. Patience and courage went into the gathering of this material, the story of which is told in a straightforward, admirable fashion that makes the region and the life vivid. More than sixty full-page illustrations are an added enjoyment.

Published in London as "Our Cockney Ancestors", *London in Bygone Days*, by Kenneth Hare (Payson & Clarke, \$4.00), aims to bring to the reader an understanding, a visualization, of past periods by means of a series of detached chapters presenting in slightly fictionized form single days in the lives of imaginary individual Londoners of six important epochs. A holiday in Chau-



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