

BOOKS ABROAD

London Life in the 14th Century, by Charles Pendrill. London: Allen & Unwin, 1925. 10s. 6d.

London Life in the XVIII Century, by M. Dorothy George. London: Kegan Paul, 1925. 21s.

[*Westminster Gazette*]

WITHIN the last year or two notable additions have been made to the literature of Old London — books on London as a whole, on historic Chelsea, and on the Temple and the Inns of Court, for instance; and all have been full of attractive matter. The addition to the list of two more works of general rather than of purely local interest is sure to be welcomed.

In one of them, *London Life in the 14th Century*, Mr. Charles Pendrill insists that there is a 'Romance of Old London,' and thoroughly justifies his assertion. He shows us where to find it, often in the things which are daily before our eyes, but which we fail to understand — the 'liberties' of the City, the Livery Companies, the old civic records in which the origin of laws and customs accepted without question to-day are disclosed. He describes, almost as one whose memory goes back to the time with which he deals, the conditions of life of the citizen of six hundred years ago, his political interests, his business, and the way in which he found his entertainment, stood up for his rights, made provision for his poorer neighbor, and generally behaved himself. Four centuries later, no doubt, these were regarded as 'the good old days'; but Miss M. Dorothy George, in *London Life in the XVIII Century*, makes us wonder why. An enormous advance had been made by that time. London had become of infinitely greater importance, and its people had grown more enlightened; and yet even this later period — our own 'good old days' — was that of which Fielding and Hogarth have left us such impressions, in which folly was at one end of the social scale and squalor at the other. But Fielding felt justified in insisting, even so, that it was false to say that 'we have refined away all our simplicity and have become artificial, hypocritical, and on the whole worse than we were half a century ago . . . we are a much better people than we were then.'

The old idea tries hard to persist. Always the days which are long past seem to be 'the good old days.' But such books as these, fortunately, help to dispel the error and still show us how interesting the study of these days may be.

The Origin of the New Testament, by Adolph von Harnack. London: Williams and Norgate. 1925. 6s.

[*Daily Telegraph*]

THIS work, translated from the German of Harnack, by the Rev. J. R. Wilkinson, outlines succinctly the history of the New Testament up to the opening years of the third century. The history of the Canon of the New Testament has been divided into two sections, in the first of which the origin is described, and in the second the enlargement. The motive forces that led up to the creation of the New Testament are treated in detail; the consequences of this creation are examined in sequence. And the author shows with extreme lucidity that consequences by no means always correspond to motives, and that a creation in its turn becomes the creator of its own law and pursues the path of its own logic. Still, the author is clearly right in claiming that any knowledge of the creation of the New Testament is imperfect without the knowledge of what in actual fact came into existence at its birth. 'The investigation,' he concludes, 'of the history of the New Testament from Origen, and still more from Athanasius downward, is, except in a few important points, only of interest to scholars; but to know what the New Testament meant to the Church as soon as it was created belongs to general theological culture.' It is precisely this contribution to the theological culture of the general reader that is presented in this erudite and extremely lucid exposition.

Modern English Writers, by Harold Williams. London: Sidgwick and Jackson; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925.

[A. St. John Adcock in *Sunday Times*]

IN *Modern English Writers* Mr. Harold Williams has given us an ample, shrewdly critical review of what was doing in the English literary world between 1890 and 1914; and the fact that his book has now arrived at a third and revised edition is a most practical testimony to its quality and usefulness. To have studied and appraised the works of some three hundred modern authors (to say nothing of, perhaps, as many more who were weighed and found wanting, and left in outer darkness) was no light task, and to speak of flaws in what is, on the whole, so excellently well done seems somewhat ungracious. But I wish Mr. Williams had carried his revisions a little further, for I feel that his

friends misled him in assuring him in this third edition that his book is 'more up to date than shortly after its publication.'

There is a lack of proportion — and was, I think, even in 1914 — in devoting a page, for example, to W. E. Tirebuck's novels and merely naming Hugh Walpole, J. D. Beresford, Compton Mackenzie, Frank Swinnerton, and D. H. Lawrence among the 'also rans.' And remembering *The Monkey's Paw* and *The Brown Man's Servant*, is it right to assert so confidently that W. W. Jacobs is 'only wearisome when he attempts to write in other veins than humorous'?

Again, in a full criticism of Mr. Alfred Noyes, which is sometimes appreciative, sometimes not, no reference is made to what many of us regard as his finest and most magically imaginative work, the *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, published in 1912. Nor is there a word anywhere about Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith, nor anything of Mr. de la Mare as a writer of fiction, except that two of his books in this kind are included in the newly added bibliography.

These and other such lapses were no doubt inevitable in so crowded a chronicle. But half a dozen bad coins won't make a rich man poor, and two or three errors — some of which may pass as matters of opinion — cannot make *Modern English Writers* other than a brilliantly clever book. Its study of the nineties, and of literary developments thereafter, down to the eve of the war, is a masterly achievement.

Whether he is dealing with Hardy, Kipling, Conrad, Barrie, Shaw, May Sinclair, Galsworthy, Wells, Bennett, and their peers, or the numerous lesser lights of his period, Mr. Williams is refreshingly outspoken, and his judgments are as sound and discriminating as the judgments of mortal man may be. He is neither orthodox in his opinions nor diffident. You may not always agree with him, but he knows what he thinks and why he thinks it. He has the rare art of saying much in little room, — for even five hundred pages is little room for so large a survey, — and, moreover, of saying it candidly, lucidly, interestingly.

The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777.
London: Jonathan Cape, 1925. 15s.

[*Times Literary Supplement*]

NICHOLAS CRESSWELL, oldest son of a landowner in the Peak of Derbyshire, set out to try his fortune in America in 1774, and kept a diary of his venture, which has now been printed by a great-great-nephew of the diarist. The chief interest of the book lies in the fact that Cresswell, to his own undoing, ran his head into the turmoil following the Declaration of Rights and

the opening of the War of Independence. He was in the States until 1777, chiefly in Virginia, though he traveled to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and New York. His position as a stiff-backed 'King's Friend' among the seething politics of the 'Rebellion' was a curious and uncomfortable one. Though suspected as a spy, and at one time searched and put on parole, he seems to have moved about the country without much hindrance, and to have had abundant opportunity for following the course of the revolution. It must be said that the result of his observation is a little disappointing. His first concern was with the resources of the country and his own plans for a successful settlement there, and he is apt to treat the political upheaval as a diabolically engineered interference with the course of nature and his own designs. He was so solid a Tory that the new ideas of the colonists could hardly penetrate his mind. He was unable to imagine how Washington's ragged levies could possibly beat the British forces, and each American success only moves him to curses against the 'd—n scoundrels.' But we get, nevertheless, a notable account of the state of things in Virginia, a picture of the odd mixture of 'rebels' with a considerable leaven of English sympathizers, — who seem to have been, on the whole, treated very indulgently, — of the soaring prices of food and clothes, of the wild farrago of rumors which passed for news, of the drum ecclesiastic so vigorously beaten by the local preachers. There is a carefully studied sketch of the character and career of Washington, by whom Cresswell had been entertained, and some uncomplimentary notices of General Howe, with whom he had interviews in New York. On the condition of the country, apart from politics, his observations are often illuminating. He was much impressed by the free-handed hospitality of the people, their fondness for dances and other junketings, their handiness as 'universal Mechanics, Carpenters, Sadlers, and Coopers'; but he is astonished at their indolence and general incapacity as agriculturists. He is shocked by slavery; but admires the Indians, to the point of contemplating flight from 'Yankee civilization' and throwing in his lot with the noble savage among the Shawnee or Delaware tribes.

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BOOKS MENTIONED

BURGIN, GEORGE B. *Some More Memoirs*. London: Hutchinson, 18s.

KEYSERLING, COUNT HERMANN. *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925. \$10.00.

ARE YOU A SPORT?

SPURRED by the success of its cross-word puzzle, the Living Age is making another bid to the sporting instincts of its readers. It is an appeal not only to the intelligence, but to the passions.

The scheme is to offer two prizes (the sums are of little significance, it is the glory that matters) of \$15 and \$10 for the two best letters of not more than three hundred words written to our editors about

HINDENBURG

It is a subject on which you surely have an opinion. Perhaps you think Hindy is a great man. Perhaps you think he is a great fool. Perhaps you think he is a great figurehead. At all events, the editors of the Living Age would like to hear what you have to say.

To the author of the best letter will go the princely sum of \$15. The runner-up will have to be content with a mere \$10. A number of honorable mentions will also be awarded—how many we cannot say, as that is up to you—and each one of them will receive the Living Age free for six months. The winning letters will be printed in our July 11 issue—also the names of the winners of honorable mentions. (There is fame for you.)

In writing your letter, it makes no difference which side, if any, you take. Simply remember that the limit is three hundred words, and that we must receive your letter by the 20th of June. The contest is open to anybody who is lucky enough to hear of it. You do not have to be a subscriber to the Living Age to compete. All you need is a two-cent stamp, pen, paper, and something to say.

EXTRA ATTRACTION! Announcement of the winners will be made over the radio from station WGY, Schenectady, Saturday evening, July 11.

THE LIVING AGE COMPANY

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First Catch Your Rabbit

WE believe in that recipe for rabbit stew which states that fundamental requirement.

★ ★ ★

In Scribner's Magazine, we first get the material.

★ ★ ★

But having secured it, we constantly try to present it in such a manner that readers will obtain therefrom the maximum of enjoyment.

★ ★ ★

A neat, compact, beautiful format makes the Magazine easy to handle and pleasant to look upon.

★ ★ ★

The editorial matter is unified so that your reading may be uninterrupted.

★ ★ ★

Many drawings, sketches, and photographs enliven and illustrate the contents.

★ ★ ★

Special super paper is used for the reproduction of illustrations.

★ ★ ★

Egg-shell paper, particularly adapted to the eye, is used for unillustrated portions and for the printing of line drawings.

★ ★ ★

Ten-point Old Style type, easy to read, clear, open, is used in the body of the Magazine.

★ ★ ★

We believe that the June number, now current, proves the effectual capture of the rabbit.

★ ★ ★

The response to it would seem to prove it.

★ ★ ★

Letters began to arrive from mail subscribers before the Magazine was on sale at the news stands (where it can now — if you're lucky — be procured for 35 cents).

★ ★ ★

Newspapers printed editorials on Senator Bruce's article, and Judge Winston's, on the morning of publication. Others telegraphed for permission to reprint portions of them.

★ ★ ★

Alexander Woolcott in the current Vanity Fair voices his praises of Captain Thomason's thrilling narrative.

★ ★ ★

News stands in many places sold out both the May and the June numbers before they had been published a week.

★ ★ ★

The safest way is to subscribe, for the July number is going to show the effect of that fundamental demand: "First get your material."