



KING GEORGE
From "Royal London" (Studio).

The British Crown

THE PEOPLE'S KING: George V., A Narrative of Twenty-Five Years. By John Buchan. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. \$2.75.

THIS book, thoughtful and firmly written, is not quite what the title might lead us to suppose; if we expected an "intimate" biography of King George, with glimpses and anecdotes of royalty off duty, this is not it. But it is precisely what Mr. Buchan was best trained and fitted to give us: a dignified and moving aperçu of Britain's history through twenty-five years, seen somewhat as the King himself might recall and reflect upon it. This modest, pious, devoted gentleman moves through the book mostly as a symbol.

Not to realize the double and subtle worth of the British Crown—its value as emblem and consummation of the nation, to which is added the deep affection and good humor felt toward the present occupant—is to know nothing of British genius, political and sentimental. The unbelieving radical or rationalist who may be impatient of Mr. Buchan's doctrine of kingship thereby confesses his own shallowness. For this not exceptionally distinguished yet universally respected head of a nation has—by being rather than doing—exerted probably as wide an influence as any man who has lived in our time.

This is a British history, but never chauvinist; it is temperate, liberal, dipped in power and candor. Through the restless years 1910-14, then into the darkness of Avernus, and the "sour-apple harvest" (the phrase is his) of after-War, Mr. Buchan takes us; rising on occasion to a real greatness of purview. Perhaps no biography of a king ever said so little of the monarch himself and yet succeeded better to convey affection for the man, honor for the paradoxical position he fulfills.

Storm Jameson's Frozen Heroine

LOVE IN WINTER. By Storm Jameson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS novel reads to me like the second limb of a trilogy. Storm Jameson has already written one trilogy of novels, and in her books listed under the title "The Mirror in Darkness," she has so far given us "Company Parade" and now "Love in Winter." In the present work the heroine, Hervey Russell, who is also a novelist and whose business experiences are obviously drawn from Miss Jameson's own (though none of the characters met in the course of editorship are) remarks at one point that she had already written enough for a long book and yet only produced about one-half of the novel she contemplated. So she decided to call that much a novel in itself, and make the remainder of a trilogy out of the rest she intended to write. Perhaps the present novel has had somewhat the same history, for it really does not end anywhere in particular.

It is a book of nearly four hundred pages and there is a great deal in it of post-war London. There are (beside Hervey and her husband, Penn, whom she really despises, and her lover, Nicholas) a large number of other characters. All their lives are somehow interrelated. They range in occupation from large industrialists, with enormous holdings, to Labor members and Socialists and pitiful small fry of the great city. Only the men in the most pitiful circumstances seem to have much to redeem them as human beings. I know of few characters in fiction I found more loathsome than Julian Swan, the fine, handsome young fascist. Penn, the husband, is a thorough weakling, and Nicholas, the lover, really not much better. The captains of industry are unlikable. Evelyn, the woman for whom Hervey toils, and finally breaks from somewhat, is entirely despicable. Hervey herself, with her combined self-pity and doggedness, her intense emotionalism and mixture of supineness and strength, is a paradoxical character, both admirable at times and often, to me at least, extremely annoying. There is no real gallantry in most of the characters, and Miss Jameson is too serious a realist to indulge in much humor. On the other hand, her work has vitality, and she knows pretty thoroughly the lives of people in quite different walks of life. She also has that which an English journalist once attributed to her, "a passionate sympathy with the majority." And she strives for proper auctorial detachment. Hers is often a shrewd, disillusioned view of the modern world. She can powerfully present to us a cross-section of contemporary chaos in a great capital. Most modern social and economic issues

are touched upon, in the course of the unfolding of Hervey's unmanifest destiny and that of the people she knows.

But in spite of much graphic writing, and the author's obvious honesty, I am forced to report that the mental and spiritual struggles of the main characters left me singularly cold. "Love in Winter" is a good title for the book; in that, almost unconsciously, the Englishwomen in it are shown as thwarted and the Englishmen as unconscionably bad lovers.

Race to Multiply

RIPENESS IS ALL. By Eric Linklater. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

THE scene of this novel is an English village; the characters include a vicar, a major, and a lady gardener; the plot originates in a trick will; but Mr. Linklater brings so much originality and vigor to these familiar ingredients that he renews their freshness. The will in question, devised by the major, bequeaths an estate of £70,000 to whichever of his various nephews and nieces shall, in a given length of time, become the parent of the largest number of legitimate offspring. The multiplication race gets under way with a bang, and before it's over we have had an amusing time with the contestants. Among these are the girl who has hopes because her husband's mother was a twin; the shy bachelor who has no designs on the fortune himself, but who gets into the clutches of a predatory and philoprogenitive female; and the black sheep of the family, who neatly contrives to turn himself into the dark horse.

Unlike "Magnus Merriman" and "Juan in America," Mr. Linklater's new novel is not a satire. It is an entertainment—a good story delightfully written, well characterized, as amusing as it is improbable.



FROM JACKET OF "RIPENESS IS ALL"



Is Youth Defeatist?

WILL teachers, editors, publishers, or whoever has an opportunity to see the yet unpublished work of the young, tell us whether the oncoming generation is defeatist in its psychology? The question is not whether they should be, or might be, or may be defeatist, but whether they are. And the best evidence, even though partial and preliminary, should be found in what they write. They have published too little yet—their spokesmen are still too casual or exceptional (young, fluent talent rushing into print)—to depend upon the testimony of printed books, or even upon college magazines, where not the most authentic but the most facile and articulate imagination usually gets the right of way.

The term defeatist should be defined. It does not mean a fear of personal defeat so much as an expectation of social defeat—defeat for the best hopes and most approved ideals of the present social structure, defeat for any constructive plans for the future based upon the status quo, defeat most of all, for what the defeatist, given his wish, free of the pressure of circumstances, would choose for the future. Like the defeatist of 1917 and 1918, when the term first came into the news, no definite negative solution, no expected social philosophy, no one feared result unites the defeatists, but only the fatalism of anticipated change for the worse.

It can be said without much likelihood of contradiction that the middle generation of American writers have defeatist written on their foreheads. There are notable exceptions, even outside the sanguine army of those who write success stories for the magazines. Stephen Benét is not defeatist. Nor is Thornton Wilder. Nor the authors of "The Green Pastures." Nor the satirists of "Of Thee I Sing." Nor Vincent Millay. But among the novelists defeatism is strong. Hemingway is a defeatist. So is Caldwell. So is Faulkner. So is John O'Hara. Thomas Wolfe is saved from defeatism only by his abounding

energy, so great that life itself seems invaluable to him even in defeat. Among the older novelists, Theodore Dreiser is the epitome, or rather the encyclopedia, of defeatism. Sinclair Lewis, in spite of his vitriol, is not a defeatist. Nor is H. L. Mencken. Robinson Jeffers is defeatism made epic. Willa Cather, a realist if there ever was one, is definitely anti-defeatist. So, of course, is the humorist, Booth Tarkington. So, one might say, are all humorists, among whom Mark Twain, who bore a tragic heart, was chief, and as surely anti-defeatist as he was against the optimists and the sentimentals.

But what of the young? The question is important, since they have, presumably, defeat to encounter, and certainly problems of an extraordinary complexity impending. Not their thinking, certainly not their present opinions, not even the upward or downward direction of the economic cycle, the political curve, the social barometer which will register their maturity, is of more importance, is of as much importance, as the morale of their emotions. One of the less hackneyed and particularly meaty lines of Shakespeare is Hamlet's "the readiness is all." We wish that someone would report upon the writings of the young.

Banned Books

Anyone interested in literary censorship will find food for meditation in the collection of banned books now on exhibition in the club house of the Junior League of New York City. Here truly are strange bedfellows: the Bible and "Look Homeward, Angel," Roger Bacon's "Opus Maius" and "The Mikado," Marx's "Manifesto of the Communist Party" and Julia Peterkin's "Black April." Somewhere, at some time, each of these and hundreds of other books have been banned. Caligula forbade the Odyssey currency in ancient Rome on the ground that the ideals of freedom it embodied held a threat for his absolutism; Queen Elizabeth suppressed the deposition scene from "Richard II"; in imperial Russia Andersen's fairy tales fell under the ban and in the province of Hunan, China, "Alice in Wonderland"; Spinoza's "Ethics," "Don Quixote," and "Robinson Crusoe" all appear on the Index Expurgatorius of the Catholic Church; Boston banned Aldous Huxley's "Point Counter Point," and Kipling's "A Fleet in Being" ran afoul of the censorship in England on the suspicion that its author (oh, ye gods!) was revealing naval secrets. When Hitler last year was holding a holocaust of books in Germany he was following in the footsteps of Savonarola who had consigned "The Divine Comedy" to the flames lest it corrode the public mind of Renaissance Florence. So it goes.

Three major causes seem to urge the censors on—one the desire to maintain moral standards, a second the offense to religious taboos, and the third the fear of political complications. Both in Europe and America the Catholic Church has put

a long list of books without the pale. Aside from this, in America, with few exceptions, it has been squeamishness as to the decency of a work that has brought it under the axe; in European countries, on the other hand, it has very frequently been doctrine which seemed to hold a menace to entrenched power. An autocratic monarch of Russia, like Nicholas I, could not brook an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" whose influence might be hostile to the institution of serfdom; Milton's England frowned on "The Areopagitica" and eighteenth century England on Thomas Paine's "The Rights of Man." Nazi Germany today denies circulation to Lenin's "The State and the Revolution," Italy and Czechoslovakia forbid Hitler's "Mein Kampf," and Soviet Russia outlaws Taine's "Philosophy."

In the unending battle between freedom of thought and political fear it is heartening to discover how futile censorship has been to restrain the progress of ideas. The teeth of the books which the censors feared have been drawn not by those who would have prevented their bite but by the mere fact that the ideas that seemed so menacing in one fashion or another became part of the public knowledge and eventually of public faith. The tenets these books set forth and the policies they advocated found their way into tolerance or observance. In proportion as a nation is free it has dared to allow any theory to be aired. Only as to morals, free countries like England and America are still constantly censorious. At least we can hope that before long even our Comstocks and Sumners will have had their day.

Ten Years Ago

The Saturday Review of May 16, 1925, listed the Pulitzer Prize awards in literature as follows:

Fiction

SO BIG

By Edna Ferber

Drama

THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED

By Sidney Howard

History

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

By Frederick L. Paxson

Biography

BARRETT WENDELL AND HIS LETTERS

By M. A. De Wolfe Howe

Poetry

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Today

The Saturday Review has held the presses for the story and photographs of the current Pulitzer Prize winners. See pages 6 and 7.