

BOOK NEWS IN ENGLAND

THE winter book season has passed after presenting us with a fairly representative output in all departments. The outstanding products have been expensive art books and children's books. It is a distinct advantage nowadays that the books published at Christmas do not really bear that "Christmassy" appearance which they used to in former years, and which practically would stop their sale after that period of the year. Christmas, as the moment when people will spend money, is selected as the suitable time for issuing a number of expensive art monographs on artists. This year we have had Sir Walter Armstrong's book on Hogarth; and Mrs. Frankau's elaborate excursus on old prints. The children's books, as I have already noted, are unusually good this season, which has to lament the

death of the most popular of all boys' story writers, Mr. G. A. Henty.

The great Coronation Durbar at Delhi will result in the publication of several books. Mr. Murray is to the front with a history of Delhi, written by Mr. H. C. Fanshawe, C.S.I., who has spent thirty years in India, where his brother Arthur, also a Companion of the Star of India, is Director-General of the Post Office. The official history of the Durbar itself will be written by Mr. Stephen Wheeler, whose father, Mr. Talboys Wheeler, wrote the official account of the Imperial Assemblage in 1877, besides a great many books dealing with the history of India, where he spent many years. The Durbar promises to be a prodigious function, for Lord Curzon is a past master of ceremonialism. The Emperor of India himself could not

make a braver show. Indeed some of the Viceroy's critics are calling the Durbar the "Curzonation." It is years since a wit spoke of George Nathaniel Curzon as a "most superior purzon."

The war book from the British point of view is fizzling out, for with the exception of Mr. C. S. Goldman's book on General French, by far the best illustrated work on the war that has so far appeared, there have been very few books on the campaign. The literature of controversy, however, still shows signs of life, for pamphlets about General Buller and General Colville and some others who have lost ground appear at intervals, showing how keenly the criticisms of the War Office and the nation are still felt in some quarters. Sir Charles Warren, who was with General Buller in Natal, has wisely forgotten the recent campaign, and is giving us one or two books on the beginnings of British South Africa. Sir Charles is a man of much culture. A Welshman by birth, he entered the Royal Engineers in 1857, and in that capacity occupied many positions, chiefly non-military. His best work has been done in Jerusalem, where he conducted the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund from 1867 to 1870. Lord Kitchener followed him in 1874-78. Indeed, almost the only book that Lord Kitchener has produced are his reports printed in the Palestine Exploration Fund transactions, which have become exceedingly rare.

Mr. Beckles Willson, who has ventured to make a study of your "Imperial Republic," is a Canadian by birth and education, though he has had a short experience of journalistic life in Boston, Georgia, and New York. He has devoted most of his attention to Canada, and is well known by an

elaborate book on the Hudson's Bay Company, a biography of Lord Strathcona, and a little sketch of Newfoundland.

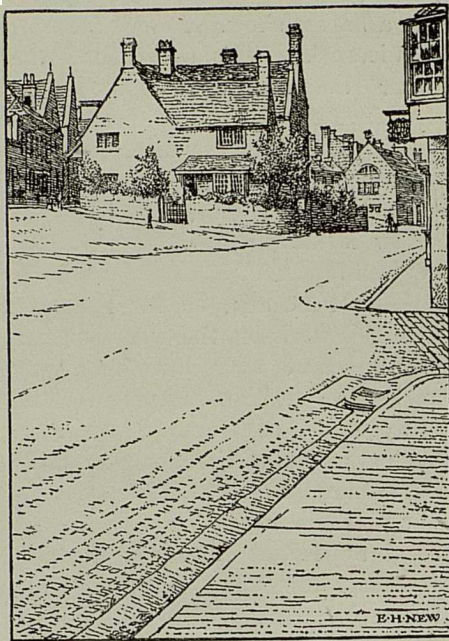
"The King's Library," by Mr. Alexander Moring, issued at the De La More Press, has made a most excellent start. The series is named after the King's Library in the British Museum, which was built in 1827 to receive the books collected by George III., and presented to the nation by George IV. An excellent view of the library, engraved within an heraldic scroll, designed by Blanche McManus, who is an American, forms the frontispiece. Some of the books are issued as folios and others as quartos. The literary side will be looked after by Mr. Israel Gollancz, who has left his mark on the Temple classics. Mr. Moring is the son of the well known heraldic engraver, who was for many years in Holborn. The series in point of format hits a happy mean between the extremists and the traditional man in the street, and it deserves to succeed.

Great progress has been made with the Lamb, which Mr. E. V. Lucas is editing for the Methuens. Typographically the book will be unusually beautiful, and I hear that Mr. Lucas's notes are of the greatest interest, for he has unearthed much material either unknown or unused by Canon Angier. Curiously enough the Methuens' house is situated within a stone's throw of the Canon's beautiful old house in the Temple, which stands close by Goldsmith's grave.

The literary aspect of Scotland is receiving a large amount of attention. It is only the other week since we had an interesting contribution on the literary men of the eighteenth century. This has been followed by a book on "Some Nineteenth Century Scotsmen," by Professor Knight, of St.

Andrew's University; while Mr. J. H. Millar has written a sketch on the literary history of Scotland from the beginning of the fourteenth century, which of course embraces the period of the English-speaking Scots. It is forty years since Professor Knight gave us his first book. In the interval he has produced an enormous number of works of one kind or another, many of them purely elementary and educational. Mr. J. H. Millar is often confused with Mr. A. H. Millar, who is a journalist in Dundee, and fluttered the dovescots of the Omarians by some plain speaking on the fashion of exploiting the immortal Persian. It is rather curious that the great mass of modern fiction in the Scots' vernacular is written by Scotsmen who have left their native heath. Very little is being done in Scotland itself. This is particularly true of verse, which has only one great exponent in the person of Mr. Logie Robertson, whose "Ochil Idylls" and "Horace in Homespun" have not been equalled by any living writer of the Doric. The Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith, whose collected works have just been issued by the Dents, has done a few things in Braid Scots so well that one regrets his having written so much in English.

I have wondered for some time why Lodge's Peerage appeared at all in view of such rivals as Debrett and Burke. It has been incorporated with Mr. Foster's Peerage, which contained the best pictorial collection of arms of any book of the kind that we have had in this country. Mr. Edmond Lodge, best known, perhaps, by his famous book on portraits, started his Peerage in 1827, and has appeared ever since, latterly being published by Hurst & Blackett and Kelly's Directories. Mr. Joseph Foster, who was the nephew of the late Mr. Birket Foster,



ONE OF THE ISLANDS, CAMPDEN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, IN WHICH IS THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT BINDERY.

has led a most laborious life as an antiquary, producing vast compilations of first-rate value to the genealogist. He first issued his Peerage and Baronetage in 1880, but he was too frank to make a great success of it. It has become rather scarce, but the reissue of the blocks alone, however, is of value to all heralds.

An exceedingly interesting experiment in the reorganization of industry on the lines sketched by Ruskin and Morris, is being tried at the beautiful old village of Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire, by the Guild of Handicraft, which has been established for thirteen years at Essex House in the east of London. The publications of the Guild, of which Mr. C. R. Ashbee is the leading spirit, are well known to all book buyers, and their reputation is shown by their constantly increasing prices. The most recent effort of Essex House Press is the beautiful Prayer Book named after King

Edward, for which Mr. Ashbee has designed a special type. It has been eagerly taken up, and although its cost on vellum is 40 guineas, a copy has already changed hands (before publication) at £320. The tendency of these private presses is to modify Morris, who, like all reformers, unquestionably pushed his theories to an extreme limit. For the average man some of his books are exceedingly difficult to read, although Morris was convinced that Gothic was the base of lower case and appealed to the eye more than the Roman. Mr. Ashbee is clearly indebted to Morris, but his type differs in some notable respects. I may add that the Guild of Handicraft turns out all sorts of work, from books to furniture, and metal work of every description. The village to which it has taken itself in the Cotswold was a seat of the wool trade in the Middle Ages. The introduction of machinery and the drift of the rural population to the big towns have cut down its population, but with the presence of the Guild of Handicraft it looks something like its old self.

The disappearance of the *Pilot*, which Mr. D. C. Lathbury founded less than three years ago and has edited with so much ability, is not surprising to those who follow the trend of the journalism of the day. The *Pilot* had brains, yet, although in appealing to the High Church party, it attacked a section of the community which is exceedingly well off, it failed in its flight. I suppose it is difficult for a young people to understand, however, how intensely conservative an old one tends to become, and how it will suffer inferiority of every kind, if only the drawbacks have the advantage of time. This is particularly true of weekly newspapers, which take a long time to find a root, and are equally difficult to

unroot. Mr. Lathbury is an Oxford man and a barrister, but he has never practised. He was for two years editor of the *Economist*, and for sixteen years he conducted the *Guardian* with splendid and well-informed dignity. The first indication that the *Pilot* was not at its best was vouchsafed from the reduction of its price from sixpence to threepence. It made a great point of the scholarly criticism of literature. One wonders whether the popular treatment of letters as done by Mr. O'Connor's new penny paper, *T. P.'s Weekly*, will be a success, for we have before us the indisputable fact that the most successful novelists of the day are those who get pretty short shrift at the hands of the experts. Miss Correlli does not even trouble to send out review copies. Another interesting new periodical is *The World's Work*, edited by Mr. Henry Norman, M.P. It is quite different from the American periodical of the same name.

The production of Mrs. Humphry Ward's dramatization of "Eleanor," side by side with the immense success of Mr. Barrie's two plays, only complicates the question as to whether a literary author can write a play. Neither Mrs. Ward nor Mr. Barrie can be said to have the real stage instinct, but while Mrs. Ward is philosophical and somewhat academic, the persuasive humanity of Mr. Barrie's genius not only covers his defect as a stage-carpenter, but actually increases the charm of his curiously amateur touch. It is just this touch which makes him conceive the point of view which other men forget ere they have left the nursery. Mrs. Ward, on the other hand, thinks as an advanced "grown-up," but the didacticism which does such excellent service in her books, lacking, as it does, almost all the friendly qualities of Mr. Barrie, is cold and dead on the stage.

That, at any rate, was the general impression conveyed by "Eleanor," for it only irritated the playgoer to see three women waste their sweetness on such a poor creature as Manisty. The madness of Alice Manisty is melodramatic to a point of being out of keeping with the general outlook of Mrs. Ward's play. Mr. Barrie, on the other hand, has simply swept the town with the two greatest successes of the season, "Quality Street" and "The Admirable Crichton." The latter is by far the most masculine thing he has

ever done, but I question whether any manager but Mr. Frohman would have had courage to mount it, for the average manager is exceedingly cynical, if one may judge of the productions, as to the intellectual qualities of their clients. So far from book-men being unable to write plays, it is notable that successes have been made by the dramatizations of "The Eternal City" and "Captain Kettle;" while Mr. Justin Huntley McCarthy was a man of letters before he became a stage writer.

J. M. Bulloch.