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# BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

the immemorial East. He mentions having watched balloon ascents and torpedo experiments. He also speaks of seditious utterances being made in the Indian Congress—an early sign that the heyday of British rule in India might be drawing to its close.

—R. M. Burdon

## CRIME'S AFTERMATH

*TRIAL BY ORDEAL*, by Caryl Chessman; Longmans, English price 18/-. *THE BUSINESS OF CRIME*, by Robert Rice; Victor Gollancz, English price 16/-.

*TRIAL BY ORDEAL* is the sequel to the sensational autobiography, *Cell 2455, Death Row*, by a man who has spent the last quarter of his 36 years under sentence of death. In his new book, which the California District Attorney's Office made a determined attempt to suppress, Chessman brings up to date the fantastic story of his fight for a new trial on his conviction for rape-kidnapping in 1948. He also gives some tragic glimpses into the lives and last moments of a few of the 60 or 70 human wrecks he has seen vacate the death cells for the gas chamber. At least three times, Chessman himself has been within hours of execution before winning stays.

At the start of this criminal epic, Chessman was not even legally represented. Today, as he gratefully acknowledges, he has powerful legal figures, journalists and devoted friends on the outside who are fighting for his right to a re-trial. Whether, as his friends believe, the author is no longer the vicious psychopath he grew up to be, I have no way of knowing. But it is certain that the case he makes against capital pun-

ishment adds effectively to the growing body of evidence against either its moral justification or so-called deterrent effect. From this point of view, his books hold a unique place in the history of penology. It is interesting to note that in California there are at present a number of moves, directly traceable to the Chessman case, to abolish the death penalty.

Only in the widest sense of the term can the criminal subjects of *The Business of Crime* be classed with the pathetic wretches in San Quentin's Death Row. Written by a member of the *New Yorker's* staff, it traces in the brisk, highly readable style associated with that magazine, the careers of five criminal "businessmen" and their associates. It covers, in turn, flourishing businesses devoted to arson for insurance purposes, the international narcotics trade, the illegal entry of immigrants, the "fixing" of inter-collegiate basketball games, and the counterfeiting of travellers' cheques. Mr Rice's introductory remarks on the relationship between organised crime and respectable citizens are worth more than a passing thought.

—Henry Walter

## ANOTHER RUPERT BROOKE

*THE PROSE OF RUPERT BROOKE*, edited by Christopher Hassall; Sidgwick and Jackson, English price 15/-.

WHO would have imagined a revival of interest in Rupert Brooke? For a few years he flashed like a meteor across the literary skies. His war sonnets in 1915 made him a public hero. His death on service and his romantic burial on one of the isles of Greece made him a legend, and the frontispiece portrayal of his profile made him an idol for a generation that had lost its young men, who in memory at least re-

mained as handsome as Greek gods. But Rupert Brooke was a "Georgian." By 1920 the Georgians were out. Eliot and Pound and the Imagists were in. Donne and Hopkins were the new masters, and "Georgian" became a term of literary abuse. Today for elderly men and women Brooke remains an idol. For younger readers he is as outmoded as Austin Dobson or Martin Tupper.

Both sets of readers, I think, will find the present volume a surprise. It includes familiar material—the first-rate journalism of his *Letters from America* and the perceptive criticism from his book on Webster—but the new material (uncollected essays and reviews) reveals an unknown Rupert Brooke. Here he is reviewing with critical appreciation Ezra Pound's first volume, back in 1909, before Pound became Eliot's master. Here is Brooke in 1913 reviewing Grierson's edition of Donne—and saying the "right" things about Donne. Evidently we must learn to be more circumspect in throwing around "Georgian" as a term of abuse. Brooke had discovered the "modern" masters while Auden and Day Lewis were still in primary school, (sorry, prep. school). Christopher Hassall both in his selection and in his introductory essay has put us all in his debt. —Ian A. Gordon

## ATOMS AND STARS

*THE ATOM*, 5th Edition, by Sir George Thomson (Home University Library); Oxford University Press, English price 7/6. *THE MODERN UNIVERSE*, by Raymond A. Lyttleton; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 16/-.

THESE are not easy books to read, but they are rewarding, even if, as with this reviewer, one's knowledge of nuclear science is inadequate. The old simplicity of electron and proton, which held when Thomson's book was first published in 1930, has gone. Instead we have "this great complexity of entities that obviously represent something deep-seated in the nature of the physical world, but do not seem to help us much to explain it." To turn from Thomson to Lyttleton is to turn from contemplating things infinitely small—most atoms have a diameter of about one hundred-millionth of an inch—to considering dimensions infinitely large—our own galaxy measures about six hundred thousand billion miles in diameter. Yet the subjects of the two books have much in common, apart from the idea advanced by Jeans many years ago—"The story of the atom is written across the sky." Both lead into the real of philosophy. "From the philosophical point of view," says Thomson, "the most important feature of the quantum mechanics is its strong trend away from determinism." Lyttleton, in discussing the notion of the expanding universe, says it inevitably leads us to the fundamental question of creation itself, creation of matter as some fundamental property of space. —L.J.W.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF HOME-MADE WINES*, by Mary Aylett; Odhams Press, through Whitcombe and Tombs, 8/6. Nearly 300 recipes, including such exotic potions as Dr Butler's Purging Ale, Maiden's Blush, and My Mug.

*MY TURN NEXT*, the autobiography of an animal trainer, by Roman Proske; Museum Press, English price 18/-. For nearly 40 years the author followed what must be one of the most dangerous professions on earth. "I am quite certain," he writes, "there are ways to make a better living, lots of ways."



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