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BOOK REVIEWS (Cont'd.)

ROYAL PROGRESS

BRIGHTLY FADES THE DON, by J. H. Fingleton; Collins, through the British Council. English price, 12/6.

CRICKETERS' CRICKET, by Learie Constantine; Eyre and Spottiswoode, through the British Council. English price, 8/6.

AS cricketer, journalist and author, Jack Fingleton must have hugged himself when he thought of this title for his book on the Australian cricket tour of England in 1948. It was sheer inspiration. The tour was more than another visit from an Australian XI, though it gained in interest from the fact that it was the first since before the war. It was a royal progress of farewell by one whose sovereignty over the whole cricket world had been recognised for nearly twenty years. It was to be Bradman's last tour and his retirement from Test cricket, and he meant what he said. Everybody felt the force of the occasion. One of the greatest of all players and personalities, the batsman who had made more runs in a given time than anyone else, was passing from the scene. Everywhere Bradman's reception was royal. The roars that greeted his early dismissals were as much a tribute to his greatness as the applause that played him from pavilion to wicket. Bradman, says Fingleton, had two objectives in the tour, and he put all the strength of his character to these ends. One was to go through without a loss, which no previous team had done, and the other was "to be cock of the batting walk until the very last." He achieved both. "In calibre," his batting was "generally, only a shadow of what it had once been" (at that rate what a holy terror indeed he must have been in his prime!), but his aggregate of runs was much the highest of the side.

As one expects from the author of *Cricket Crisis*, Fingleton describes this progress well. He tells the story of the matches in detail, brightly and with judicial authority as befits a professional reporter who was once accustomed to open the batting for Australia, and intersperses it with pleasant comments on the English scene. His appraisal of Bradman is lengthy and acute, and is accompanied by estimates from a number of other critics, English and Australian. Fingleton says that "on good pitches, none will deny that this most amazing cricketer was the greatest personality the game has ever known." The limitation must be noted, and there may be argument as to the exact definition of "personality." Numbers, including this reviewer, will still hold that, seen in the round, Grace was the greatest personality and the greatest of players.

Fingleton touches on Bradman's aloofness and his keenness to win. He is not a "matey" man. He was so determined to make a record in match-winning that he would not weaken his side against the counties, so that some of his party saw a good many games from the stand. They composed a song on this grievance: "Ground staff bowlers is our name . . . in a match we're never asked to play." The Australian Board of Control stipulated that only a certain number of English Test players should be chosen for the two Festival games. Bradman scrutinised the English side at Scarborough closely, but fielded



SIR DONALD BRADMAN
What is happiness?

a Test side himself. Did the New Zealanders make a similar stipulation? Perhaps there is something in the comment of John Arlott of the BBC, that Bradman "has missed something of cricket that less gifted and less memorable men have gained. How, I wonder, would Don Bradman have defined happiness?"

Learie Constantine, the famous West Indian, might agree with Arlott. "That was a good knock," a famous batsman said to him after a quick, happy innings, "but you need not have got out. Remember—we don't play this game for fun." Constantine, a professional, and said to be the highest paid in the game's history, scorns this attitude. "I have always played cricket for fun," he tells us in this book, and he considers cricket today "timid and dull because care and worry gnaw at the edges of our minds all the time." Learie Constantine is one of the most colourful figures of cricket history. A first-class fast bowler (ninety miles an hour at his fastest), a hurricane bat, and probably the most acrobatic of all fieldsmen, he is greater than the sum of those qualities. The gusto with which he writes this book of advice to young cricketers is in keeping with the terrific and untiring energy he puts into everything he does on the field.

This is primarily a coaching manual, and it may be doubted if anything so lively of the kind was ever written before. He starts the young cricketer with the choice of his clothes and his bat, and takes him right through the departments, even to the management of a small club and courtesy towards visiting sides. Points are illustrated from Constantine's own experience and that of many other famous players. The book is packed with well-expressed racy infectious advice, reduced to atom-splitting detail. Never before, surely, have so many devices and stratagems of bowling been explained as here. We learn how Mailey and Grimmett practised their art like crack billiards-players, and plotted on the field for wickets. Even experienced cricketers may be surprised to learn what can be done to a ball with fingers and arm. As to fielding, Constantine says he has