

LONDON PANORAMAS

THE COCKNEY, by Julian Franklyn; Andre Deutsch, English price, 18.
FASHIONS IN LONDON, by Barbara Worsley-Gough, the Londoners' Library; Allan Wingate, English price, 15.

(Reviewed by A.M.)

THESE two excellent books cover different layers, one plébian and one aristocratic, of the infinitely varied world of London. Julian Franklyn devotes more than 300 pages to the history, habits, and general characteristics of what is loosely called the Cockney, by whom he means the human London, the men and women who keep the city going, who sweep its streets, cook its dinners, keep its accounts, mend its shoes, build its homes and deliver its newspapers. Out of wide reading and exceptional personal knowledge, he traces the Cockney down the centuries, and pictures his modern environment in detail — his home and street life, his amusements and state of mind. We are introduced to music halls and coffee stalls, markets and games, even to marbles. It is a Dickensian panorama of fact, bright and warm and greasy with life.

The chapters on Cockney speech, including slang and profanity, are the

most scholarly part of the book. Mr. Franklyn is very severe on those who would suppress the Cockney dialect as something vulgar and undesirable. Cockney, he contends, is as honourable a dialect as anything in England, and he quotes in support Professor Weekley, who calls it "that noble blend of East Mercian, Kentish and East Anglian" associated with Chaucer, Spenser and Milton and modified into the literary English of the present day.

The author is also a staunch champion of Cockney virtues, which he declares have been clouded by realistic writers about life in mean streets. However well-intentioned the outside philanthropist may be, he will never really get inside the Cockney's heart. This record of the Londoner's passionate local loyalties, adaptability, good humour and zest for life, goes far to explain why London defied the bombers so magnificently.

The other end of the social scale is reached in Barbara Worsley-Gough's addition to the admirable Londoners' Library. *Fashions in London* is concerned at first with the old moated aristocracy, the really exclusive upper or inner set, whose customs included long and vast dinner parties followed by deadly dull evenings, when even innocent card games were tabooed. Then we



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"Adaptability, good humour and zest for life"

see the barriers of caste and conduct broken down, largely at first through the influence of Edward, Prince of Wales (Edward VII), and later through the impact of two wars. There is much information, clearly and wittily presented, about dress (the 18-inch waist), amusements and general social set-up. The illustrations add to the amusement and incredulity with which we regard the

fashions of long ago, but it may be wise to reflect that 50 years hence people may be feeling the same about us.

BETTER THAN MOST

HEAVEN AND EARTH, by Carlo Caccioli; Heinemann, English price, 15.
IT'S DIFFERENT FOR A WOMAN, by Mary Jane Ward; Victor Gollancz, English price, 12 6.
THE HILLS WERE JOYFUL TOGETHER, by Roger Mui; Jonathan Cape, English price, 12 6.
MAN ON THE TIGHT ROPE, by Neil Paterson; Hodder and Stoughton, English price, 7 6.

CONTEMPORARY

Italy, America, Jamaica and Czechoslovakia provide the settings for these four novels. The first two are good, the second two competent; high scoring these days, when life has so far outstripped fantasy—at least in the amazing, the horrifying, and the unexpected—that fiction has fallen into a languishing decline.

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