

Books and Men

Light and Shade of King George V's Character in New Biography

Ernest Short's Volume No Mere Panegyric

"WHY did the love of an Empire come to this simple, modest man?" asks Ernest H. Short in "King George, the Well-Beloved." The answer cannot be given here in a brief space, for Mr. Short's own book is the answer. As the author says, it was because simple, modest people the world over wanted guidance. But King George's life has to be studied from its earliest years for an understanding of the simplicity and modesty, and withal the regality, of the man who was in that

position when simple, modest people the world over needed guidance.

Mr. Short has done his work well. Into a broad outline of the life of the late King he has fitted apt anecdotes and pertinent observations which show how admirably King George's character and tastes were moulded for the part that destiny thrust upon him.

The book is not a mere panegyric; discussion of some unpleasant suggestions once made about the King is not shirked. Mr. Short does not need to be reminded that no portrait is true if it be wholly light or wholly shade.

Due attention is given to the formative early years. Prince George, as he then was, did not become prospective heir to the Throne until he was 26 years old, when his elder brother, the Duke of Clarence, died. But both the Duke of Clarence and his younger brother had been given the same kind of training. Their own father's preparation for life as heir to the Throne had, as Mr. Short reminds us, been less than successful, not for want of forethought but from over-carefulness. He had been a victim of a System. King Edward the Seventh (as he was to be) and, after him, King George, decided that their sons should not be brought up on a system. King Edward and Queen Alexandra desired for their boys less of books, maybe, but more of places and people. And so the Duke of Clarence and Prince George entered the Royal Navy, as cadets, when one was 14 years old, the other 12. "Herring" and "Sprat" were their nicknames in the training ship Britannia.

So this intimate biography begins with a mischievous boy playing pranks on other people and having to "bend over" sometimes to receive punishment for disobedience, and then traces the making of a man and a king well fitted to rule the British peoples in the troubled times to come. There is no need to remind these peoples what manner of King he was.

But the story of the moulding of that King is distinctly of abiding interest to them. That story is told lucidly in Mr. Short's book, and with excellent judgment of what is pertinent and what is not. Again, one must commend Mr. Short's use of anecdote in a book which makes the reader feel that he had actually known King

Desert Madness

Action and Romance

IN his latest novel, Harrison Conrad vividly describes the adventures of Billy Gordon, who undertakes to locate some lost lodes which were discovered accidentally by a party of three soldiers, one of whom was old Ben Gordon, Billy's father. In the struggle



B.B.C. AUTHOR.—Guy Pocock, on the staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation, whose new novel, "Period Programme," is now available in New Zealand. It is even more amusing than his "Design for a Staircase."

to find this gold, Billy has many difficulties to overcome, but with the loyal aid of Judith Shane and her father he finally wins through.

Mr. Conrad has the good gift of imagination, which he uses to its fullest extent to bring his pictures more naturally and more clearly before the mind of his reader. "Desert Madness," as indicated by the name, has been set in a background of barren, desolate regions, where men take the law into their own hands; where heats, droughts and sandstorms take toll of the lives of the toughest "desert rat."

From the first page to the last, there is not one uninteresting moment. It is a book of fast-moving action and thrilling romance, and anyone who seeks light entertainment should read this story.

"Desert Madness." Harrison Conrad. Philip Allan. Our copy from the publishers.

George V. The publisher's description of the book as an intimate biography is justified.

"King George, the Well-Beloved." By Ernest H. Short. Philip Allan, London. Our copy from the publisher.

"Oh Mummy!—
what a lovely light"



"Yes a Crompton
and better than
the others too!!"

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