

Reviews.

IN ENGLAND TO-DAY. By LUKIN JOHNSTON. (Dent, 8/6 net).

The author of this book left England at the age of eighteen and lived in Canada for twenty-five years. He has been in England for the past two years and has written this book as a reply to many questions that have reached him or will greet him on his return to his adopted land. If his book be a guide, and we think it is, he will carry back with him many pleasant memories of the folk he has met and the things he has seen.

Mr. Johnston has an easy and a pleasant style. He has managed to convey to his readers a comprehensive view of his two years' sojourn in terse and plain language and in nineteen brief chapters. His outlook is a wide one and ranges from the Derby to the Lord Mayor's show and the orators in Hyde Park ; but sandwiched between these fixed and rooted institutions of English life he has contrived to say something of the old inns of England, its churches, cottages, castles and rural life in general and this perhaps is the more pleasing part of his book. Certain ancient epitaphs have amused him, and the glories of cathedral architecture have left him silent in admiration. He has discoursed with rectors, vicars, vergers, tavern hosts and men of the farm and the soil and his discourse has always been free from irritation. Surprising as it may seem in so brief a survey, he has managed to bring Oxford and its story within his ambit, touching lightly upon its grey walls and the terminal sojourners of that ancient city.

One does not expect, nor indeed look for, any profound archæological disquisitions in Mr. Johnston's book and he would be the last probably to claim any special fitness in this connexion. But he obviously has been moved by the story of the past of his native land and has an effective way of presenting the scenes that met his gaze as he roved through the English shires. His pages are seasoned with trite observations and he displays a keen insight into many of the interests, and indeed difficulties, of English country life at the present time.

We feel that Mr. Johnston will not mind us drawing attention to the fact that as one comes upon Henley from the Maidenhead road one does not see "the grey spire of Henley Church outlined above the town" for the church has a square tower and no spire. But this is a slip of an author who is enamoured of the romantic associations of the countryside and we are pleased to have had the opportunity of reading what Mr. Johnston thinks of England and the English in these stirring days. He must not be unduly concerned about our social insularity.

E.W.D.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND. By ARTHUR BRYANT.

(London, Longmans, Green & Co., 9/6 net).

It is not often that a work of outstanding historical value comes clothed in such pleasant and fascinating language as this one; many historic memoirs might well be formed on such a model. For here is ample evidence that an intensive study of a figure of the past can be made as thrilling as the works of the great imaginative writers.

The narrative leads off with the flight of Charles after Worcester and with skilful pen the author re-creates the oft-told tale of the King's flight in a way that at once becomes absorbing. We learn how close to detection and capture the King was on several occasions before the "Surprise" carried him secretly across the Channel to land him at Fécamp. His exile in France, the finessing and manoeuvres which eventually brought him to his native land; the spontaneous explosion of joy and thanksgiving which burst the bonds of Puritan repression, the gaiety and gravity which alternately elated or depressed the people; the plots, the plague, the great fire which stirred men's hearts to deeper things; the apparent suavity and yet keen discrimination with which the King approached the recurrent political, diplomatic, religious and financial crises that dogged him at every turn; his love of the sea and the creative arts; all are eloquently told in the pages of this book. "Here we see him . . . striding at dawn to his 'physick at tennis,' or taking his

divertissements at Nelly's candle-lit parties ; sailing his yacht through stormy seas from the Nore to Spithead ; supping with his jockeys at Newmarket or gossiping with Pepys in the park ; discussing politics in his laboratory, or, for privacy, ' between the wall and the bed ' ; fishing in the rain while he listens to the distant howls of the mob ; alone and vilified, outwitting his foes and saving his throne ; and lastly apologising on his death bed for being such a long time a dying."

Mr. Bryant's book may be said to give us a portrait of the King more intimate and different from any that we have hitherto known. It is a book about a King and not so much about the age in which he lived, although the political and religious backgrounds are limned in much as Romney and the great portraitists sketched in a distant prospect behind their sitters. The second Charles, and in much the same measure his father, possessed some strange, compelling personality which in the midst of a feeble administration and pleasure-loving court, held together the warring factions and jarring constituents of seventeenth-century England ; and this book, more than any other study, has stressed this individuality.

Not the least interesting note in the book—interesting to those who are privileged to be natives of the ancient borough of Reading—is the fact that on the twenty-seventh of June in the year of grace, 1630, William Laud, Anglican Bishop of London baptised with water from the Jordan and with these words, " Double his father's graces upon him, O Lord, if it be possible," the babe who despite his many frailties lived after much travail in the wilderness to find his way to the hearts of an obstinate people. And the interest of course lies in the fact that in his youth William Laud passed with his satchel from his father's house in Broad Street to that Free School in Reading which has given many eminent men to serve God and the King. But Laud soon passes out of the picture, for he had lost his head before even the babe he had blessed was in danger of losing his.

Mr. Bryant's book is a sound and scholarly piece of work and its interest holds to the last. As a story, buttressed by

voluminous authorities, it is fascinating to a degree. The labour of selection and condensation must have been enormous, for the age is massed with literature, both fugitive and enduring, in the form of memoirs, tracts, letters, diaries, ballads, debates, journals and trials. It will be long, if ever, before such an admirable study is superseded.

E.W.D.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

By EDWARD HUTTON. Illustrated by HUGH THOMSON.
(Macmillan, 7/6 net.).

This excellent series has long been a favourite both with the student of local history and the general public; the latter preferring that their knowledge of the past shall be gleaned from the rambling itinerary, seasoned with a variety of anecdote and observation, rather than from the more exact and analytical studies of the expert. But by this it must not be supposed that Mr. Hutton, to whom this volume has been entrusted, and who has already proved his mettle in similar volumes on Wiltshire and Somerset, necessarily comes within the category of the skilful Rambler. The county of Gloucester has great variety to recommend it; historical, geographical and ecclesiastical, and Mr. Hutton has managed to find something to say about every corner of the Shire, from the great Roman city of *Corinium Dobunorum*, the modern Cirencester, which lies under the gentle southern slope of the Cotswolds, to the wonderful views from Birdlip and the sheer delights of Painswick, Kempsford and the beechwoods of the Cotswolds in spring. It is not easy to review critically a book of this kind as the author has performed his task thoroughly and in well chosen language. We shall, therefore, apart from two critical notes, content ourselves with assuring the reader that among the whole of this series the volume on the County of Gloucester is one of the most fascinating, not only from the wealth of material which the author had to draw upon but also the exceedingly able way in which he has done so.

We shall comment specifically upon the Fairford glass and a tradition concerning Moreton-in-the-Marsh. As to Fairford, Mr. Hutton shall tell us about the famous glass in his own words : " The church of S. Mary at Fairford . . . stands on the site of an earlier building, relics of which, of the fourteenth century, may be seen in the western piers of the church. But there came John Tame, a London merchant, *temp.* Henry VII. who made the town of Fairford famous, and it has gone on being famous ever since. When he came, there stood in this place an ancient church. He pulled it down and set himself to make on a small scale a fake of the great church of Northleach. This was finished in 1493. He then undertook to glaze it, and did so with the story of Our Lady and her divine son and the church founded on S. Peter. No doubt he obtained the glass in Flanders, and it is an irony that when the vandalism began at the Reformation and was renewed by the Puritans, so much old glass of the highest beauty of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was destroyed and the ugly stuff here saved.

Fairford boast !

Thy Church hath kept what all have lost,
 And is preserved from the bane
 Of either war or Puritan,
 Whose life is coloured in the paint,
 The inside dross, the outside saint.

" It goes to show how poor we must be in really fine glass when we can rave about the pallid, ugly, washed-out stuff here. If you would see what glass can be, go to Chartres, Sens, Troyes, Auxerre, and a hundred others, and have whole cathedrals full of the most glorious and beautiful work of a better time than the end of the fifteenth century. What do you say? They are foreign, and their beauty too? They were not so foreign when they were made, and in all they represented we were still one. And in what, then, is this Flemish glass at Fairford English? It is as English as Van Eyck or Memling, and as foreign as Bruges and Antwerp, or, shall we say, as Aaps—and that is not an English name. But in such matters I must refuse to admit

frontiers, or I shall find myself a foreigner in Athens, Rome and perhaps in Westminster Abbey. Away with all this ridiculous nationalism!"

Mr. Hutton's observations are certainly sound, but whether the vehemence with which he declares them will please Gloucester folk is another matter. Parochialism has a happy knack of over-riding the obvious, and not a little local pride has grown up in the neighbourhood of Fairford as to her wonderful church windows.

Now we must break a lance with Mr. Hutton regarding King Charles the First and Moreton-in-the-Marsh, at whose inn, the "White Hart," the martyr king is said to have slept. Mr. Hutton has a footnote thus: "I like to believe this (the sojourn at the inn). In the Cottage Hospital (1875), the chair, cushion and footstool he used are preserved." Readers may be reminded that these objects have been recently acquired by the nation and are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and that in an article in the *Connoisseur* for April, 1928, the connection of Charles I. with these articles is disputed and a strong case made out for their being the perquisite of Archbishop Juxon after the Coronation of Charles. II. Juxon, after "twenty years of waiting, placed an earthly crown upon the head of the son whose royal father he had helped upon the short but stony road to an eternal one."

It only remains to add that the illustrations by Hugh Thomson ably second Mr. Hutton's work and have all the charm and wistfulness which we have come to associate with his facile brush.

E W. D.