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LITERARY NOTES

CONSIDERABLE is the speculation of the reader of fiction as to the time spent by a novelist in producing a book. Bob, the half-baked football hero, who experiences the utmost agony in getting a half-dozen coherent sentences together weekly in order to satisfy the timid family at home as to his safety, would probably gasp if he were informed that a prolific writer like Mr. Le Queux can issue a story of 83,000 words in a month. Nor is Mr. Le Queux's speed with the pen record-breaking. Mr. Hall Caine has written 9,000 words while en route from Scotland to London. Mr. H. G. Wells thinks nothing of a daily average of 7,000 words. But writers who are noted for their rapidity in most cases are writers of the novel of incident and pay no great attention to form. The polished work requires more time devoted to detail. Mr. Watts Dunton laboured for fifteen years over "Aylwin," and Mrs. Humphry Ward, who can show speed when she desires, stayed with "Robert Elsmere" three long years. The late George Meredith allowed a two-year interval in the perfecting of a single one of his books.

information given shows that the work is the result of the study of years. Mr. Jones was three years secretary of the committee, but for over twenty years he has been studying hymns and hymn tunes. Besides the technical side of the work, Mr. Jones frequently gives interesting notes of incidents connected with the writing of a hymn or the composition of a tune, which add greatly to the enjoyment of the reader. Reference has frequently been made to the completeness of the indexes of the Book of Common Praise and this feature is carried even further in the Annotated Edition. Nothing like the index of tunes has even been attempted before. This index gives the various names under which the tune appears, the name of the composer, date of composition and publication. Many tunes which in every other hymn book are considered anonymous are here credited to their composers. It is safe to say no work of the kind approaches this either for completeness or for interest. Mr. Jones has produced a work which will be a joy to all hymn-lovers and a mine into which all future compilers of hymnals will delve.

* * *

THE Book of Common Praise, annotated edition, by James Edmund Jones, B.A. Toronto: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press.

Those who have looked at all into the compilation of a hymnal know that the mass of detail involved is enormous. With some notable exceptions it has been the custom in the past for compilation committees to issue the hymn book and allow all record of the work of obtaining the final form of the volume to be lost. Thus nobody knows why one reading was selected in preference to another, why a tune seemingly suitable was not used, and so on. If it was because the copyright was unobtainable, no record is left of the names of the owners or the date of the expiry. While acting as convenor and secretary of the compilation committee of the Anglican Book of Common Praise, Mr. James Edmund Jones of Toronto determined that all the data gathered in preparing the hymnal should be preserved both as a guide to compilers of future hymnals and also as a work that would be of interest and value to the lovers of hymns. While it was not possible to carry this intention out in its entirety in regard to the various readings of all the hymns, this has been done in regard to the most important and most interesting. Mr. Jones might have written a bulky volume for the learned, which ordinary people would never have had time to read, but instead he has issued an annotated edition of the hymnal treating the hymns and their authors and composers in the order in which the hymns appear in the book. The result is a volume of handy size in good plain type which thousands of people, undoubtedly, will use as their regular hymn book. The result will be that these people will be able to see when a hymn is sung, the author and composer and to get the interesting facts about their lives; while the reason why one reading was adopted instead of another will be found in cases where the matter is important.

A look into the book shows that not only is Mr. Jones by his training well fitted to produce such a work but that it has been a labour of love as well as of skill. The hymns from other languages have been traced to their sources in German, French, Greek and Latin, and the amount of

MR. JEROME K. JEROME, known chiefly to fame by his "Three Men in a Boat," announces a new humorous story which he calls "They and I," and which purports to recount the doings of a family of five.

* * *

MR. THOMAS HARDY, who since the death of George Meredith is recognised as the peer in the domain of English intellectual fiction, will not be represented by a novel this season. Mr. Hardy instead will issue through Messrs. MacMillan, "Time's Laughing-Stocks and Other Poems."

* * *

THERE has just appeared in England through Messrs. Methuen three bright volumes of essays from the pens of the three cleverest writers to-day of English humour "that is light." Mr. G. K. Chesterton is responsible for "Tremendous Trifles," most of which have appeared in the London Illustrated News. Mr. H. Belloc calls his book "On Everything," and it deals with a varied assortment of subjects which would seem to justify the singular title. Mr. E. V. Lucas' volume, which completes the trio, is "One Day and Another."

Overworked Snake

THE new and very stringent prohibitory law which goes into effect in Kansas has revived an old story on the subject. A stranger went into a Kansas drug store and asked for some whiskey.

"I can't sell you any whiskey," said the druggist.

"But I'm sick," persisted the stranger.

"That won't help any," replied the druggist. "It don't make any difference. I can't sell you any whiskey for being sick."

"Well, what can you sell it to me for?" asked the stranger.

"The only thing we can sell whiskey for in this town," said the druggist, "is for snake bites. Hold up now! Don't ask me where to get bitten. No use. There is only one snake in town, and he is engaged for three weeks ahead."



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