

THE BOOKLOVER'S LONDON

CHAPTER I

PERSONAL AND GENERAL

EVERY man finds his own charm in London, and unfortunately it too often blinds him to all the charms that other men have found in it. "I see that the Londoner is also, like me, a stranger in London," wrote Emerson in one of his Journals; "I have a good deal to tell him of it." It is curious, how complacently the visitor or new resident assumes that the mystery, the wonder, the beauty, the fascination of London that is new to him has never been discovered before, and that certainly the poor Cockney takes no interest in his native city and knows nothing about it. In the same spirit of surprise at his own discovery a writer (evidently one of these excited new-comers) noted in my newspaper the other morning that "the average Londoner will not take the trouble to find out that on a very clear day if he looks straight down Bouverie Street he will have a view of the Crystal Palace over in Surrey." Well, I am a Cockney and an average Londoner, but I shall never go out of my way to obtain that distracting vision, not because I am indifferent to the charm of London but simply because I do not want to see the Crystal Palace, and do not count any