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THE CONNOISSEUR, INCORPORATING INTERNATIONAL STUDIO

acquainted. It was accepted by Pythagoras, Plato, the Neo-Platonists, Virgil, Ovid; it became an integral part of more than one great religion, among them the Hindu and the Buddhist, as well as of the philosophy of most Western theosophists. It has attracted some of the deepest of modern thinkers: Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Hugo, Browning, Tennyson, Whitman. Even such sceptical minds as Hume's and Huxley's condemned its hasty rejection. It is the mantle of such men as these which has descended upon Mr. Shirley.

No one fitter to deal with such a subject than the Hon. Ralph Shirley could be imagined. He founded and edited (the latter for twenty years) *The Horoscope* and *The Occult Review*; to these and kindred studies he has devoted the labour of his life. His achievement in this book is startling. The exposition is brilliant; the subject, despite its range and depth, is presented with a lucidity comprehensible to everyone. The Problem of Rebirth is examined from every angle, the evidence 'for and against' stated, and the case summed up judiciously. Some of the evidence favouring the theory of Reincarnation is no less than astounding, supported as it is by a wealth of serious testimony which cannot be dismissed. Among such cases that of Alexandrina Samona, which belongs to the present century, is perhaps the most remarkable of all.

'My object in writing this book,' says Mr. Shirley, 'has not been, at least primarily, to convince, but rather to make the reader face the subject under discussion independently of traditional beliefs and preconceptions. It is a plea for the reconsideration of an hypothesis which has not latterly received the attention which it merits and which has a very direct bearing on questions such as Heredity and Evolution which are at the present time very much to the fore.' The whole question of 'Heredity and Reincarnation' is examined by Mr. Shirley in a chapter of exceptional interest, and in a spirit that shows no trace of prejudice. From this examination the weakness of the atavistic theory emerges only too apparently. It has been tortured by its protagonists to explain away difficulties which are altogether beyond its power to elucidate. How far the theory of Metempsychosis succeeds where that of Atavism fails the reader of this remarkable book will judge for himself.—G.R.C.

CONTEMPORARY PEWTER IN THE NETHERLANDS

(London: International Tin Research & Development Council, 37B, Strand, W.C.2)

WE have but to think of the paintings of Ter Borch and Ostade, of the carefully painted canvases of Metsu and the elaborate still-lives of Jan Steen and

others who delighted to paint the pewter pot and plate, to remember that Holland has a pewter tradition more than three centuries old. The industry to-day is virile, as the illustrations to this third Bulletin of the International Tin Research & Development Council prove.

The modern revivalists of pewter started by repeating old traditional forms; but new forms, suitable to the peculiar properties of the alloy, the function of the object, and the taste of the day, are now being produced at Zeist and Tiel that rival the products of the seventeenth-century pewter-casters of Leyden and elsewhere.—H.H.

NORDISK FOTOGRAFI, 1936

(Stockholm: Wahlström & Wildstrand, 88 pp. 7 kr.)

WHILST we can distinguish readily a Swedish from an English painting, or even tell from what language a piece of literature has been translated, there is no trick of hand or turn of phrase in photography to afford a clue to its 'port of origin.'

The lens cannot help viewing life internationally; but so international has become the vision of the modern photographer, and so unimportant to him is his subject matter, that not one in ten of the photographs in this album reveals its *provenance*. The curled rope might make its pattern equally well on the deck of a ship in Gothenburg or Hull, cisterns have a way of arranging themselves in Orebro as they do in Suffolk, furnaces and cranes are much-of-a-muchness in any industrial town or harbour, and shadows on stairs obey the same rules the world over. Who can distinguish a Norwegian footstep in the snow from that of a Scot? Is the lofty building that, like some modern leaning tower, rapidly foreshortens itself diagonally across the page, in Holland or the States?

But though the Scandinavian Annual of Photography for 1936 is only ten per cent. Scandinavian, it worthily reflects the times.—H.H.

HORSE BRASSES

THE CONNOISSEUR frequently receives inquiries from readers concerning Horse Brasses. Those interested in this fascinating by-path of collecting will welcome the handy little brochure issued by Mr. H. S. Richards, of 40 Graham Street, Birmingham, which illustrates a hundred and forty examples, and tells their history succinctly. It is interesting to learn that there are quite twelve hundred different designs in existence. It is said that these ornaments originated in the ancient belief in the Evil Eye, and that such amulets had protective power against it. The price of this booklet is eightpence.—G.