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BOOKS OF THE DAY.

In "The Eye of the Beholder" (Hulton; 30s.), Mr. Lance Sieveking frankly lists and describes a representative selection of famous persons he has known. There is nothing wrong with that. We would all of us, if we could, be pickers-up of unconsidered notorieties, and Mr. Sieveking has recognized that anyone who has ever met a great man, for however short a time, has his own contribution to make towards his composite picture. "No two people," he writes, "see a man or woman from *precisely* the same angle. It is all in the eye of the beholder." But I do not know why he goes on to tell us that "the book will . . . only include those people who, on quiet reflection, appear to me 'beautiful.' " One has only to read the chapters on Bernard Shaw and Aleister Crowley to discover that, if this contention is to stand, Mr. Sieveking's ideas of beauty are very comprehensive indeed. Personally, I was glad of the plain speaking to which he has treated Shaw. "A rasping voice charged with irritability . . . quite horrifying conceit . . . such an atmosphere of arrogant pride . . . such a lack of warmth or love towards (their) fellow-creatures." It is quite time that these things should be said. As for the egregious Crowley, he gets off almost too lightly: "I feel that perhaps it is not a harsh judgment to say that he was not a good man. But he never did me any harm. Perhaps he wasn't a very good magician either. . . ."

But of course it is the celebrities whom Mr. Sieveking knew and liked who give the book its value. Here is a really good portrait of G. K. Chesterton ("Mr. Tame Lion"—how felicitous children can be!), and another—perhaps the best of all, because of the intimacy between him and the author—of Paul Nash. There are happy phrases, such as: "The really strange thing is that Eric (Maschwitz) has found that by insisting on living his life in a patch of sunshine left over from the vanished past, he has proved beyond a doubt the truth of the old saying that life is what you make it." How the sunshine sparkles in the essay that follows! There is a short passage about Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Esmond Harmsworth (now Lord Rothmere) which might be a pastiche cartoon by Low and Illingworth. Prime Ministers hop daintily from twig to twig of the rather odd

arbor cognitionis—the family tree of his acquaintances—which the author has printed on the inside front and back cover pages of his book. Every now and then, I am sorry to say, Mr. Sieveking's style becomes waggish and *espiègle*. He wriggles and he skips. He peeps round corners and giggles. But no silly tricks can impair the essential merit of this work, which is very considerable indeed.