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Viscount Castlereagh by Arthur Hassall

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VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH. By Arthur Hassall, M.A.
(Pitman.) 3s. 6d. net.

This book is an able *apologia* for the life of a man whose real greatness has as yet been very imperfectly recognized. England owed more to Castlereagh than to any other statesman during the Napoleonic epoch, with the exception of Pitt. It is well to have the foreign policy of this great Irishman set down clearly, so that he, very insufficiently honoured in his own generation, may have the praise that is his due from posterity. Unfortunately, like most biographers of the hero-worshipping school, Mr. Hassall goes too far. He attempts to defend what is indefensible. Castlereagh's Irish career is better left in obscurity. Mr. Hassall fails altogether to justify or even to excuse his hero's share in the abominable intrigue and corruption which preceded the passing of the Act of Union. He has not cared to understand the Irish Constitution or to make an intelligible path for himself through the jungle which surrounds the incident of Fitzwilliam's recall. Again, Castlereagh's career as an English statesman after 1815 is anything but glorious. The Liverpool ministry, faced by the necessity of the internal reorganization of the country, failed miserably, and a large share of the blame must rest on Castlereagh's shoulders. These two parts of the book, the first part and the last, are unworthy of the brilliant and stimulating history of England's foreign policy from 1800 to 1815, and the share which Castlereagh had in shaping it.

J. O. H.

THE CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT. By Philip Vivian. Popular Edition. (London : Watts and Co.) 3s. 6d. net.

The author of this book has succeeded in making his meaning clear, and the result is a very readable volume. Not only is the book readable ; it is also, from a certain point of view, worth reading. We do not say that Mr. Vivian has given us any profound or original thought, any fresh light on old problems ; but he has stated his opinions with transparent sincerity, and sincerity is always worth something. In our judgement, the book is an honest expression of the grounds on which its author has rejected Christianity and adopted an attitude described by him as " militant Rationalism."

Having said so much in praise of Mr. Vivian's book, we regret to have to add that this exhausts what we can say in its favour. It appears to us that the writer has not grasped his problem ; his attitude is, as far as we can see, a purely