

THE BRITISH EMPIRE. By Basil Williams. (Oxford University Press; 3s. 6d.).

It is curious how the very extent of the British Empire and its bewildering variety of climates, population and culture renders the task of its description extremely arduous. Anyone who sets out to write a short account of it, like the one under review, is forced to an enumeration of detail out of which it is often difficult for the reader to construct a clear mental picture. None the less, Professor Basil Williams, an extremely distinguished historian of the 18th century, has produced a volume well up to the high standard set by the Home University Library. Perhaps it is too much in a book of this size to ask for maps, but this addition would be of great value in enabling the reader to assess both the strategical and economic value of the imperial regions. None the less, this book is a very useful short summary of the growth and present status of the most remarkable political institution or network of institutions of recorded history.

P.F.

MORE TALKING AT RANDOM. By Douglas Woodruff. (Burns Oates; 8s. 6d.)

Another welcome book of curious anecdotes and pertinent comment reprinted from D.W.'s column in *The Tablet*. This is an 'occasional' feature that very well stands the test of re-publication.

M.S.

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