THERE is now very little difference between historical romance and romantic history. In the former, fact is hidden in the mists of the past, and history is woven out of the facts; but the net result is much the same. A new and attractive example of this second method, with explanations from documentary evidence to purely imaginative scenes and conversations, is "THE WITCHERY OF THE ROSE OF LONDON. THE ROMANCE OF A ROYAL MISTRESS." By C. J. S. Thompson. With twenty-one illustrations (Grayson; 126 ill.). The author's prose is as plain as the weather, as lucid as alchemy, astrology, poison mysteries, and so on. Perhaps less readable than the present subject by the fact that his heroines are accessories of sorcery and witchcraft, his heroine, the author's view of her from her high estate after the death of her royal lover, Edward IV., and that the King's marriage to Elizabeth Grey was also alleged to have been an act of sorcery. Jane's life, as here related, and the world of society in which the title refers to the character of the person and character.

Contemporary biographical material, read with some curiosity, though including some letters from John Lynden, Richard Duke of Gloucester, Edward Rich III., in the preface, by the way, unaccompanied by the name of his author, may be a hint that some of the author's reserve for Cromwell. More reliance is placed on Jacquin the later writers, particularly Sir John Carle, who actually saw Jane in her old age. His picture bears witness to her good qualities and the beneficent use she made of them, in building schools and hospitals, and in writing a history of her time. On these lines he has produced a very appealing portrait.

While his fictional passages are a trifle crude, he imparts an element of plot to the early chapters, in telling how Lord Hastings, unable to secure for Jane herself, conceived the idea of setting his royal master on her track, with a view to bringing her to Court within range of his own ambitions; and how the scheme failed because the amorous King proved more constant in his love than Hastings had anticipated. In Part II. of his book—Jane Shore in Poetry and Drama—Mr. Thompson gives in full the narrative poems by Thomas Churchyard (1587) and Anthony Chute (1583); a printed broadside by Edward IV.; Michael Drayton's "heroic epistle" put in the mouths of Edward and Jane in the Ovidian manner; several ballads, and Nicholas Rollin's poem, "The Life and Adventures of Jane Shore." Shakespeare himself, of course, as Mr. Thompson recalls, mentions "Shore's Wife" in "Richard III." The latter describes Jane chiefly from Richard's hostile point of view.

Jane, we are told, was a daughter of one Thomas Wane-stead, a mercer of Cheapside. Her beauty became a danger to her father, having frustrated an attempted abduction, her father married her off to William Shore, a worthy goldsmith and banker of Lombard Street. They lived happily with him for some years, and thither, according to Michael Drayton, Edward IV. visited her home and gave her the ring to make her acquaintance. I was not aware of all these intriguing facts and traditions when I plotted the clerical pen many years ago in that unfortunate borough. They might have helped to lighten the tedium of the office stool. "In the time of Henry VII.," we read, "some of the houses occupied by the goldsmiths were remarkable for their gilded and carved frontages, and above the doorways swung great sign-boards embellished with heraldic devices, or ornamented with figures of animals and birds." In my time, this taste for pictorial emblems still survived to some extent in Lombard Street, and every now and then I payed visits beneath the sign of the Pelican.

Finally, Mr. Thompson gives an interesting note on the portraits of Jane reproduced in his book as illustrations. None of them, he points out, is authentic, since in her time portraiture as an art had scarcely begun in England. Those that we have, he says, are imaginary pictures, painted in the middle of the sixteenth century. Among them are two preserved at Eton College, but neither corresponds with Drayton's description of one that he saw there about 1669, which has apparently disappeared. Others given in the book are from the royal collection at Hampton Court, from King's College, Cambridge, and from various wood-cuts and engravings. There is a tradition that Jane painted the cause of Eton College when Edward IV. was considering the appropriation of its revenues. Despite the poverty and privations of her later years, she lived to be over eighty, and died about 1532, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Henry VIII.

Jane Shore was a type of those women who are dependent on the bounty or caprices of men—a type much rarer nowadays, though still not entirely extinct. How the modern changes in the social and economic status of women came about is not mentioned in a book on the fore-runners of the feminist movement—"Women in Subjection." A Study of the English Women before 1532. By I. B. O'Malley, author of "Florence Nightingale, 1820-1856" (Duckworth; 1925). Jane herself is not mentioned, and there is only a passing allusion to some of her contemporaries, "the ladies of the pentagonal house," which splendidly portrays, the public history of the reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and the fourth Edward as a spire of daring, to the advantage of the earlier princes. These affairs, of course, are entirely subsidiary to the main current of the book: the psychological reconstruction of some self-centred individual. Mr. Thompson inclines to the view that the behaviour of "Twelve Days." By Sidney Rogerson. Foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart. With eight Drawings by Stanley Spencer (Batsford; 6s. 6d.). This strikes me as being among the best of the war books I have seen, for giving a vivid and intensely vivid, picture of life in the trenches on the Western Front. As Captain Liddell Hart says: "This book is a picture, rather than a history, of the war that is in the making."

As the title indicates, the scope of the narrative is strictly limited to the events of these twelve days in the history of one particular sector, not marked by any outstanding military event, but merely presenting a picture of the daily routine of the infantryman's life at the Front, without any of the usual microcosm of the battle. "Every personal incident," says the author, "whether small and everything, including the conversations, is described in its context." Captain Rogerson does not tell us whether his work is based on any personal experiences, or whether, after this long interval, he has drawn his picture from the imagination of the author or the singularly arresting.

In the last number of The Illustrated London News appeared some astonishing photographs of certain animals, not at a South African homestead, associating with human beings on the most amicable terms. The big beasts are seen feeding by a lady's tea-table just like a pair of well-trained dogs. Some of them are with many others taken in the same domestic surroundings or in the wild, often in "Laos Wild and Friendly." The presentation of the Beasts as a companion-piece of an interesting subject for photography in his natural habitat. The anecdotes of one who has reared lions as a hobby. By E. F. W. Bell, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. With fifty-five illustrations in photogravure (Cassell; 6s. 6d.).

While appreciating to the full the wonder and beauty of the phenomena, I feel the unique interest of the author's narrative; and to some extent the novelty of the gallantry of the lion, even in its native haunts, when treated with tact and savoir-faire. But I dare to feel a little nervous in approaching that house as a visitor. "Perhaps no other animal," writes Mr. Tennyson, "has a more beautiful and temperamental character than the lion; nor is it easy to reason with a lion, since he has never been domesticated and is more likely to attack those who are equal strangers he will reveal the mysteries of his way of life in a manner which I admire the author for rearing those lions from cubhood to maturity." He reveals the Author's skill in taming and civilising creatures in quite a new light. I can easily believe that the lion would lie down with the lamb, if duly provided, at regular intervals, with a suitable quantity of cold water. He concludes with a

Image: Illustrated London News Group