

## Lemmy Caution And The "Psycho Boys"

ONE of the most popular detective story writers is Peter Cheyney, author of such books as *Poison Ivy*, *Can Ladies Kill?*, and *Dames is Dynamite*. It is therefore good news for the Peter Cheyney fans in New Zealand that adaptations of these novels are to be heard from the ZB stations. The first of the stories, *This Man is Dangerous*, is scheduled to begin from 12B on Thursday, May 4, and will be heard every Tuesday and Thursday at 8.5 p.m. *This Man Is Dangerous* features Lemmy Caution, the G-man whose adventures have done much to put Cheyney's novels into the best-seller class. It was recorded in Australia.

The announcement that the Peter Cheyney novels are being put on the air is a reminder that one in every four new works of fiction published in the English language is reported to be a detective story and that a greater percentage of people read these stories than any other type of fiction. Phillip Guedalla even says that "the detective story is the normal recreation of noble minds" and Rex Stout adds that "people who don't like mystery stories are anarchists." On the other hand there are psychologists who say that the rise of the detective novel is due to the decline of religion at the end of the 19th century. Man, they say, has a deeply-rooted sense of guilt and one of the functions of religion is to lift this burden of guilt from the individual's shoulders. But with the decline of religion man has been left alone with his guilt, so he has turned to the detective novel as an antidote. The reader is able to identify himself with both the detective and the murderer, representing the light and dark sides of his own nature. Most lovers of detective stories will probably hoot with laughter—and rightly—at these efforts of the "psycho boys" (as Eric Gill called them) to explain their taste in fiction. At any rate the detective story grows in popularity.

It is, however, interesting to notice that the devotees of the detective novel are drawn almost exclusively from the better educated classes. The uneducated tend to read straight thrillers. One difference between the two is that the criminal of the detective novel is almost always a sordid villain, and the detectives and police triumph as the heroes; while in the thriller the criminal is often its hero and nearly always a romantic figure—an offshoot of Robin Hood—and the police represent menacing interference, "a mirror to the inherent reactions of the different classes towards law and the underdog." But there the "psycho boys" are at it again, and we shall leave them, with the conviction that if we enjoy the adventures of Lemmy Caution from the ZB stations, it is because they make a good yarn, rather than because they are good psychology.

### Natural History

"WILD LIFE" is a new programme on the ZB stations. It comprises a series of talks on natural history by Professor Crosby Morrison, M.Sc., editor of the Australian magazine which bears the same title as the radio programme. Broadcast time is 9.15 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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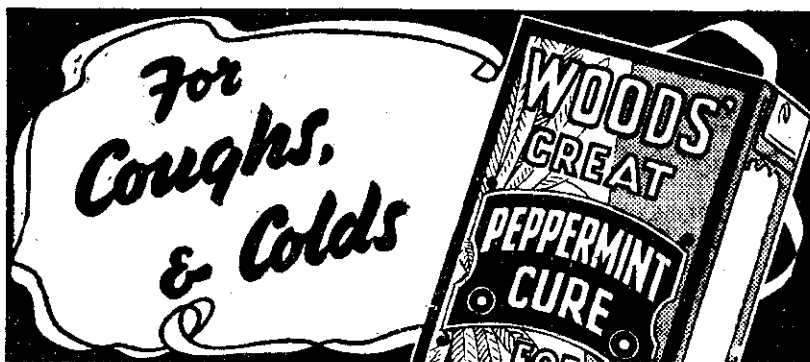


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