



WILLIAM COLENSO

(From the portrait by G. Lindauer, in the possession of the Napier Borough Council)

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the reader's imagination and the *femme fatale* has charms which we have to take for granted but which we never see at work.

—B.L.C.

TWENTIETH CENTURY REPRINTS

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON. By H. G. Wells. FROST IN MAY. By Antonia White. THE HAMPSHIRE WONDER. By J. D. Beresford. ISRAEL RANK. By Roy Horniman. THE CENTURY LIBRARY. Eyre and Spottiswoode, English price, 6/- THE WINGS OF A DOVE. By Henry James. The Century Library. English price, 9/-.

THERE is something exciting in the announcement of a new library of reprints. What will they choose? The idea behind the Century Library is "to do for the best English fiction of the 20th Century what the Everyman Library has done for the classics as a whole." What is "the best English fiction?" The publishers' announcement goes on to modify this definition somewhat, for it says that "apart from such books as *The History of Mr. Polly* or *The Wings of a Dove*, which have already established themselves as classics, the Century Library will revive novels which have been unduly neglected." Such "neglected" books may not be among the "best." However, the point need not be pressed. Some mixing in a set of reprints appeals to a lot of readers, and in the space of novels since 1900—hundreds of thousands have been published—many of much merit must have passed into near oblivion. The five novels that have come to us are among the first eleven in the new library. Two are by very well known writers. A third is by a fairly well known man, J. D. Beresford; it was his first, and published originally in 1911. The other two have appealed, this reviewer would say, to a smaller public. Horniman's book was published in 1907, and Antonia White's in 1933.

So we have here, from this very promising series, a long novel by a

master of social analysis, Henry James; one of Wells's scientific romances; a tale of a girls' school; a story of a child born with the developed brain of a man, by a writer who was to specialise in the ultra-normal; and a thriller about a supreme egotist who sets out coolly to murder half-a-dozen people so that he can reach a title. The Henry James's reprint is timely, because there is now a revival of interest in him. In his introduction to *The Wings of a Dove*, Herbert Read describes it as "the first member of the great trilogy which constitutes the final phase of James's work." *The First Men in the Moon* (introduction by V. S. Pritchett) is perhaps the most fantastic of Wells's scientific fantasies, and one can easily recapture the extraordinary verve with which he mingled science and romance. It is quite probable that Wells the prophet and philosopher will be forgotten, and Wells the novelist be remembered, from the beginnings in 1895 to *Mr. Polly* in 1910. Elizabeth Bowen says of *Frost in May* that she can think of no other girls' school story. (it is written for grown-ups) that is a work of

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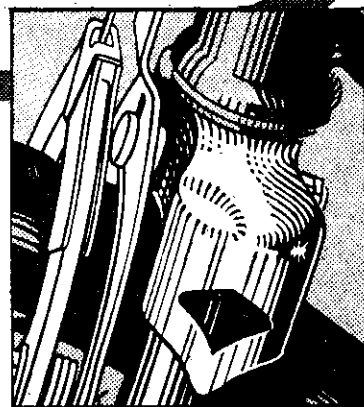


Spencer Digby photograph.

COMMANDER THOMAS WOODROOFFE, who will be one of the reviewers in the ZB Book Session on May 22. He will discuss Nicholas Monsarrat's *My Brother Denys*. "The Prose Works of Henry Lawson" will be reviewed by O. N. Gillespie; Lin Yutang's *The Gay Genius*, by James Bertram; and *Was It All Cricket?* by Dan Reese, will be reviewed by Winston McCarthy. The session will be chaired by the British publisher, Sir Stanley Unwin.



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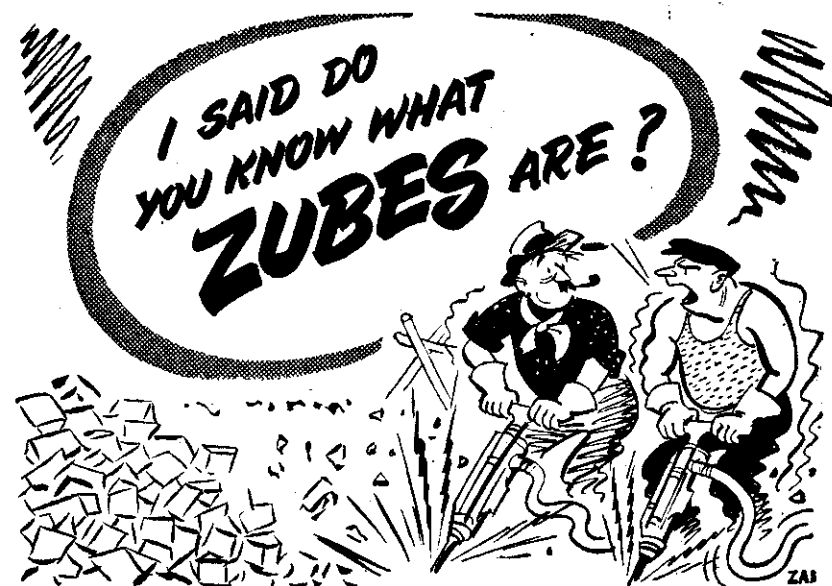
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