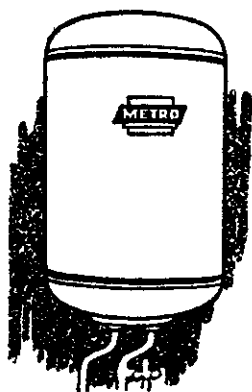


Meet
the
Man
who —



provides his wife with
help in the home . . .
. . . the most important
help of all -- --

CONSTANT SUPPLIES OF HOT WATER



He has installed for her
the magic

Metro

— unrivalled — automatic —
ELECTRIC WATER HEATER
Essential . . .

Efficient . . .

Economical!

A Happy Husband makes a Happy Wife . . .
. . . together, they make a Happy Home.

Made and guaranteed by

Metro-ELECTRIC & ENGINEERING CO. LTD.

16-18 CONSTABLE ST., WELLINGTON

AUCKLAND & PROVINCE: John Burns & Co. Ltd. (Radio Dept.) HAMILTON: W. R. Nicholls Ltd. TARANAKI: J. B. MacEwan & Co. Ltd. (All Branches) WANGANUI: Bennett Radio Ltd. HAWKE'S BAY: Vickery Electrical Co. Ltd. Hastings. HASTINGS: Loach & Price Ltd. WELLINGTON & PROVINCE: Briscoe, E. W. Mills & Co. Ltd., A. & T. Burt Ltd., Progress Motors Ltd. NELSON & MARLBOROUGH: Tomlinson & Gifford Ltd. CANTERBURY: Gordon Electrical Ltd., Christchurch. WEST COAST: Connors & Blackmore Ltd., Greymouth and Westport. OTAGO: Parker & Keane Ltd., Dunedin.



*The modern disinfectant with the pleasant,
refreshing smell!*

SANPIC, the modern home disinfectant . . . is wonderfully
all-purpose and so effective, so pleasant to use.

For a clean, healthy home, use
SANPIC regularly. Use it for
floors, sinks, drains and all
household purposes. In 2 sizes.

NON-POISONOUS
- So important where
there are children

Made by Reckitt & Colman (New Zealand) Limited, Forth Street, Dunedin. **5s. 2d.**

Books

DAYS IN AMBER

WHITE TOPEE, by Eve Langley; Angus and Robertson, Australian price 16/-.

(Reviewed by David Hall)

FOR complete acceptance and enjoyment of this book one needs special equipment. One should be Australian-born. Then again one should have been an admirer of that extinct form, the essay—Robert Lynd and all that—for this is not so much a novel-without-a-plot as a collection of autobiographical essays. The basis of these memoirs of a young girl in Gippsland between 1927 and 1929 is emotion recollected in tranquillity—grand days of hard work in the sun, grand nights drinking coffee or wine with those quaint Italian land workers, and at all hours headier draughts of ecstasy, far keener no doubt in retrospect than ever in actuality.

The first piece is tiresomely over-written. Later in the book Eve Langley gets into her stride or gets used to her own cleverness—and it is much more comfortable reading than the beginning, where page after page makes one snigger or wince—"utterly Australian" (a comment on a girl's appearance); "the frozen snow tiger that the tropical orchid is"; "emperorian charm"; "Long and noble and blazingly Greek in the blue heavens above were the days I worked for Tom Henderson. . ." She has a classical fixation, and many things are Greek or Grecian. "A wide blue sky from which at evening the great Ajax or Hector of Troia seemed to lean downward to me. . ."

Critics have been offered this salutary advice: reflect whether a writer's greatest weakness is not in fact his greatest strength. I must admit that Eve Langley's prinked-up ecstasies do often come off. Her heightened style can succeed magnificently. "Greedily I held on to the days; meticulously I embalmed them within myself. I built up strong years in my cells. I tied myself to eternity with lofty thoughts." The disadvantage of her method—apart from its hit-or-miss risks—is the contrast between the sophisticated vehicle and the way of life described. For she is telling us about the satisfying natural

and almost primitive life of the Victorian outback, peopled by men and women she shows are the salt of the earth, in a prose in a high degree the product of literary artifice.

The merits of this book are its extraordinary zest for life and the completeness and detail of the picture she draws. She tells us—in between her feats of emotional athleticism—all about tea growing, bean sorting, pea-picking and every other type of farm work. Her people are human and their observer herself has plenty of humour. This book is strong enough to stand a lot of abuse, and Eve Langley's greatest strength (which sometimes betrays her into moments of weakness) is her power of conveying her own heightened sense of beauty. I would like to see someone write in this way about New Zealand.

PROPHET AND WIFE

TOLSTOY, a Life of My Father, by Alexandra Tolstoy, translated from the Russian by Elizabeth Reynolds Haggood; Victor Gollancz, English price 30/-.

ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY, who must now be 70, was a young woman in her father's tormented old age. She supported him in the struggle with his wife, Sophia Andreyevna, and helped him to escape on the journey that ended with his death. Her biography is very much a family chronicle. Perhaps she was too much engaged, emotionally, to be objective about events which have already been described in many books; but she gives an admirable picture of daily life at Yasnaya Polyana, especially in those later years when the house was always full of Tolstoyans.

The ageing writer, no longer interested in novels, was deeply preoccupied with religion. He had divided his property among wife and children, and was trying to detach himself from material things. But he could not stay silent when new evils and injustices were reported, so that the man of peace was always in the arena, arguing and denouncing. Inevitably, he was surrounded by disciples and camp followers. He was revered and hated; and in his own home, where he had his best opportunities to carry out his precept of non-resistance, life was a succession of little wars.

His wife, who had 13 children, could not understand Tolstoy's reluctance to take money for his writings, and resented an idealism which threatened her security. "You . . . may not have a special love for your own children," she wrote while still a young woman, "but we common mortals cannot, and perhaps we do not want to, pervert ourselves and justify our lack of love for a particular person by some sort of love for the whole world."

The conflict deepened. Tolstoy wanted to surrender all property in his writings; his wife resisted strenuously, and sons and daughters moved into opposite camps. Life at Yasnaya Polyana was intensely emotional. Everybody kept diaries; Tolstoy had two—one secret—after he discovered that his wife was reading what he had written and was making her own entries *post facto*, with the aim of justifying herself to posterity. There were scenes, faintings, attempted suicides, and a simmering hysteria. The aged prophet, wrong-headed in so many ways (Shakespeare was "a terrible impostor and piece of filth," and art was real only when it was "comprehensible and accessible to all") was trying to be pure in spirit and to



TOLSTOY

"The man of peace was always in the arena"