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THEATRE IN DANGER

Bruce Mason and John Pocock

8/6

The future of the theatre in New Zealand, the prospects of the Players, the outlook for the contemporary drama everywhere—here are the basic questions of the theatre brilliantly discussed with many local examples; the whole work being well spiced with wit and not too much hampered with polite restraint.

FROM BOOKSELLERS.

PAUL'S BOOK ARCADE,
HAMILTON and AUCKLAND,
Publishers.

BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

Victorian journalism. His account of the life of this indefatigably lecherous young doctor who abandoned medicine for the delights of racehorse-owning and spending money is told with zest and in gratifying detail. It is a little reminiscent of Frith's *Derby Day*, a crowded canvas, every bit of it attractive, but the whole effect perhaps a trifle busy and distracting.

Palmer was about as saintly as Nero, except that he remained on good terms with his disreputable mother; it is her words which make the ironic title. Palmer had already defrauded an insurance company of £13,000 by insuring the life of a drunken brother and then finishing him off in short time with the most readily available of all poisons, alcohol—to give his actions the most innocent interpretation. He had a strong motive for destroying his friend, Cook (for whose murder he was hanged), as

he had just defrauded him of considerable sums. But the source of the prejudice against him which invaded even the highest judicial circles was his conduct on the racecourse: he thought nothing of poisoning the horses of rival owners. Wasn't that reason enough to hang the pestilential fellow?

—David Hall

PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

TUPARI, by Franz Caspar; Bell and Sons, English price 18 6. CHISUNGU, by Audrey I. Richards; Faber and Faber, English price 42 -.

FRANZ CASPAR and Audrey Richards are both anthropologists. Their books are concerned with the time they spent among primitive peoples; the former with the Tupari in the heart of the Matto Grosso in Brazil in 1948, the latter with the Bemba in Northern Rhodesia in 1931. But there the similarity between their works ends. Mr Caspar has written a popular travel book, Dr Richards a technical work of anthropology.

I suppose that the Matto Grosso has a fascination for many readers, which comes partly from Conan Doyle's *Lost World*, partly from the adventures and disappearance of Colonel Fawcett, partly from the awful legends of savage Indians, armed with blow pipes and darts envenomed with the lethal *curare* poison. Mr Caspar's book will disappoint readers with over-inflamed imaginations. He offers an account of the day to day life of the Tupari; a story which has its own fascination and excitement, but which lacks the highlights of murder, mystery and sudden death. The Tupari were believed to be untamed warriors and cannibals, but like so many legends which Europeans believe of savage peoples, these customs were more honoured in the breach than the observance. Mr Caspar's book is interesting, but spoiled by writing down to the level of what the author conceives to be his readers' interests and intelligence, even where such simplification makes for disjointedness or lack of clarity. One suspects, too, that Mr Caspar believes that sex in every other chapter helps sales.

Dr Richards makes no such concession to her audience. She describes a girl's initiation ceremony (*chisungu*) in detail as she witnessed it, and she discusses its significance both for the Bemba society and for the study of society in a wider sense. She is concerned with the function of an initiation ceremony in the general operation of matrilineal society; how it reflects and establishes the position of women in a society which is organised through the mother's group, but yet depends largely upon the men for its physical survival. Dr Richards's book is technical, but not difficult. Her descriptions and her explanations seem to me more satisfying because they add to the fascination of her story a theory which makes sense of it.

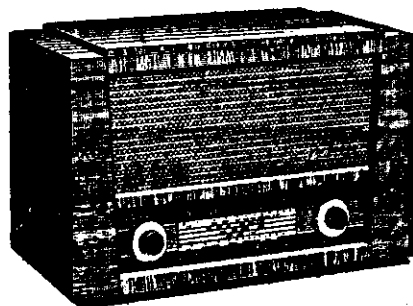
—Francis West

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS PROBLEMS, by Sigfried J. de Laet, translated by Ruth Daniel; Phoenix House, through Whitcombe and Tombs, English price 21/-. A brief but comprehensive study of problems confronting the modern archaeologist, written by a man who has studied and taught methodology for many years. There are 23 photographs.

THE TWO REVOLUTIONS, by R. H. Bruce Lockhart; Phoenix House, through Whitcombe and Tombs, English price 10/6, gives a concise eye-witness account of the Kerensky and Bolshevik Revolutions of 1917, and the historical background to both.

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 30, 1957.



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