

her as merely pretty and not very intelligent; and a few—mostly unfriendly observers—found her insipid. The portrait in these pages is of a young, strong-willed and charming woman who sometimes could be silly, who was quite amoral, and who was completely disinterested in her love for Byron. "She lived long enough," writes the biographer, "to read all that was said against him by the people who had called themselves his friends. She must have heard, when she went about in the society of London and Paris, all the tales in his disfavour. Worst of all, she read, in Moore, the flippant and unkind remarks that he himself had made about their love. But none of it affected her. Of all the women who had loved him, including Augusta, she alone stood up for him to the end."

—M.H.H.

AN ECCENTRIC SALT

FAMILY TROUBLE, by William McFee; Faber and Faber. English price, 10/6.

THE creator of Mr. Spenlove and his shipmates has written another urbane tale, this time about Captain Jack Bannister, who rescues a pretty foreign widow from a sinking ship and suffers for it thereafter in various parts of the globe. This is a familiar world through which Mr. Spenlove conducts the reader, with many an anecdote and philosophic aside; it is the solid maritime world of a modern, minor Conrad. The author has been writing books like this for over 40 years, and this one has some of the rambling, inconsequent quality of an old man's reminiscence. Yet his hero is a fantastically eccentric young salt, and the story of his career of knight-errantry is told with discernment and a quiet, subtle humour.

—W.

WORDY JUNGLE

STORM AND ECHO, by Frederic Prokosch; Faber and Faber. English price, 10/6.

THE heat thickens, the jungle suffocates, and the mind fills with disgust at the teeming tropics of Africa and the squalor and superstition of its natives. Mr. Prokosch has written in the picaresque vein about Asia and America, and now through his highly individual eyes

we see the Dark Continent. His theme he has stated before, in *The Seven Who Fled*: "There is only one victory possible for man, that of having lost with a certain dignity of heart and nobility of spirit." The four characters in this book are searching for the mysterious Mt. Nagala. What is it? The birthplace of the Negro, God, death? Lost in the undergrowth of the book's wordy jungle we are never quite sure. All four die on their maddening trek through the Congo. Only one achieves victory, to die on Nagala, uncorrupted in spirit by the hell he has endured. In Africa the veils of decency are torn one by one from the human soul. Never has the tribal Negro appeared so depraved, with his phallic obsessions and ritual mutilations, and yet seldom has the individual Negro appeared so noble as in the character of Oudangé, the faithful bearer and ancient warrior of his race.

—P.J.W.

KILLING A CRITIC

DEAD LION, by John and Emery Bonnett; Michael Joseph. English price, 8/6.

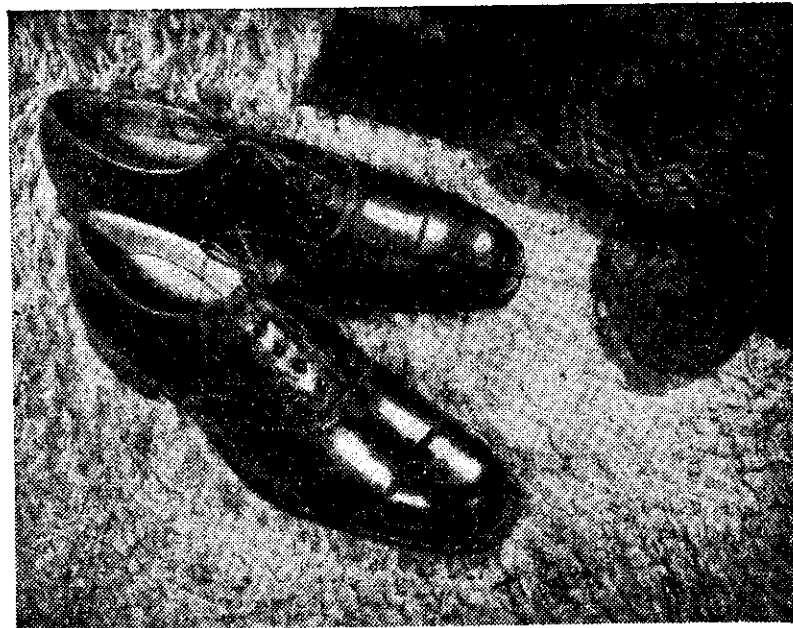
THERE is a pleasant flavour of *The New Statesman* and *Nation* in this story of a murdered critic. It is not merely that a copy of the esteemed journal supplies one of the clues. The characters, especially among the literati on the outskirts of the novel, are obviously members of the coterie; and the plot could have grown out of an entry in the Weekend Competitions. The story is neatly contrived—a little bizarre, perhaps, but not impossible if linked in the imagination to the more literary parts of London. Moreover, there are no policemen, a fact which helps the reader to stay firmly on the side of the murderer. Writers who have suffered from "clever" reviews will not be out of sympathy with the person who removed an obnoxious critic.

—H.

LAKE AND FOREST

THEN CAME ADVENTURE, written and illustrated by Emma L. Brock; Museum Press. English price, 6/-.

CHILDREN love islands, and when there is forest in the background they are certain to be in the mood for adventure. The island in this story is near the shore of Lake Superior, just below the Canadian border. The forest is a primeval fragment, but quite large enough to be a background for strange events. Miss Brock keeps the adventure within modest limits; but it is real enough for the children in the story, and it will be equally real for children who read about it.



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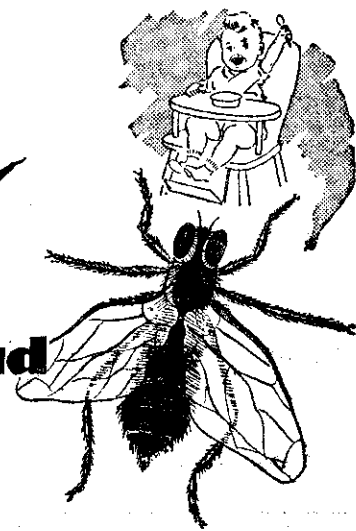
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ZB book reviews for this Sunday, January 22, will deal with biography, and the chairman will be H. C. D. Somerset (pictured above). Stuart Perry will review "Dickens," by Hesketh Pearson; James Bertram will discuss "Shaw," by C. E. M. Joad; Professor W. T. G. Airey will review "The Great Pierpont Morgan," by F. L. Allen, and A. R. D. Fairburn "Shelley," by Edmund Bjunden

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