

BOOKS

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to do on their own. The appearance in Essex of a party of four disreputable Maoris (two men and two women) arouses curiosity. The narrator refers to "their bickerings and beatings," and to his notion (he was a boy at the time) "that they worshipped their native gods, with fearful rites, in the watches of the night." I wonder if this is Edmund Crispin's idea of Maori ways.

Mystery stories written by the ex-headmaster of Eton and ex-Dean of Durham are marked by a gentle and gentlemanly excitement. No one is hurt. In *The Nabob's Jewel* Dr. Alington gives us urbanity, scholarship, humour and wit, and a nice taste in quotations, among which I found a long-lost favourite. A very light crime soufflé, which won't vex you any sleep.

Desmond Cory's *This is Jezebel* is another investigation by the amateur Lindy Grev. Art connoisseurship and fraud are skilfully tied up with crime, and the writing is lively.

—A.M.

COUNTRY PLEASURES

PLOWMEN'S CLOCKS, by Alison Uttley, illustrated by C. F. Tunnicliffe; Faber and Faber. English price, 10 6.

MRS. UTTLEY is probably most widely known here for her Sam Pig, Tim Rabbit and Brock Badger books. She has written between 30 and

40 of these animal and country books, each one crammed catalogue full of minute details, recipes, records and observations. And yet here is another with a thousand or more close and careful observations on country flowers, trees, weeds, hedges, animals and people—and, as far as I can find, not the least repetitious. It is the sort of book to put on a table near a sunny corner, handy to pick up for a few moments' pleasure at the end of an afternoon's gardening in autumn; certainly not a book to be read at a sitting.

—J.

CLOAK AND DAGGER

GEORGE VILLIERS, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, by Phillipe Erlanger; Hodder and Stoughton. English price, 16 ..

THE unchallengeable charmer of two kings, the virtual ruler of England, the victim of the assassin's knife, the "enigma of the world," George Villiers's meteoric career in Stuart England is described by Phillipe Erlanger with a vigour and a gusto which let us off none of the juicy bits—except too close an examination of the nature of James the First's affection for him. This is indeed a well-balanced and duly picturesque account of a life in itself highly sensational, of which one would scarcely expect great sobriety of treatment. No doubt the translator is accurate, but he is also clumsy, witness such phrases as "the old-time ne'er-do-well from Billesdon school."

—David Hall

The Eustace Diamonds

A NOVELIST'S first object should be to please both himself and the widest possible circle of readers—that was what Anthony Trollope thought. And he saw no reason why a writer should not do this and at the same time produce good work, if he set himself certain standards of craftsmanship and did his best to keep to them. H. Oldfield Box, who adapted Trollope's novel *The Eustace Diamonds* for broadcasting, mentioned these points in introducing the serial to readers of the BBC *Radio Times*, and he quoted Trollope as saying: "It becomes . . . a matter of deep conscience to the novelist how he shall handle those characters by whose words and doings he hopes to interest his readers. . . . How shall he teach the lessons of virtue, and at the same time be a delight to his readers? . . . If a novelist can so handle his subjects as to teach wholesome lessons, the good that he does will be very wide."

These principles Trollope followed in his own writing, says Mr. Oldfield Box, and he quotes *The Eustace Diamonds* as an excellent example of how he managed to do so, while at the same

time producing an extremely entertaining story. In this story two young women, Lizzie Greystock and Lucy Morris, are orphaned and left penniless in their late teens. Beautiful and unprincipled, Lizzie captures and marries Sir Florian Eustace, a dying baronet of great wealth, and is soon left a rich widow. Lucy, less beautiful, but with charm and sweetness of character, earns her own living as a governess. Lizzie's cousin, Frank Greystock, a rising young barrister, falls in love with Lucy, but is swayed by his ambition. Will he, after all, marry Lizzie, whose wealth he covets to help his career, and who is determined to take him away from Lucy? Listeners will discover the answer to that question when the BBC transcription of *The Eustace Diamonds* is broadcast from National stations of the NZBS, starting from 1YC on Saturday, September 12, at 7.30 p.m., and from 3YC on September 23. They will also hear how Lizzie's greed leads her to refuse to restore to the trustees of the Eustace estate the diamonds which she lyingly asserts her late husband had given her.

In this production of *The Eustace Diamonds* Lizzie and Lucy are played by Belle Chrystall and Patricia Field, and Frank Greystock by Lewis Stringer.

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