

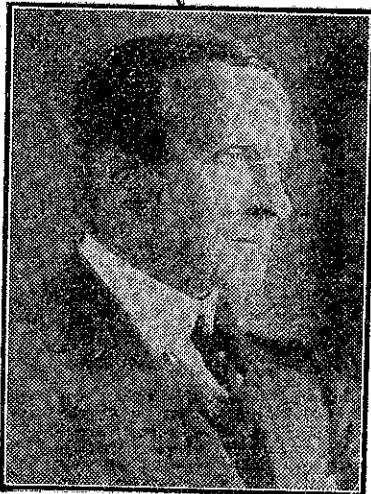
Books and Men

Pleasant Habit of Carving Rump Steaks From Humans

ACCORDING to librarians and book-sellers, travel books form a great proportion of the public's reading matter. Small wonder, if the reading is as interesting as "Africa Calling," a recent book by Roger Courtney, who was formerly a bank clerk in Leeds. His first book, "Claws of Africa," ran into a second edition in no time, the readers writing letters to him asking for more. In his second book, "Africa Calling," he tells of some of his experiences in Kenya, Uganda and the Belgian Congo, which are startling examples that truth is not only stranger than fiction but infinitely more interesting. Who, for instance, would believe that there are in Africa reputed cannibals who dig up newly-buried corpses and eat them, or attack living people and carve off "rump steak" before they are dead? Other examples of barbaric practices are given which happen in this Dark Continent in the present age, incredible though it may seem. Mr. Courtney also touches upon witchcraft. Although people in civilised countries are apt to scoff at such matters, the fact remains that there is undoubtedly more behind it than meets the eye. Levitation is generally attri-

buted to mass hypnotism, but Mr. Courtney gives an instance of the removal of a dead elephant from against the wall of a missionaries' station which requires more than hypnotism as an answer to an unsolved puzzle like that. The habits of insects, birds and wild beasts mentioned by the author provides excellent reading, especially of the jigger flea and the honey bird. This bird will lead a man to the honey of wild bees in the jungle and if the man does not reward the bird with its share of honey after the smoking, it will, at the earliest opportunity, deceive him and lead him to destruction. Among many incidents Roger Courtney tells of his race to a goldfield and hospitable and hostile attitudes shown towards him by savages, which would make a thriller yarn appear decidedly feeble. For sheer horror the chapter called "The Drum" would be hard to beat. The chapters are in the form of short stories, each one simply but effectively written and abounding in interest, thrills, or quiet humour, all of which goes to make up one of those books that simply can't be dropped until the last page has been turned.

"Africa Calling," Roger Courtney, George G. Harrap. Our copy from the publishers.



Radio, Films and Writing Among Chief Interests of New Canadian Governor.

THE appointment of Mr. John Buchan to the position of Governor-General of Canada is of more than passing interest inasmuch as he is the first commoner to be appointed to a position of that kind, he is related to Gladstone and he is a writer of the first magnitude. In 1901 Mr. Buchan went to South Africa. He fell in love with the

country and became a convert to Cecil Rhodes' dream of a United British Empire. Upon his return to England a few years later he became a partner in the publishing house of Thomas Nelson and Sons.

When the War broke out he was appointed correspondent by "The Times," London, and he saw considerable service on the Western Front. His experiences enabled him to write his "History of the Great War." He also has numerous novels to his credit.

"From Monday to Friday noon," he said recently, "I put everything out of my head but politics and business and limit my activity to four major interests: Parliament, my publishing connection with Thomas Nelson and my work with the British film and radio industries. The week-ends I spend at my place near Oxford gardening and writing."

What Do We Know Of China?

Maurice Dekobra Presents Some Fresh Material

"CONFUCIUS IN A TAIL COAT" is a bright and entertaining volume which etches in the detail of the author's main contention that, with all our study and attempt to "understand" China, we cannot "understand" her at all. This well-known writer of intriguing novels (of which 4,000,000 copies translated into 23 languages have been sold) in his steady search for fresh material visited the East. Claiming no qualifications for this particular work of explaining China, other than that of a skilled high-speed investigator, he visited the main cities and established interesting contacts. Running through the various chapters is a thread of actual romance-in-the-making in the experiences of a Russian exile Serge in selling contraband to "the highest bidder whose money is good," a very important qualification, aided and abetted by two lady friends, one his mistress and the other her rival. That, however, is but the seasoning to the work which is, in its field, quite definitely an able etching of Chinese life and point of view. Prophecy regarding China is vain. Here are 400,000,000 people, backed by 5000 years of a civilisation which in its high morality, attainment and comfort, is at least the equal of our own. Of that mass of people barely a million are as yet really conscious of Western effort and power. With that the outcome of 100 years of missionising penetration who can prophesy the rate of progress, if progress it be? The author achieves his aim of giving us something of China's point of view. By analogy he places her in the position of France in the middle ages. What right had her neighbours, then, to presume to dictate phases of her internal development? So with China. She has her problem. She will solve it for herself. But the first problem to be met will be the conflict in the near future on Chinese soil of Russia and Japan, which once begun will lead, says he, to a general conflagration in the East. The book is well illustrated with a number of magnificent plates of recent date.

"Confucius in a Tailcoat," Maurice Dekobra. T. Werner Laurie. Our copy from the publishers.

HANS FALLADA'S new novel, "Wir hatten mal ein Kind," recently published in Germany, is already in its 20th thousand in that country. Eric Sutton, who was responsible for the English editions of "Little Man, What Now?" and "Who Once Eats Out of the Tin Bowl," is already translating the new book and Putnam expect to publish it in July.