

## BLACKFRIARS

created with impressive vividness the figures of the women, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Dinah. As for Jacob, the whole book is an effort to recall the experience of that great life: some of the interpretations seem exaggerated and even false: but the effect of its entirety is magnificent and unforgettable. Perhaps the greatest compliment one can pay it is to confess that it forced us to re-read with delight the famous chapters of Genesis.

A.M.

**THE LOST HERO.** By Robert Speaight. (Peter Davies; 7/6 net.)

A book which is worth while. The author has artistry of word: his rhythm is dignified and smooth, his adjectives are always vivid (very occasionally a stricter economy would have avoided a momentary tendency to verbal exuberance), he writes with detailed knowledge and sympathy as well of South America as of Assisi and Rome. In contrast to the cruder realism which is the more usual medium of the modern writer, Mr. Speaight often adopts the method of a more delicate limning of a situation, achieving the same end without the possible danger of a too blatant brush.

The background of the novel is Catholic; the author deals with insight, through his characters, with many important issues (there is a fine paraphrase of a passage from the *Summa* of St. Thomas); the delineation of the character of Alvarez, the ex-priest, is particularly striking, and the main issue of the plot, the struggle between love and hate (of God and man), is finely and profoundly worked out.

L.S.G.V.

**SEED OF ADAM.** By Violet Campbell. (John Murray; 7/6.)

Sincere, understanding, strong; stronger had it been more pruned; valuable for its thesis, worked out with sense of drama to a powerful climax: that the inexcusable vice is that of the Pharisees (not, surely, the Sadducees, p. 132?), since sin and folly are in all the sons of Adam; while on the other hand the thought occurs that in the muddled disharmony of all our lives 'there is something grand . . . there appears the enormous significance of God' (p. 384). The character of the sadist-maniac finely drawn: the influence of birth, environment, on character, making the crime not a sin but a disease. An incidental discussion of comparative religion, stressing the parallel naturalism of all, presents the obvious appearance from the viewpoint of the unbeliever: one is anxious to urge in reply how from the opposite standpoint of the faith the parallelisms in other re-