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(page 102)**

**The World of Books**

**By Vernon Fane**

Mr. Charles Richard Cammell writes like the romantic I am sure he is, and the first volume of his autobiography, which tells the story of his life to the age of forty, is not inappropriately called *Castles in the Air* (Richards Press. 18s.). I read this memoir with interest as one always does, I suppose, when many of the scenes and some of the people described are familiar, and with appreciation too, for the writer's candid sentiment and the kindness of his memory.

Not everyone will agree with Mr. Cammell's assessment of his friend Aleister Crowley's poetic gifts, or with all his literary judgments, but the charm of the book lies not in these but in the circumstances of the writer's life, whether he created them for himself or relished them when they came about more arbitrarily. In the course of his life, and, indeed, in the part of it here recounted, Mr. Cammell has been a poet, a satirist, essayist, biographer and playwright, a connoisseur of painting, lord of two *châteaux* in Burgundy, and an authority on the literature of the occult. A few years later he was to be *épée* champion of Scotland, and a reader cannot help reflecting that to be an international fencer seems more typical of him than any of his other ploys. When one has added that at one time he was diplomatic agent for an ex-Khedive of Egypt, the picture becomes, if not more distinct, at least more vivid. An unusual book by something of an unusual person.