

unique record. The author truly remarks that his significance has not been fully recognised by our historians.

I wish the author could have included a study of that mysterious figure, Sir Frederick Whitaker, who was the power behind so many Cabinets and, like Vogel, seemed to prefer to put up other men as Prime Ministers while he retained the real power.

* * *

SOME day I hope Dr. Scholefield will devote a separate volume to each of these statesmen because although he has included a few anecdotes about some of them he must have had to exclude many pages of description. Walter Bagehot says in his study of Hartley Coleridge, "There is no way of delineating character but by a selection of characteristic sayings and actions."

Complaint is often made that the tendency to-day is to make biography err on the side of indiscriminate panegyric. Dr. Scholefield has avoided this error and has given us a discriminating picture of each man's character. This must have been extremely difficult in the cases of Sir Julius Vogel, Sir George Grey, and R. J. Seddon, but the results are excellent.

The author frequently quotes the views of William Gisborne with whom he finds himself in accord. The late Sir Francis Bell, who knew Gisborne personally, once told me in reply to my inquiry, that Gisborne is reliable and shrewd in his judgment of his contemporaries so that it is helpful to know that both these biographers—Gisborne and Scholefield—coincide in their views.

I hope this volume will widen public interest in our early statesmen and that this will encourage the author to give us some more extended studies in a sphere he knows so well.

JUNGLE EPIC

PACIFIC VICTORY, by Hugh Buggy. Ministry of Information, Commonwealth of Australia.

THE task of writing a brief popular but official history of Australia's effort in the war against Japan was by no means easy, and Mr. Buggy deserves credit for the manner in which he has marshalled his material to bring out the dramatic quality of the events of Australia's deliverance from the threat of Japan. This is eminently a popular production, both in scope and format.

Possibly to-day we are inclined to forget how close the war came to the Australian mainland, as close relatively as we would have been to it had the Japanese made landings in Fiji. The Japanese attempts on Port Moresby and Milne Bay were made with strength and determination. Darwin suffered, too, one devastating air raid; and the North-west corner of the Australian continent was for a long time menaced by the building up of enemy strength in the East Indies.

The repulse of the Japanese in the jungles of New Guinea is one of the great stories of the war. It is this jungle fighting with its almost unendurable hardships which is the central theme of the book, though the magnificent contributions of Australia's navy and air-men are also related. Mr. Buggy tells

tales of individual gallantry, besides presenting a competent general view of these difficult campaigns. He gives due weight to the personality of such leaders as the late Mr. Curtin and General MacArthur. The freeing of New Guinea and the taking the offensive to the North have a quality of greatness that fully merit that too-lightly-used word "epic." *Pacific Victory* is a deserved tribute both to Australian fighting spirit and to Australian generalship.

The author, preoccupied with Australian achievements, does not always give a balanced picture of the Pacific war as a whole. There is a lack of proportion in the omission of any reference to the outflanking advance of the United States Fleet, in which the Gilberts and Marshalls fell, without which there would not have been such freedom of movement for amphibious operations on the North coast of New Guinea.

Then this book has some of the faults it is always hoped will be avoided in popular histories. Plans of particular operations do not show essential names, and there is no general map of New Guinea. The author exhausts himself with his use of superlatives, and his considerable journalistic powers are severely strained in the search for fresh synonyms for the fine behaviour of Australian troops. This persistent overwriting is wearying to read, and in the end does a disservice to men whose courage was indeed worthy of the most subtle and skilful literary treatment.

—D.O.W.H.

NICE OF YOU, BUT . . .

IF YOU'D CARE TO KNOW. By Paul H. Simpson. Merivale Publishers, Auckland.

ONE of the objects of the author of this book on the history and present social atmosphere of this country is to "provide a measure of entertainment, if not enlightenment, for New Zealanders themselves." Entertaining it is, often in ways the author little suspects, and it is written in a brisk, wise-cracking style, a sort of historian's Tommy Handley's half-hour. Enlightening it is not, and it begins with an error: the assertion that New Zealand is the Antipodes of England. Apart from small blemishes of inaccuracy and misconception, the lengths to which the author goes to salute the rising sun of the United States set the teeth on edge.

—David Hall.

Eerie Story

IN many years of writing E. Phillips Oppenheim earned (from his publishers at least) the title of "the prince of story-tellers," and though at the time of his greatest output radio serials were unknown, not many novelists had a style so easily adaptable to radio. Station 3ZB claims that there is proof of this in the popularity of *The Treasure House of Martin Hews*. It is not yet too late to pick up the threads in this eerie story of the cripple, Hews, his bodyguard, and the beautiful and mysterious Beatrice Essiter. Admirers of the Oppenheim manner should tune in to 3ZB each Monday at 6.30, and Tuesday at 7.45 p.m., for this feature.

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