

country in England, and her joys and pleasures (there appear to have been few if any unpleasant distractions) were the simple ones of childhood in an English village. This book is a collection of 12 essays on several of the activities of her life, not very different from those of other children: listening to stories by the fire, choosing Christmas cards, taking part in the children's operetta. The author has a leisurely style; she dwells at length on each incident, and the book passes easily from bedroom fires to school, the music lesson, creeks, marbles, and boulders, and so home again.

C. F. Tunncliffe has illustrated *Country Things* with some pen and ink drawings and woodcuts which will be disappointing to admirers of his earlier work. His drawings of children particularly fall below the standard of his wild life studies.

It is a book for people who had a similar childhood and now yearn to have it back again; or it is possibly a book for those who have sickened of a hard materialistic world and who may find their escape from it here. For myself I cannot refrain from saying that I found it almost unbearably dull.

—P.T.

MASTER BOMBER

ENEMY COAST AHEAD. By Wing-Commander Guy Gibson, V.C., D.S.O. Michael Joseph Ltd., London.

EVEN after six years of war, the literature of flying is still not extensive. *Sagittarius Rising* and *Wind, Sand and Stars* are the only pre-war titles which at this remove seem likely to endure, and since 1939 the scarcity of first-class writing has, with one or two exceptions, continued. Of these exceptions *The Last Enemy*, some of the shorter flights of H. E. Bates, and now *Enemy Coast Ahead* are the most notable.

The latter, written in 1944, published in February last, and now through its second printing, is the story of Bomber Command told autobiographically by one of its most distinguished pilots. From the nature of its subject it is therefore neither so personal a record as Hilary's, nor so philosophic as de Saint Exupéry's. But if it does not soar beyond a middle flight, the casual diction and the unaffected simplicity of the style—the complete absence of heroics in a story of men to whom the capacity for sustained heroism was as essential as a clear eye and a steady hand—provide a picture which is as accurate in spirit as it is in technical detail.

The book begins with the war, and follows its varying fortunes in the air up to the time when the Allies mounted the main day-and-night offensive against industrial Germany. The climax of the story is the account of the raid on the Mohne and Eder Dams in the Ruhr Valley, and the tension is built up faultlessly toward this tremendous climax. The chapters describing the preparations for this raid, the secrecy which surrounded the training and its unprecedented thoroughness (16 crews flew 2,000 hours, dropped 2,500 practice bombs, and were able finally to pin-point a target from exactly 60ft. at a speed of exactly 232 miles an hour), are war history as well written as it is ever likely to be, and the account of the actual bombing of the dams is descriptive writing of a very high order.

Enemy Coast Ahead, which has an introduction by Marshal of the Royal

Air Force, Sir Arthur Harris, is dedicated to 114 of the author's comrades, almost all killed or presumed killed—a roll of honour filling three pages. To them this book is a fitting memorial, as it is to the author, for he himself failed to return from a bombing mission made not long after his narrative was completed.

PRIMA DONNA

YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN ONCE. By Grace Moore. Invincible Press, Wellington.

THE foreword to this book tells us that Grace Moore takes down her hair, not only about herself, but about the friends she made on the road to success. It is true that she lets a few curls escape, but she scarcely seems to bear out her publishers' threat or promise. A prima donna more often than not waits till she stops singing before taking up authorship, or gets somebody else to write the story of her life for her. But Grace Moore's book has the stamp of being a first-hand account; its interest lies in the fact that it has been written while her name is still great, and because it is the story of artists who are still very much in circulation. And so it lacks the pathos with which reminiscences of a faded star are often coloured. To the budding singer the pages devoted to Miss Moore's start in life, her training, and how she regained her voice after losing it completely, will appeal; to the New Zealand cinema-goer who wants to delve into the privacy of the big people of the entertainment world the book will be revealing up to a point. And the fans of Grace Moore herself will like, especially, the last paragraph in which she says: "It has been a good life so far. I've liked living it, and look forward to more of the same."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE fourth number of *The New Zealand Geographer* (published half-yearly) comes with a title page and list of contents for Volumes I. and II., so that subscribers may now have their first bound volume made up. Members of the New Zealand Geographical Society will look with pride on its achievement. The October 1946 issue, again maintaining a very high standard, contains an article on "Land Utilisation in Metropolitan Christchurch" (with eight maps and some photographs) by F. Parks; "The Future of World and New Zealand Trade" by C. G. F. Simkin (Professor of Economics at Auckland); "Manufacturing in New Zealand—a Specific Example" (an account of the engineering enterprise at Irishman Creek in the Mackenzie Country) by H. O. Pappe; "The Loburn Run, North Canterbury" (summary of a thesis) by Joyce Deane; and "Fighting a War with Maps" by Eugene C. Grayland.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS WITH BOOTS AND PACK. Edited by F. L. Johnston. Auckland Tramping Club, Inc.

A BIRTHDAY publication containing an account of the club's past history, some trampers' doggeral (in prose and verse) and reproductions of trampers' snaps.

RADIO TUBE VADE-MECUM, 1946. Editions Techniques P. H. Brans, Antwerp.

A TECHNICAL publication whose value is doubtless known to those who would use it. It was up-to-date as at last July, and includes details of tubes used by Allied and enemy forces.



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