

# ADVENTURE AT SEA

THE PACIFIC OCEAN. By Felix Riesenbergl.  
Museum Press, Ltd.

THIS book gives a full story of Pacific exploration, beginning with that desperado, stowaway, bankrupt, and visionary, the intrepid Balboa who fought his way across fever swamps, cloud topped summits and wild Indian tribes to the shores of the Pacific, and ending with the flight of Captain Eddie Musick from San Francisco to Manila in 1935. In between we have Magellan making his dreadful voyage across the unknown wastes, his ships foul, his men starving, and making landfall at the Ladrões when another day might have been the end of them all; Sarmiento, Mendana, and the beautiful, cruel, unfaithful woman his wife, who would not serve out fresh water to thirst-tormented sailors and when they complained that she washed her underclothes in their blood, snapped out, "Can not I do what I like with my own property?" We sail with de Quiros, the devout dreamer, to the New Hebrides, and follow the track of the huge galleons that made the Manila voyage from Acapulco to bring back silks, embroideries, ivory, sandalwood, uncut gems, spices, and aromatic herbs. Into the wide Pacific, the safe secure Spanish Ocean come the English freebooters; Francis Drake, with all lights out, sailing into Lima amid the crowded shipping and afterwards taking the Caca-fuego with an immense treasure; Cavendish, 10 years later, capturing the Manila galleon, laden with wealth almost beyond counting; and after the English the dour, stubborn Dutch fighting bloody battles as a commercial speculation. Perhaps the most dreadful of all the Pacific voyages was that of Anson in the crazy old Centurion manned by invalids, pensioners, gaol-birds, pressed men and a few fine volunteers. After terrible sufferings in which three-quarters of his men perished from scurvy he also took a Manila galleon. There is a diverting chapter concerning the on-goings at Tahiti when the glamorous Oherea was Queen and when Wallis was captain of the Dolphin and de Bougainville of La Boudeuse. Captain Cook who is ranked as "explorer-extraordinary" receives as is his right full treatment, although the author seems little concerned with his discoveries along the coasts of Australia and New Zealand.

The sealers and whalers have a chapter to themselves beginning with that excellent seaman Captain Fanning "who would not permit any of his crew to swear" or to be sworn at and who inspired such confidence in his men that a boy who fell overboard said afterwards that he wasn't at all afraid after the captain called out to him as he was being washed away that he would save him. We have in contrast the story of the Essex which was attacked and sunk by a ferocious sperm whale. The crew took to the boats and at the point of starvation became cannibals, eating the bodies of the dead and casting lots for the next victim. The captain and four others survived. In a chapter on the "Opening of the Japanese Door" there is a full account (from the U.S.A. point

of view) of Commodore Perry's diplomatic expedition of 1854, concerning which the commander himself said, "It is probable that arrogance may be charged against me . . . but I was simply adhering to a course of policy . . . which had hitherto worked well." The final chapter covers Bering and his tragic end, the California clippers; and finally the clipper planes.

The material is fascinating, and in general the author handles it exceedingly well. He does not always get a good balance and there are some surprising omissions. Kingsford Smith's flight across the Pacific is not mentioned despite the fact that it was several years ahead of Captain Musick's. He does however keep a high level of interest throughout and the book is extremely readable. Anyone interested in voyages of adventure and discovery will do well to read it and it should go into all the school libraries.

The black and white illustrations by Stephen G. Voorhies are excellent, but the maps, while adequate, are undistinguished.

—O. E. Burton

## IN QUEST OF A PURPOSE

THEATRE IN AUSTRALIA. By Allan Aldous.  
MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE. By Enid Moodie Heddle.

(Quest Discussion Pamphlets, F. W. Cheshire Pty. Ltd., Melbourne).

NOT afraid to line up his ogres, whether large commercial companies or scatterbrained amateurs, and attempt, by standing on the appropriate number of piled-up soap boxes, to reach a height of indignation from which he can fell them to the earth, Allan Aldous discusses the problems of the Australian drama (which broadly are the same as those we face in New Zealand) with a refreshing realism and gusto. He talks entertainingly of the past: in convict days the first theatre was closed by the governor because when any family was seen to be at the play, its house was automatically robbed. He writes of the present with both fairness and iconoclasm, and has enough faith in his fellow Australians to make proposals for a reformed future. Incidentally, it appears that Adelaide repertory amateurs alone in Australia possess their own theatre. His enthusiasm and commonsense permit us to forgive him the embarrassing virility of his style.

The pamphlet on Modern English Literature (which includes American) is not nearly so well handled by its author, whose critical enterprise seems limited to reciting strings of writers' names (many uneasy bedfellows here) and rather unconfident paraphrasings of the opinions of second-rate authorities.

This new and interesting series of pamphlets on cultural or social topics is designed to appeal to members of adult education groups, and is in some degree a peace-time overflow from Australian army education: there were some signs of a similar development in this country.

—David Hall

# TONIGHT-

## It might happen to YOU!

When you can see, you're safe ... always carry a torch and make sure it's loaded with Fresh Eveready Batteries.



Immediately your torch goes dim . . . Buy FRESH

# EVEREADY

TRADE-MARK

## TORCH BATTERIES



ER47/T68 A NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY PRODUCT

For Coughs & Colds

WOODS' GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE FOR COUGHS & COLDS

W.E. Woods Ltd.

WOODS' GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE

W.E. WOODS LTD., LAMBTON QUAY, WELLINGTON

always wash your hands before and after meals with

# WRIGHT'S

Coal Tar Soap

N.Z. Agents:

S. A. Smith & Co. Ltd., Albert St., Auckland