

## BOOKS

# A SHEPHERD'S LIFE

WAYLEGG. By Peter Newton. A. H. and A. W. Reed.

IF I had reviewed this book the day I finished it, I might easily have called it the book New Zealand has been waiting for since books first began to be a New Zealand product. That would have been wrong but not quite ridiculous. There is not enough variety or depth, nowhere a complete enough escape from trivialities and non-significant things, for a really important book; but I think it is the best book of its kind so far produced in New Zealand. It is in fact so far as I can remember the only book that begins and ends with high-country shepherding. Bruce Stronach, a few years ago, wrote some good articles on the subject for the Christchurch Press, and Burdon has, of course, written a first-class book about high-country farming in general. But Peter Newton is a musterer and nothing else. His life for 20 years has been seven or eight months of racing the dawn to ridges three, four, or five thousand feet high, followed by four or five months in

winter quarters in lower country if he has not returned to a mountain hut to shoot keas or deer. It has been a life of unbroken companionship with horses and dogs and close but continually changing friendships with other physically tough young men. And almost every hour of it makes fascinating reading. Mr. Newton does not quite succeed in being entirely direct and simple; which is, of course, another way of saying that he has not quite reached reality and truth. But he has skirted very close to them, and I don't know whether we should be most grateful to him for writing the story down or to his publishers for their courage in circulating it. I am myself most grateful to both, and grateful also to John Pascoe, F. Jones, and V. C. Browne for their wholly satisfying photographs.

(There is a curious mistake on the dust jacket which, though it has nothing to do with the interest of the book itself, ought to be corrected when a new edition is called for. Neither Woodstock nor Castle Hill nor Lake Coleridge nor Mesopotamia nor Mt. White nor St. James is in the Mackenzie Country.)

## IN DEFENCE OF A JUDGE

MR. JUSTICE RICHMOND AND THE TARANAKI WAR. By W. Downie Stewart. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington.

THE purpose of this little book is to "vindicate a great judge." Whether it succeeds or not I am not well enough informed to say; but it succeeds with me. Mr. Stewart writes with some indignation. But he writes frankly and fairly, and, within the limits of his space, fully. As far as I can judge he keeps back nothing that it would be reasonable to ask him to bring forward and answer in a book of 28 pages. But the fact remains that only some of the arguments are presented on both sides. I think he answers his opponents, but I hesitate to say that he annihilates them on the evidence of this brief encounter. I admit, too, that I found myself on his side as soon as he used the argument of Robertson of Brighton that instead of judging a man by what we know of his deeds we should judge his deeds by what we know of the man.

O.D.

## FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS

MODERN DECORATION AND FURNISHING. By D. E. Barry Martin. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington.

WHEN the paper situation was even worse than it is to-day Mr. Martin issued a sketchy and untidy but suggestive and sensible guide to the planning

and building of a home. Now he offers "a complete guide to planning and buying for all interiors." It is a useful production for the people for whom it is intended—those among us who have just enough judgment in such matters to know that we need assistance, but not enough boldness to hire it. Most of Mr. Martin's advice is common ground to all architects, but not all say it as simply as he does, or as brightly; and when he wanders away from the beaten path he says so—as in his section on the mental and physical effects of colour. The book is well printed, the illustrations are clear, there is a useful index, and Mr. Martin has the courage to place the things he calls bad side by side with the things he approves and praises. But it is a pity that he found it necessary to include eight pages of advertisements.

## OTAGO CHRONICLES

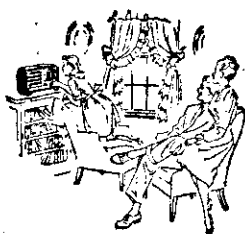
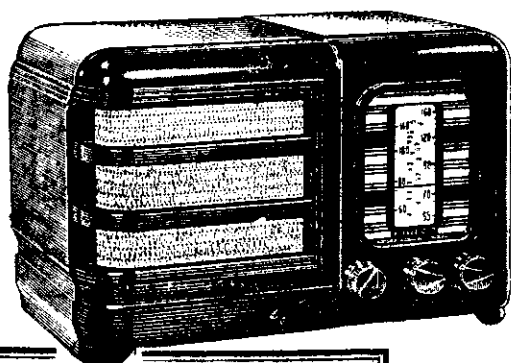
TEVIOT TAPESTRY: A HISTORY OF THE ROXBURGH-MILLERS FLAT DISTRICT. By A. H. H. Webster. Otago Centennial Publications (printed by Whitcombe and Tombs).

WAITAHUNA MEMORIES. By Eric Skinner. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington.

EACH of these books is in its way an achievement. The district of Teviot has to-day a few hundred inhabitants. Even when the gold-seekers were there it had only a few hundreds more except for very brief periods, and yet it has been found possible to write a book

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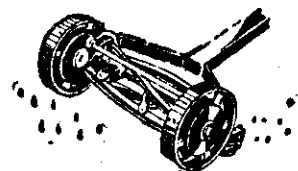
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