

(continued from previous page)

[T would have been well for Roy Farran if his service had ended with the joyous strafing of German columns in retreat, but the Palestine Police provided a final and most bitter chapter. His comments on what he considers the leniency and inconsistency of British authority in dealing with terrorists are scorching. He tells us why and how he escaped when the charge against him was pending, and returned, also that he had a complete alibi to meet the charge. This book was written in prison while he awaited trial.

Farran writes fluently, with the zest of a man who finds his happiness in action, and a shrewd eye for the characteristics in the very mixed human element about him. It is one of his engaging qualities that while he is often critical of his superiors—he has the contempt for the office soldier often found in his type—he is most generous in praise of comrades, and merciless towards himself. (He has a lovely story of a brigadier in England saying to him on his return from Africa: "You fellows come here from the desert thinking you own heaven and earth. You don't. Now you can get down to some real soldiering for a change.") Farran often tells us he was wrong in his decisions. He is candid about his fears. He confesses to moral cowardice and to seeking in liquor an anodyne for the boredom of inaction. He is not a well-balanced man. At the end of this long and extraordinary story many readers will ask a question. What are the Roy Farrans, the men for whom the clock seemed to stop (his own way of putting it) when the war was over, going to do in peace? Roy Farran is not yet thirty.

—A.M.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

THIS NEW ZEALAND, NOW AND THEN.
By L. R. C. Macfarlane. Simpson and Williams, Christchurch.

HERE we have a traveller's tale clearly intended for those of us who hope to see New Zealand first. The glossy illustrations are straight from the Tourist Department's ample folios, even if the "Entrance to the Cathedral, Waitomo Caves," does show, as its principal feature, the wide slippery duck-walk so familiar to visitors at that tourist resort. But surely the Department must have squirmed a little when the Diesel launch which serves the riverside villages on the Wanganui became a "house-boat." Alas for Pipiriki.

Mr. Macfarlane knows some parts of New Zealand very well. He is happiest in his descriptions of his own North Canterbury and of farming areas elsewhere. He has the countryman's eye for land and the manner in which it is used. In cities he is less happy, and this is reflected in his work. An exception is Christchurch. He has a very considerable affection for that city, and it shows even when he is most entertainingly detailing the welter of overlapping local bodies that make the electors such busy folk on polling days. It would be interesting to imagine the evidence he would offer before the Commission at present examining the "Greater Christchurch" project.

In the wilder parts of our country Mr. Macfarlane is content to adopt conventional attitudes. This is especially noticeable in his treatment of the West Coast of the South Island. The inhabi-

tants there are a little tired of being regarded as in some way or other museum pieces. And folk in central Hawke's Bay will be interested to hear of the "sweet warm plains of Hawke's Bay where frosts are seldom heard of."

The author is no stylist. His knowledge of the mechanics of the English language is rudimentary. Clearly he knows what he wants to say, but he tries to communicate it in the same way as he would in conversation. The trouble is that one misses the facial expression, gesture, and vocal stress that eke out meaning in conversation. Nevertheless, Mr. Macfarlane does succeed in establishing a certain footing with his readers. Perhaps it is because he has such an acute eye for what goes on in a small town, perhaps because of his contagious gusto, perhaps because among his new and amusing stories one meets such old friends as the libel on a hotel in Rotorua. Occasionally, however, there'll be an observation too good to be missed. These for example: (Of Central Otago) "If you can strike a match on a dark night and see one blade of grass the land is in good heart." (Of Cook Strait) "It separates the Mainlanders from the North Islanders . . . and it deepens misunderstandings." Followers of racing will be interested in the suggestion that there should be a dividend on the last horse, but that the jockey should be fined.

And I should like to commend to the attention of a certain town in North Auckland this story: "I went to the railway station and said to the clerk in the booking office, 'I want to go to Whangarei,' 'You mean you have to go to Whangarei,' he replied, 'No one wants to go to Whangarei.'"

—J.D.McD.

MAN AND DOG

THE WAY OF A DOG. By Sir William Beach Thomas. Michael Joseph Ltd.

I HAVE long been familiar with Sir William Beach Thomas's writings on the English countryside, mostly through his "Open Air" column in the English Observer. But Sir William on the

(continued on next page)



ERIK DE MAUNY (above), who joined "The Listener" staff before the first issue was printed, and remained with us until he went overseas with the armed forces, has recently taken a B.A. degree at London University, with special distinction in Russian. He has also had a novel accepted for publication, and appears on the title page as the translator of Sartre's recent book "Reflections on the Jewish Question."

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