

# CHOOSING 20 BOOKS FOR SIX MONTHS

(Continued from previous page)

either Peter Buck's *Vikings of the Sunrise* or Keesing's *The South Seas in the Modern World*.

A bit highbrow? Not a bit of it if you aren't scared of names. There isn't a book in the above list which the average man, once he had made a beginning, would willingly put down.

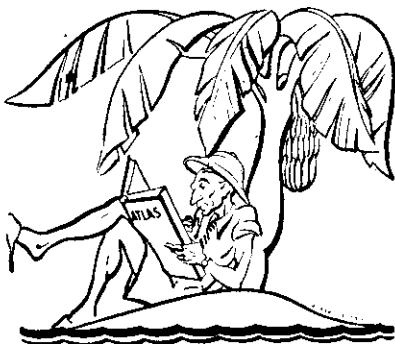
**DR. G. H. SCHOLEFIELD** (Librarian, General Assembly Library):

IT is usual to offer Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to a man going in a schooner to the North Pole or any other solo reader; but this is something quite different. I have assumed that these men are isolated and won't get a change of books for six months. They are New Zealanders, a cross-section of society, of average intelligence and with a fair amount of time for reading. Any of them could read through these books in a few weeks unless he deliberately rationed himself and before the end of the period almost all of them will be using the reference books from time to time. Since all quotations come from the Bible or Shakespeare, they will thank the genius who included these and despised the fathead who forgot to put in a good dictionary. My comment is that all three of these should be part of the permanent furniture of the unit and not changed each period with the rest. Discussion hours can be arranged to eke out the collection and make it ever so much more valuable to individual men, who will soon be found after each discussion asking for the major reference books—Whitaker's, the *Cyclopedia*, the dictionary which isn't there, and the *New Zealand Biography*. The shorts and detective stories and even the *New Zealand classics* could easily be read aloud. Perhaps for the first time in their lives many of the units will be able to study their *New Zealand surroundings* and will appreciate the books on our natural history and also the slight incursion into the story of the *New Zealanders themselves* afforded by Marsden, Cowan, and the two big biographical volumes.

1. *The Bible* (with concordance).
2. *Complete Shakespeare*.
3. *Whitaker's Almanack*.
4. *Columbia Encyclopedia*.
5. *O. Henry's Short Stories*.
6. *Hundred Best Short Stories*.
7. *Dorothy Sayers: "Mystery, Detection and Horror."*
8. *C. M. Martin: Fifty One Act Plays, 1940.*
9. *Tolstoy: "War and Peace" (Book Society's single volume).*
10. *A. Berriedale Keith: "The Dominions as Sovereign States."*
11. *C. A. Cotton: "Geomorphology of New Zealand."*
12. *Laing and Blackwell: "Plants of New Zealand."*
13. *W. R. B. Oliver: "New Zealand Birds."*
14. *Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden.*
15. *Shrimpton and Mulgan: "Maori and Pakeha."*
16. *J. B. Condliffe: "New Zealand in the Making."*
17. *Elsdon Best: "The Maori."*
18. *James Cowan: "New Zealand Wars."*
19. *Scholefield: Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.*
20. *W. Satchell: "The Greenstone Door."*

## AN OFFICER IN THE NAVY:

1. *Great Short Stories of the World* (Heinemann).
2. *Collected Short Stories of H. G. Wells.*
3. *Collected Short Stories of O. Henry.*
4. *The Faber Book of Modern Stories* (edit. Elizabeth Bowen).
5. *Great Russian Short Stories* (Benn).



6. *"Tales of Mystery and Imagination"—Edgar Allan Poe* (Everyman).
7. *"The New Arabian Nights"—R. L. Stevenson* (Chatto & Windus).

Plenty of short stories are included because service routine favours spasmodic rather than continuous reading.

8. *"Moby Dick" (Herman Melville).*
9. *"Humphrey Clinker" (Tobias Smollett).*
10. *"Peregrine Pickle" (Tobias Smollett).*
11. *"Moll Flanders" and "The Fortunate Mistress"—Daniel Defoe* (Peter Davies' 1 vol. edition).
12. *"War and Peace"—Tolstoy, translation Constance Garrett—(Heinemann).*

If the reading public can accept the long-drawn-out dialogue in Eric Knight's *This Above All*, Tolstoy's great novel, thought by many to be the greatest novel ever written, should present no difficulties. Though Smollett and Defoe are "classics," their pornographic interest will ensure their being read.

13. *"The Week-end Book" (Nonesuch).*
14. *"Science for the Citizen" (Lancelot Hogben).*
15. *"America's Cook Book" (Scribner's) or any good cookery book.*
16. *"The Long White Cloud" (Wm. Pember Reeves).*
17. *New Zealand Official Year Book, latest edition.*

Reeves' history of New Zealand is still the best popular summary; the Year Book is a neglected classic and will be useful to start or settle arguments.

18. *A good popular, authoritative objective study of modern Russia.*
19. *A compendium on simple carpentry and metalwork for a limited set of tools; plenty of diagrams.*
20. *"Hints to Travellers" (Royal Geographic Society, in 2 volumes).*

Numbers 18 and 19 may be asking our librarians for the moon, but it is more than likely that they will be able to hand it to us as a plate.

I have assumed that people with specialised interests will have their own books, and also that a few Western and detective novels will have found their way into most kitbags.

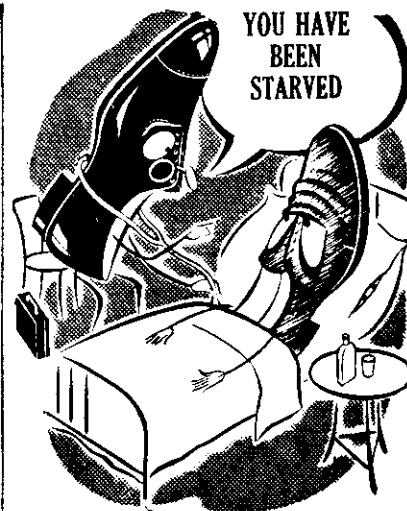
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## A SERGEANT IN THE ARMY:

"TWENTY works is a pretty tall order, even for a six months' spell without dust," said one soldier when cornered in the Company orderly room by a *Listener* representative. "I could make it a tall order even for the platoon truck, what with the works of Edgar Wallace and the works of Balzac and . . . but perhaps that's taking plurality a bit too far. Twenty volumes should provide scope for the most omnivorous bookworm. At any rate, here's my first 20, not necessarily in order of precedence, but as they come to mind: *The New Testament* and the *Apocrypha*—there's bound to be a Bible wherever I'm stationed so's they can get me to reaffirm my loyalty if necessary, but I've

never had, or made time yet to read the books they left out of the Old Testament. Then I'd take *King Lear*, which I haven't read (mea maxima culpa!) and *Shakespeare's Poems* (most of which I have), the *Poems of Tennyson* and the *Oxford Book of Modern English Poetry*. These are all works which I feel I ought to take, and which I have no doubt I will enjoy once I get my teeth into them. But I suppose what you really are interested in are old favourites that one would be willing to re-read. Anyway these would be better than making a blind date with an unknown author. So I'd take *The Arabian Nights*; *John McNab*, and *The Three Hostages* (Buchan), *The Vanished Poms* (Hamilton), *San Michele* (Munthe), *Mathematics for the Million* (Hogben), *Father Malachy's Miracle* (Bruce Marshall), *Ripeness Is All* (Linklater), *The Grapes of Wrath* (Steinbeck), *A Fisherman's Creel* (Wm. Caine—out of print now, I think, but a delightful blend of good prose and humour), *More Than Somewhat* (Runyon), *The Cream of Thurber* (Thurber), *The Black Girl* (G.B.S.) and *Under Fire* (Barbusse).

"On the whole, like Figaro, *je me presse de rire du tout de peur d'être obligé d'en pleurer*—or words to that effect."



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