

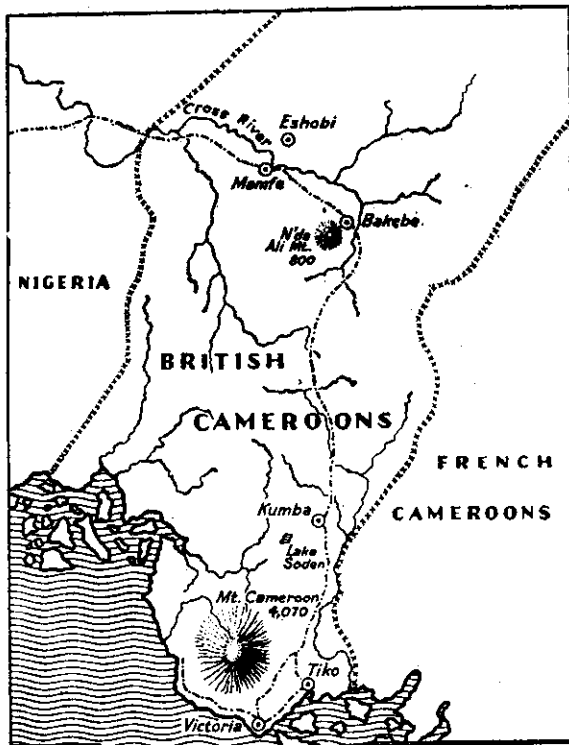
BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE

THE OVERLOADED ARK has been a very popular book—the sort that can't be borrowed from a public library without first reserving it, as *The Listener* found when it wanted a copy in a hurry—so there should be a big audience for the radio version which is to be heard from National stations of the NZBS. The story as Gerald M. Durrell told it is of a six months' trip he made with a companion to the great rain forests of the Cameroons, in West Africa. Their first reason for going was to collect and bring back alive some of the fascinating animals, birds and reptiles that live there. But they had also both cherished for a long time a dream to see Africa—"not the white man's Africa, with its

macadam roads, its cocktail bars, its express trains roaring through a landscape denuded . . . by the beneficial influences of civilisation," but "one of those few remaining parts of the continent that had escaped this fate and remained more or less as it was when Africa was first discovered." Where they went listeners will see in the map below, reprinted from the book.

The programme takes its title from the ship that brought them back to England, for, as Mr. Durrell points out, the difficulty in booking passage begins when you explain that most of your luggage consists of a hundred-odd crates of live birds, mammals and reptiles. His book naturally stresses the highlights of the trip, rather than the dull routine of taking care of the animals which occupied most of his time. But he is careful to explain that in expeditions of this sort there is something more than excitement and adventure. It was probably this concern to give a true picture of the job of collecting wild animals when so many writers have given an untrue one that specially appealed to Nesta Pain, who produced this radio feature. As listeners will recall, she has been associated as writer or producer with many notable programmes on scientific subjects.

The Overloaded Ark, which will be heard first from 2YA on Sunday, December 19, at 9.30 a.m., is a dramatised feature, not just a talk, and listeners will feel that they are really sharing some of the adventures described by Mr. Durrell in his book.



Waking Nightmare

"THE exploration on which Walter de la Mare conducted me in his story *Bad Company* landed me beyond mundane regions," wrote the critic Martin Armstrong when this hitherto unpublished story was first broadcast by the BBC early this year. "He has the art, when he cares to use it, of building up an increasingly sinister atmosphere," Armstrong continued, "and with this grim, mysterious story, read to me late at night, he induced in me a condition of waking nightmare from which I escaped only by going to bed and to sleep."

Bad Company was discovered by a BBC talks producer, P. H. Newby, himself a well-known writer, when Walter de la Mare mentioned in conversation one day that he had several unpublished stories. When Newby read them he felt that *Bad Company* would make an excellent broadcast, and the author, now in his eighties, agreed to read it himself at the microphone. A recording van was sent to his home, and the result was subsequently broadcast. A transcription is to be heard from 2YC at 8.20 p.m. on Thursday, December 16, and later it will be broadcast from other NZBS stations.

This story, which describes a strange encounter on the London underground

railway, leads the listener to a hideous and neglected house in a dingy alley off the Thames Embankment. Guided to this deserted spot by an evil-faced figure, the narrator is persuaded by what he finds there that the priceless blessing of repentance is not denied us, even after all earthly things appear to have ended.



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