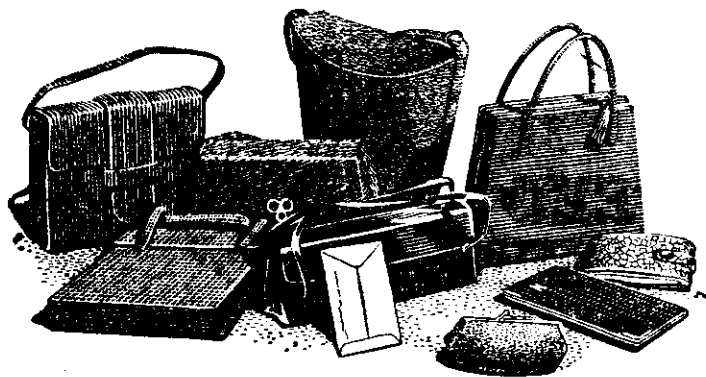




Good Reward

People lose money every day. Newspapers frequently carry advertisements offering rewards for money lost in wallets, purses, and handbags. Amounts lost may vary from "a large sum" and "five-pound notes" to "annual holiday pay", and the rewards offered may range from "good" to "generous".

The way to avoid losing "large sums" of money is not to carry them, and you can do this if you make a practice of paying by cheque. A cheque account with the Bank of New South Wales is simple, safe, and convenient.

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES *Cheque Account* *



* Enquire at any branch of the
BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES

LARGEST TRADING BANK
OPERATING IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

THE "WALES" HAS SERVED NEW ZEALAND FOR OVER NINETY YEARS

NZ5605d

A famous OXFORD COMPANION THE OXFORD COMPANION TO MUSIC

9th EDITION :: By PERCY SCHOLES

THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW EDITION OF THE BEST KNOWN OF ALL ONE-VOLUME MUSICAL DICTIONARIES. IT HAS BEEN COMPLETELY REVISED AND RESET AND NUMEROUS NEW ARTICLES HAVE BEEN ADDED. 1200 Double column pages Over 1000 illustrations.

N.Z. Retail Price 75/6

— OF ALL BOOKSELLERS —

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
WELLINGTON.

BOOKS

THE CAMPAIGN IN BURMA

DEFEAT INTO VICTORY, by Field-Marshal
Sir William Slim; Cassell, English price 25/-.

(Reviewed by L.W.T.)

IT is occasionally held that military history, especially if it is accurately told, is uncommonly dull reading. Much of the diversified writing on the Second World War, however, has called that opinion in question, and this book gives it the lie direct. It is an outstanding piece of writing from a remarkable man, a striking projection of personality.

This one volume covers the history of the Burma campaign from the point of the author's entry to the theatre as Rangoon fell, through the agonies of failure and retreat into India, the long stalemate of re-organisation, the critical defensive battles of Kohima-Imphal, and the vigorous re-invasion of Burma. It ends with the rout of the Japanese armies, in their turn, before Rangoon.

This is a highly personal account of a campaign as seen with the eyes of an Army Commander, yet the focus ranges widely through all levels of command and administration, both in the army and in the supporting air forces. The hopes and anxieties, the disappointments and triumphs are fully shared and the suspense of battle grips the mind almost painfully.

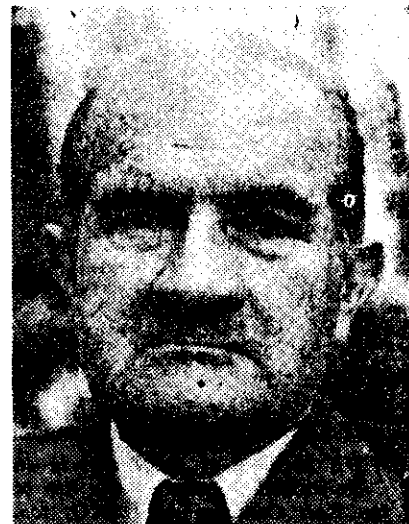
One would expect intellectual honesty of this author, and there is no disappointment or disillusionment. "If you are a general," he says, "it is hard not to slur over your mistakes, to blame others for theirs." Slim consistently resists this temptation; indeed, there must be few campaign stories by successful generals which contain so many frank admissions of errors of judgment—admissions based not on hindsight but on the information which he possessed at the moment of decision. This alone is enough to make the book unique.

When it comes to the assessment of other men's failures, one may sense the author's sympathy with the Duke of Wellington, who declined to write his memoirs because he had "no wish to embarrass a number of worthy senior officers whose only fault was their dullness." Slim overcomes this difficulty with typical generosity by giving full credit to commanders who measured up to his standards, and by leaving the absence of remark to create its own comment upon the others. Reticence serves him well.

On two individuals, however, positive comment was unavoidable, whatever the author's opinion might have been. These were General ("Vinegar Joe") Stilwell, operating in the north-east with the Chinese forces, and Orde Wingate, commanding long-range penetration forces.

BOOK SHOP

SIX books will be reviewed in the Book Shop session on Wednesday, August 1. Alison Atkinson, of Whangarei, will review *Strange Island*, by Francesca Wilson, *East of Katmandu*, by Tom Weir, and *The Marching Wind*, by Leonard Clark. Malcolm Mason, of Wellington, will review *The Hidden Catch*, by Charles Conell; and J. C. Reid, of Christchurch, will discuss two air books, *Bitter Monsoon*, by Oliver Moxon, and the *Proving Flight*, by David Beatty.



SIR WILLIAM SLIM

"An unusually perceptive and well-disciplined mind"

Of the former, he remarks, with genuine regret at Stilwell's dismissal by Chiang Kai-shek, "He fought too many people who were not enemies; but I liked him." He makes no such admission on Wingate, while giving that fiery temperament full credit for the determined pursuit of an idea. The two actual operations of the Chindits are put into perspective with the campaign as a whole; their value was to be measured in terms of Allied morale rather than in material results.

The Burma campaign, possibly owing to its complexities and to its difficult place-names, has received less study than most. Slim is nowhere better than in his simplifying description, before each major battle, of the geographic setting, and his analysis of the strategic situation which faces him. This invariably brings into account the state of morale, his constant concern; few commanders can have understood better the minds of their men. In spite of a forgivable simplification here and there, and an occasionally repetitive phrase, one is permitted to see why he fought each battle as he did. One may also see, very clearly, that this war was considerably more difficult—and a great deal more unpleasant—to fight than the campaigns in the Middle East or in Europe. The difficulties of terrain, of communications and of climate obtrude themselves at every stage of Army planning and administration. The enemy, fanatical and cruel, makes his contribution to these comparisons, and Slim remarks of the Japanese fighting defensively, "I know of no army that could have equalled them." These are measured words. He instances many fanatical acts (an encircled Japanese company marching in close ranks into a river to drown, rather than surrender), and gives reluctant admiration to their qualities as "fighting insects." Throughout the campaign, less than one per cent became prisoners, even counting wounded.

This is a wise and well-considered book. It will repay casual reading, and it will repay analytical study. Through it all there shows not only the heart of a great leader, but the unconscious pride of a professional in his ability to meet the challenge to his skill. To

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 27, 1956