

# Himalayan Exploration

EAST OF EVEREST, by Sir Edmund Hillary and George Lowe; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 21/-.

(Reviewed by John Pascoe)

THIS account of the New Zealand Alpine Club Himalayan Expedition to the Barun Valley in 1954 is exciting reading. The complexity of the country gave great scope for new passes, many first ascents, much mapping of unexplored ranges and adventures abounding. Hillary writes with laconic and characteristic vigour and Lowe with wry understatement.

In 1951 and 1952 Hillary explored the approaches to the Barun by high level routes. He was determined that the Barun Valley would give an ideal stamping ground for a young New Zealand party. Roland Ellis, Phil Cook and other devoted N.Z.A.C. men in Dunedin undertook the hard work of financing and providing for the expedition, and the men chosen were both fully representative of post-war New Zealand climbers and fit for the difficult tasks ahead. Bill Beaven, Geoff Harrow, Norman Hardie, Jim McFarlane, Colin Todd and Brian Wilkins were picked to accompany Hillary and Lowe. Drs. Charles Evans and Michael Ball were added from Britain. At a cost of £8000 and helped by *The Times*, the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club in London, the expedition achieved its main objectives.

The strenuous trek through Nepal led to a point where the party could split into small mobile groups, each with exploratory and mapping ambitions as well as those of peak climbing. Their self-reliance and initiative were fully tested. In spite of an unlucky accident in the Barun, when McFarlane was badly frostbitten after a fall into a crevasse, and Hillary was seriously ill at high altitude, the party was steadfast. Hillary gives a vivid account of the courage of McFarlane and Wilkins, his companion. Barantse was the most spectacular of the many peaks climbed. No less exacting was the crossing of steep and icy passes, when all the resources of good and modern piton technique were used to shepherd laden porters safely.

The seventy pages of text includes an outline of all expedition activities and the five-day Sherpa festival of Dumji. One wishes for a much longer and more detailed account. There is light and shade in the writing, but it is all compressed with such modesty that only the experienced climber can realise the full stature of the men who made a chapter of Himalayan history. Forty-eight pages of magnificent gravure illustrations add an impressive dimension to the text, and three maps are valuable. The New Zealand Alpine Club will have every reason to be proud of the record of its first expedition overseas. It is to be hoped such enterprise will be repeated in future years.

## LOOKING FOR LAWRENCE

THE DESERT AND THE STARS, by Flora Armitage; Faber and Faber, English price 25/-.

EVERYTHING connected with the luckless Lawrence (T. E.) seems to wind up in paradox. The unspeakable Lowell Thomas who sought to glorify Lawrence (and, incidentally, himself) succeeded only in making him a figure

of poor fun. Richard Aldington, who rode out as the bold iconoclast, not only suffered a terrible mauling, but found that his book actually raised Lawrence's stature by chipping away some of the Lowell Tomfooleries.

So we have Aldington to thank for some of the many merits of Flora Armitage's new biography. No biographer henceforward can tackle Lawrence without facing and answering Aldington's charges; which just goes to show that the more spiteful the *advocatus diaboli* the more convincing the canonisation. Miss Armitage deals with Lawrence as Impostor in an Epilogue—and burks none of the charges. She empties Mr.



T. E. Lawrence

Aldington as dispassionately as a housewife shells peas, and deals with Lawrence's webs of falsehood honestly, calmly and sympathetically. She presents the whole life of Lawrence in accurate perspective, not as a setting to the brief Arabian adventure. She brings to her study a woman's aching pity for the physical and spiritual suffering of a man at civil war with himself. She tries to "explain" Lawrence and fails, as all his biographers must fail, but gallantly.

For other Lawrence biographers there will be, as there will always be men and women compelled to write of the Brontes, of the murder of Abraham Lincoln, of Mr. W.H. of the Sonnets, of the Easter Island monoliths. Lawrence of the cliff-like brow and the jutting chin had a strangely Easter Island look about him, come to think of it.

—G. C. A. Wall

## MARCHLANDS OF EUROPE

GERMANY'S EASTERN NEIGHBOURS, by Elizabeth Wiskemann; Oxford University Press; Geoffrey Cumberlege, English price 30/-.

IN 1945 the nations of Eastern Europe set about expelling any German minorities that had not returned to the Reich in the train of the defeated German armies. This book describes two of the largest migrations; the removal of the Sudeten minority from the borders of Bohemia, thereby strengthening Czechoslovakia as a national entity; and, in addition to the expulsion of the minorities from Poland, the eviction of the indigenous population from the Oder-Neisse lands of Eastern Germany, and the settlement and incorporation within the Polish State of these "Recovered Territories." The Sudeten question may be considered as permanently settled, but not the question of the Oder-Neisse lands. The Allies were agreed in principle that Poland should have territory in the west to compensate, in part, for the savagery of the German occupation and destruction, in part, for the Russian annexation of land to the east of the old Curzon Line. But none of the Western Powers will accept this present western boundary, protesting that a definite line can only be drawn at the final peace conference. No West German politician can afford, as yet, to admit the territorial changes as final.

The acquisition of these territories has considerably strengthened the Polish economy; for these lands include the

valuable agricultural districts of Lower Silesia, some areas of light industry, and the ports of Stettin and Danzig; and now the whole of the Silesian coalfield, with perhaps the greatest reserves in Europe, comes within the economy. The Poles have actively resettled farmers and some of their surplus agricultural population in the west, and the Silesian area is to be developed with regard to the whole industrial development of Eastern Europe. The westward extension of Poland has, for the Czechs, broken the German encirclement of Bohemia.

The West German authorities had to resettle some nine million refugees from the east. Drawing upon first-hand experience the author vividly describes the economic and sociological aspects of this resettlement. The general recovery and expansion of the German economy has been a great factor in easing the task; but it has proved harder to resettle those refugees from rural areas, many of whom had been landowners, than those refugees from professional and industrial classes.

The German-Polish conflict is an old one, and it has taken many forms; appearing, for example, as tensions between groups and classes, such as German entrepreneurs-Polish labourers, German landowners-Polish peasants, German Protestant-Polish Catholics, German educators-Polish nationalists. And one cannot foresee the end of this conflict, to which the division Communist-non-Communist will add rancour. The same areas and the same forces are still involved. Thus, the Oder-Neisse question is of importance to the future peace of Europe. Miss Wiskemann's book is a

## BOOK SHOP

THE Book Shop programme for Wednesday, September 26, will be devoted to New Zealand Book Week. Books to be reviewed or mentioned will include "Eric Lee-Johnson," by E. H. McCormick; "Ancient Voyagers of the Pacific," by Andrew Sharp; "Forest Homes," by Peterson; "Moonshine," by Helen Wilson; "A Gallows Tree," by Florence Patterson; "The Fire and the Anvil," by James K. Baxter; and "Spring Fires," by Ormond Burton.

particularly valuable addition to the limited number of books, in English, which discuss current events in Central Europe.

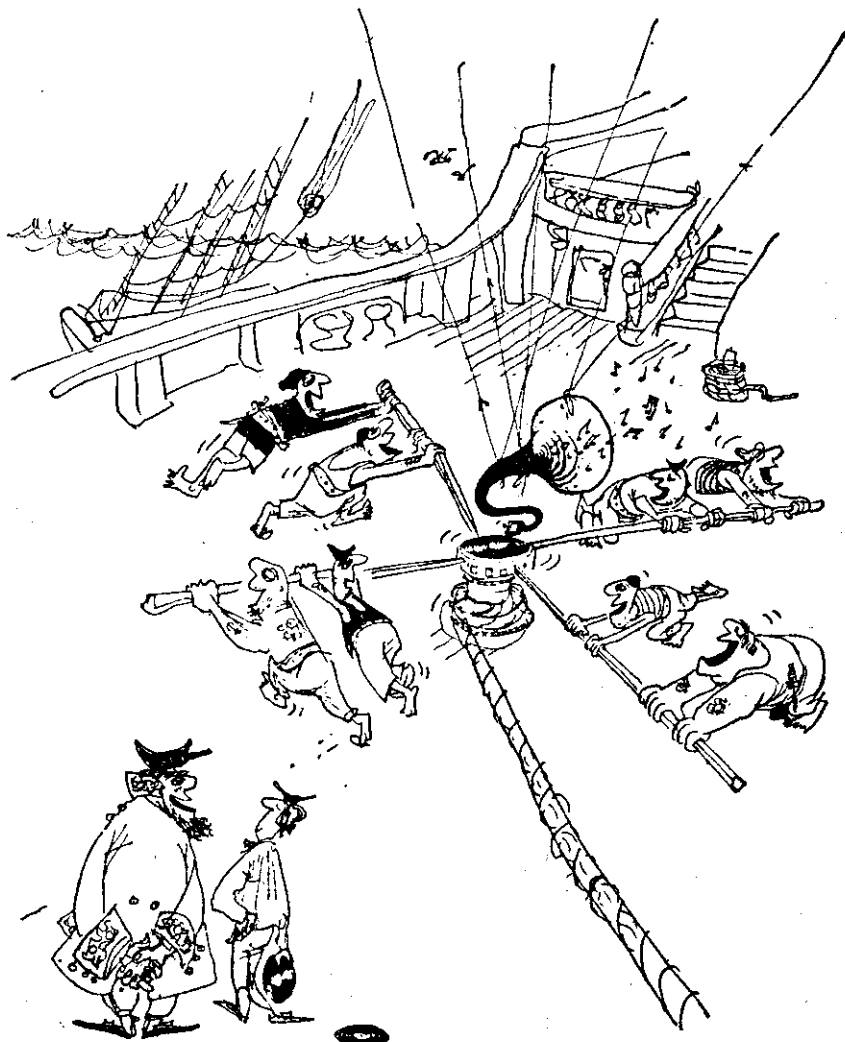
—S. H. Franklin

## A MEAL OF OYSTERS

ELARNA CANE, by Affleck Graves; Faber and Faber, English price 12/6. THE GUINEA STAMP, by W. R. Loader; Jonathan Cape, English price 13/6. THE HOSANNA MAN, by Philip Callow; Jonathan Cape, English price 13/6.

LIKE, like, like; but what lies beneath the semblance of things? When Virginia Woolf wrote that she might have been writing of *Elarna Cane*; it is an accurate comment on this curious, triangular novel. Sentence by sentence the bright, merciless accumulation goes on: everything is like something else and the very felicities, as if a housewife were gathering up piece by piece a rare and shattered vase, have more truth than the whole. The labour has an inexorable quality; one works and wades through a welter of apt simile.

In one corner, bassoon-blowing Lorne, all cold male; in another, the carrot-headed, illiterate poltergeist, Elarna, (continued on next page)



"Excellent, Bos'n, excellent!"

(C) Punch