

FAR AWAY PLACES

DOCTORS, DRUMS AND DANCES, by Andras E. Laszlo; Robert Hale, English price 18s. **THE NAKED AUCAS**, by Rolf Blomberg; Allen and Unwin, English price 21s. **HIGHWAY OF THE SUN**, by Victor von Hagen; Victor Gollancz, English price 18s. **THE LAST CANNIBALS**, by Jens Bjerre; Michael Joseph, English price 21s. **WORLDS BEYOND THE HORIZON**, by Joachim G. Leithauser; Allen and Unwin, English price 40s.

(Reviewed by D. W. McKenzie)

THE raw material of travel literature is the account of the eye-witness, who may be ignorant or well-informed, perceptive or insensitive, understanding or prejudiced. Whatever his characteristics, if he can write vividly of his experiences he can be sure of being read. These five books all reflect in different ways the personalities of their writers and the attitude they bring to their travels. In *Doctors, Drums and Dances*, Andras E. Laszlo, M.D., writes of a trip through Angola, which must reach nearly bedrock in the matter of preparation. He could not speak Portuguese, let alone any of the native languages of Angola, and was quite helpless in servicing the truck which carried him and one native helper. But he saw a number of native ceremonies of

various kinds, and if the unimaginable horrors he is always about to describe never quite eventuate, and if the photographs he reproduces are not as exciting as the scenes he describes filming, his staccato narrative makes the most of what he did see.

Rolf Blomberg in *The Naked Aucas*, on the other hand, gives the complete background of an Ecuador Indian tribe which must be as belligerent and unapproachable as any people in the world, with a sinister record from the times of the first Jesuit missionaries, who achieved only martyrdom. Blomberg determined to lead an expedition to the Aucas, but the actual account of this comes as an anti-climax, for they were met with a hail of spears from the forest and went home without being able to see the natives at all. The account of European contacts with the Aucas, however, is detailed and fascinating.

Highway of the Sun, by Victor von Hagen, is a magnificent account of a two-year expedition recording the great Inca highways of Peru. Its author made extensive preparations extending over many years, including detailed study of the records of the Spanish conquerors of the Incas, which enabled him to

locate places whose very existence had been forgotten. In the desolate highlands, into the forest, and across the coastal desert his expedition followed the great roads, sometimes paved into the sands, sometimes climbing upward around the tremendous precipices of the Andes. He brings the Inca culture to life in his narrative, for always he is seeing how their system worked. Indeed, he conducted experiments with native runners between the stops on the ancient roads which showed that the Inca's boast that he could, high in the Andes, eat fresh fish from the Pacific was quite possible. One surprising feature of the book is that though it abounds in excellent photographs none is shown of the great roads from the air, though the author describes the results of several flights, and though the American Geographical Society, which sponsored the expedition, has already published some remarkable air views of them.

Jens Bjerre's book *The Last Cannibals* is distinguished above all by sympathy for the peoples he describes, both in Central Australia and in New Guinea. He attempts to find reasons for habits and ceremonials which seem strange and repugnant to European observers, and to understand them in relation to the people who practise them.

Finally, Joachim G. Leithauser in *Worlds Beyond the Horizon* continues a trend noticeable among German authors of travel works today, and takes

the whole field of world exploration in his view, beginning with the Carthaginians and ending with rocket exploration of space! Though he protests in his preface that "this is no book of heroes," that is exactly what it becomes, though, of course, Pizarro, for example, may be a hero or a villain according to one's point of view. The personalities of explorers emerge surprisingly clearly considering the small space which can be devoted to each.

A NEW ZEALAND MARRIAGE

A GALLOW'S TREE, by Florence Preston; Cassell and Co., English price 15s.

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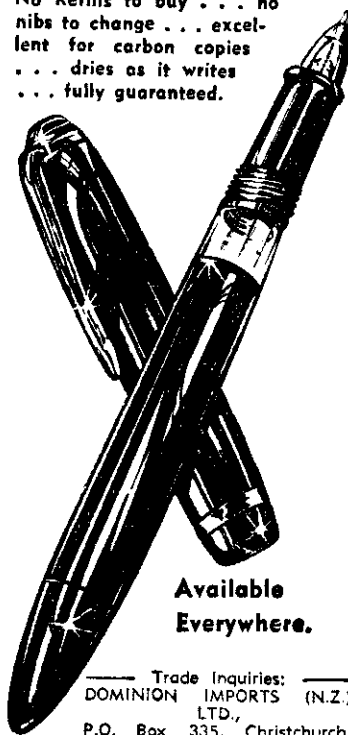


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