

out with a blow from a weapon, and is then so angry that before he drives away he leans out of the window of the car and shoots the dog as it lies on the ground. This also needs no comment from the reviewer.

"Would you like a helicopter?" said President Peron to the members of the French Expedition to climb the towering needle of Mount FitzRoy, in the Patagonian Andes, and this phrase comes to mind time after time as one reads *The Conquest of FitzRoy*, by M. A. Azema, the leader and medical officer. This magnificent peak towers above a sparsely-settled and little-known land, offering almost vertical faces and overhangs which can only be climbed by the techniques of "artificial climbing," of pitons and wooden wedges, though not as artificial as the helicopter. This book is splendidly written and well translated, and takes us from the first thoughts of the men who grouped themselves to climb this distant monolith to the last forcing of the last vertical pitch on that incredible last face, in a way that makes us feel we are there with them. M. Azema drops many a perspicacious comment and observation, from the habits of the ranchers of Patagonia and the argumentative nature of French climbers to a slightly acid note as to why this peak should be called such an unsuitable name (an incidental look at the name of Everest).

Of the many books on warfare in the Western Desert none is more modest than *The Desert is My Dwelling Place*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Owen. The Long Range Desert Group fought in a way that was more like sea warfare than land, and Owen describes his part in it with vivid detail and good characterisation of his companions. His comments on the New Zealanders he met there are interesting: "The New Zealanders were tough, self-reliant individuals with an earthy sense of humour and an indomitable spirit. They could bear almost any hardship with a shrug of the shoulders and a determination to take more of it if it were necessary. I found them slightly aloof and a little suspicious of me at first, for they did not know what kind of a man I might turn out to be. They were wary of British officers, whom they sometimes suspected of being ignorant fops. But once they realised that you were prepared to muck in with them and did not wish to stand apart they were not only most entertaining company, but they became wonderful friends."

ROUND AND ABOUT THEATRE

MARGARET RUTHERFORD, by Eric Keown; *Rockliff*, English price 15/-. **THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 1954-56**, Photographic Record introduced by Ivor Brown; Max Reinhardt, English price 21/-. **THEATRE, 1955-6**, by Ivor Brown; Max Reinhardt, English price 21/-. **VALE OF LAUGHTER**, by Ben Travers; Geoffrey Bles, English price 18/-. **HOW NOT TO WRITE A PLAY**, by Walter Kerr; Max Reinhardt, English price 21/-.

THE Rockliff series of monographs on theatrical personalities (with one or two notable exceptions) tend to be carefully compiled records of the artists' careers with occasional but complimentary extracts from the critics; they would be yet more valuable if they included judgment and assessment with explorations into the artists' methods. Photographs of Miss Rutherford, both from films and plays, form an excellent record in themselves and the *Punch* critic, Eric Keown, writes her story with relish and sly dry wit.

The Memorial Theatre volume is intended as a pictorial record, though Ivor Brown introduces the volume, all

too briefly, with well-phrased judgments, generous praise, mellow scholarship and discreet condemnation. The photographs by Angus McBean are valuable not only factually but as the work of an artist with a camera; he has the gift of posing a theatre picture superbly and yet conveying spontaneous movement and emotion.

For the second time—but not the last by many, we hope—Ivor Brown collects his year's criticisms in *Theatre, 1955-6*; they are what we have come to expect from him. He renders a further service by recording all London productions during the period with cast, producer, length of run, etc. There is also a summary of principal repertory productions. Additional contributions include, to New Zealanders' interest, Sir Ralph Richardson; his Antipodean Report is mainly on Australia, is charmingly brief and somewhat apologetic, indicative of his shy elusive personality. It will probably make us somewhat ashamed that he did not receive the support and response here that his company deserved. The book is a valuable record and very readable.

The name of Ben Travers was synonymous with wit and humour for many years as a novelist, and also as the creator of the Alwyth farces in which Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, Robertson Hare and others riotously disported themselves to London's delight. Mr Travers has lost none of his skill in presenting a story, though this mellow recording, mainly of theatre memories, has not the fictional zest; it is direct autobiography. There are valuable hints on plot construction and the writing of comedy, and his personality is revealed as containing more of the shrewd business man and of the sensitive artist than his readers might have expected.

How Not to Write a Play is by one of New York's foremost dramatic critics, renowned for his murderously brusque and witty reviewing. Here he slashes at almost all current dramatists, particularly those descended in technical methods directly or indirectly from either Ibsen or Chekhov. They include, in Walter Kerr's opinion, almost every playwright of today, successful or unsuccessful.

—John V. Trevor

THOSE OLD SHADES

THE LAST CRUSADER, by Louis de Wohl; Victor Gollancz, English price 16/-. **REMEMBER ME?** by David Staction; Faber and Faber, English price 15/-.

THAT same Philip of Spain who, in 1554, married Mary Tudor, had a young half-brother, natural son of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. The boy, later known as Don John of Austria, became one of the most dashing and heroic figures those stirring times had seen. His popularity and early military successes led the cautious Philip to put continual disappointments in the way of his personal ambitions. At first, however, these ambitions were dedicated to a nobler cause—the expulsion of the Turks from Christendom—and in this book we follow Don John to the highest crowning of those efforts. In 1571, when still only 24 years of age, he led a huge Christian fleet to defeat the Turks at the battle of Lepanto, so royally described in Chesterton's poem.

Louis de Wohl's skilful handling of fact and fiction has produced a spirited and credible story of palace personalities and intrigues. But apart from King Philip the characters have been given a little too much sweetness and light, so that the violent nature of the times scarcely emerges—a regretful comment

(continued on next page)

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