

recur each year, but as the birds get older they tend increasingly to return to the same colony, a process which is hastened by successful breeding. Unless an accident intervenes, a clutch consists almost invariably of two eggs, and some of the most striking of Dr Richdale's observations show how closely this number is balanced with the quantity of food a penguin can collect for its young. One parent bird can collect just enough for a single chick in its later and most demanding stages. Thus a pair can feed the customary two chicks, but if one of the parents is lost one or both of the chicks is inevitably doomed to death by starvation. As another result, in seasons such as 1938-39, when suitable food for the penguins was apparently scarce in the sea, a much smaller proportion of chicks than usual survived to reach the fledgling stage.

In the present book Dr Richdale has presented his findings in great detail, largely by the discussion of some 80 tables. While this ensures that the reader who is prepared to give considerable thought can assess for himself exactly what has been discovered in each aspect of the life history of these birds, it has not resulted in a book which is easy to read, and it is difficult, except in the chapter on age and maturity, to find a simple statement of the essential findings on any point. In short, this book is one for the specialist rather than for the bird-lover or amateur naturalist, but if the author could be prevailed upon to apply his unique knowledge and experience of penguins to the writing of a simple account of their lives and behaviour for the general reader the result could well be a book which would be fascinating to all who are interested in the natural world around us.

"BEAU CLOWN"—AND OTHERS

SHADOW OF THE MOON, by M. M. Kaye; Longmans, English price 18/-.
BEAU CLOWN, by Berthe Grimault; Andre Deutsch, English price 10/6.
GREAT CIRCLE, by Robert Carse; Victor Gollancz; English price 13/6.
EVERYWHERE I ROAM, by Ben Lucien Burman; Longmans, English price 16/-.

OF these four novels, M. M. Kaye's takes the bun for sustained effort—632 pages of cliché-studded romance, with a capital "R," and historical romance at that. Alex Randall, a sahib in the service of a nabob of the East India Company, falls in love with his boss's wife (even when they were only bespoken). His boss is a drunken lout, a "washermarrer" type who deadens the pain of the white man's burden with gin and brandy. Like a gossip's story, this book is full of asides and irrelevancies, but we can be certain that one good thing came out of the Indian Mutiny—Alex's boss died and Alex and Winter (short for Winter de Ballesteros, Condesa de los Aguilares) lived happily ever after. However, anything that has all that the heart would desire will sell. Why, even a family tree is included in the price.

The author of *Beau Clown* is also a woman, but had the advantages of being only 14 years old and almost illiterate. This story is therefore a fresh product of the experience and imagination of a child. There are no frilly flutters or great loves here. The publishers point out that the only possible comparison is with Daisy Ashford, the writer of *The Young Visitors*; but the resemblance is slight, and not of much point. Berthe Grimault's cheerful acceptance of everything life has to offer, whether it be the visits of Negro soldiers to the farm which is the locale of the story (which make her wish she was older), the antics of three escaped lunatics and her dip-

somaniac father, dirt and poverty, hunger and death, is a quality of childhood that is often forgotten. When "The Chopper," a madman with homicidal tendencies, is gored to death by a mysterious white bull which appears here and there in the story, the children are fascinated, even amused; they wait and moan only because they see the adults doing so. It is a sordid, fantastic tale, but relieved by two things: the beauty of the image of the White Bull, and the unquenchable zest of its amoral author. Woe betide anyone, be he Freudian or not, who dares to explain this book. Let him just read it.

Great Circle is a rattling good yarn about a New England whaling skipper who leaves his gal in Old Salem, hunts the mighty whale, rounds the Horn, fetches up on a South Sea isle, succumbs for a while to the languor of the tropics, but finally beats around the Horn again to a lusty welcome home. Then he's away to sea again with his bride safely stowed in the cabin of a brand-new clipper. Thoroughly enjoyable and authentic, and the whaling scenes are superbly done.

Ben Lucien Burman, the author of *Everywhere I Roam*, has been hailed as a "new Mark Twain" according to the notice on the dust jacket; but this tale of a character who searches America for a refugee from juke boxes and the like is fairly well done, although with a flatness and lack of gusto that Mark Twain never had.

—Edmond Malone

MUSIC ON THE WIND

WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR HISTORY, by Anthony Baines; Faber and Faber, English price 42/-.

HERE is a general, technical and historical background to the study of wind instruments written by a former bassoon player in the London Philharmonic who is both an enthusiast and an innovator. The book is divided into two parts. In the first section the instruments are discussed in great detail—such topics as fingering, breathing, embouchure and "the merciless capriciousness of reed-making." In the second, the history of the instruments from the primitive flute world to the present day is told. At the end can be found notes on maintenance and a comprehensive bibliography. Woodwind manufacture and the composer's use of instruments in the orchestra lie beyond the book's scope.

The author's interest in the possibilities of woodwind sound lead him to make several interesting suggestions, among which are proposals for the revival of some older instruments. He thinks the treble recorder should be redesigned so that it can be played in a modern orchestra. He would like to see the ancient shawm come back, outside if not in. "The sound of these shawms is unbelievably exciting. Their effect is of tremendously loud, full throated oboes . . . great would be the day if ever they came to be tried in the northern countries to add their fiery glow to the rather pallid hues of our military bands." He hits out at the present lop-sided concentration on descendant recorders in schools and suggests combining recorders with the 16th Century crumhorn, an easily blown reed instrument. It will be interesting to see whether Mr Dolmetsch's lathes ever become diverted to crumhorns.

He gives insight into the growth of distinctive national styles of playing in Europe and will tell you why the wind section of the Vienna Philharmonic sounds differently from those of English (continued on next page)

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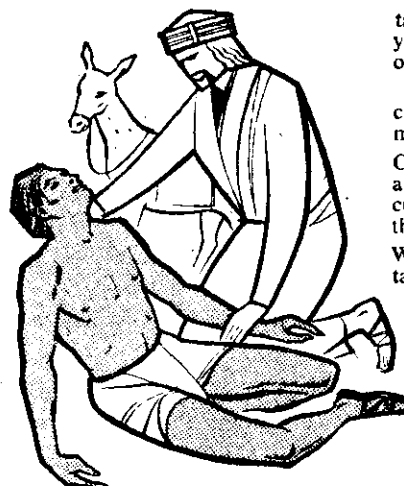
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