

or forward, though films have already been discussed as a recreation and may yet figure as one of the arts.

Having made these reservations, it is proper to emphasise that the new volume in all other respects appears to reach the excellent standards already established by the editors. Condensation does lead occasionally to over-simplification ("Political propaganda is almost the only kind known today"), but in general the work of summarising has been done with clarity and precision. —J.M.

OLD AND NEW JAPAN

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE, by David H. James, Allen and Unwin. English price, 21/-.

THIS book contains a mass of material about Japan's earliest warring clans and royal households, events leading up to the war, and the war itself; but its title is misleading. The accepted historical record of the clans and eras of the shogunate may be found in more simplified form in the *Japanese Year Book*, as presented here they become confusing. Mr. James gives us little or nothing about the vigorous political movements which were pursued with determination from the island of Shikoku, and there is little about social changes, which admittedly were slow. One's faith in the author is shaken by incorrect details such as a list of the early feudal castles, since he seems unaware that most of those included were destroyed in 1945. He says that Admiral Yamamoto remorsefully crash-dived his aircraft into the wreckage of a convoy destroyed in the Bismarck Sea, whereas the Japanese commander-in-chief was shot down by an American airman over Bougainville.

Half-way through the book Mr. James begins to tell his own story, which he does extremely well, if a little bitterly. His version of the sad and sorry fall of Singapore will not please the Australians, but it helps to remove the doubt and indecision which existed throughout that campaign. Had Mr. James confined himself to this personal account of events, as he experienced them in action and as a P.O.W., he would have produced a much more satisfactory book. But his attitude is not sufficiently detached. He is obsessed with personal prejudices, as in his unfair and uninformed references to what he terms the "MacArthur shogunate." Quotations from the Japanese newspaper *Mainichi* of October, 1937, which prophetically set out the present position, in China and Russia's attitude and ambitions, supply one of the more interesting passages from a book evidently designed to meet any public interest created during the signing of a peace treaty. —O.A.G.

FORERUNNER OF KAFKA

TALES FROM HOFFMANN, edited by J. M. Cohen; the Bodley Head. English price, 16/-.

J. M. COHEN, who translated *Don Quixote* in its new Penguin edition, has collected here five of E. T. A. Hoffmann's major tales. There has been no new edition of Hoffmann for 50 years, although his name is a byword for the supernatural and the macabre, and Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* is only one of a number of musical works his writings inspired. The tale of mystery and imagination was really Hoffmann's invention, but by applying the Hoffmann formula to themes more in keeping with his times, Mr. Cohen points out in his introduction, Edgar Allen Poe was at least partially responsible for his predecessor's eclipse.

Hoffmann is even more significant today, Mr. Cohen suggests, as the first of (continued on page 15)

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 10, 1951.

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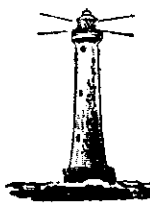
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