

always tends to produce a parody of civilisation. Most of Australia's population is huddled in over-grown cities around the coast. One can sympathise with the feelings of the Jindyworobaks on seeing Sydney become American-cosmopolitan, and the outback farming communities more and more like remote social deserts in the Middle West, while hopes of attaining "national consciousness" in any natural and genuine sense grow dimmer.

I am not suggesting that the whole of Australian literature has been blighted by this dialectic of self-consciousness. For one thing, it has in itself produced some interesting, and occasionally significant—although, I suspect, not particularly viable—works. And for another, there have always been writers who have remained more or less detached from it. Two of them are among the writers Mr. Green picks out as being the most important—Henry Handel Richardson and Judith Wright. The stature of these is unquestioned. And this leads me to ask a question I do not intend to answer here and now, but upon which I would invite calm reflection. It is this: Is there any significance in the fact that women occupy such a prominent place in the Australian literary tradition?

HAPPY DAYS

OLD HERBACEOUS. by Reginald Arkell; illustrations by John Minton; Michael Joseph. English price, 8/6.

DUNE BOY. by Edwin Way Teale; illustrations by Cecil W. Bacon; Robert Hale. English price, 12/6.

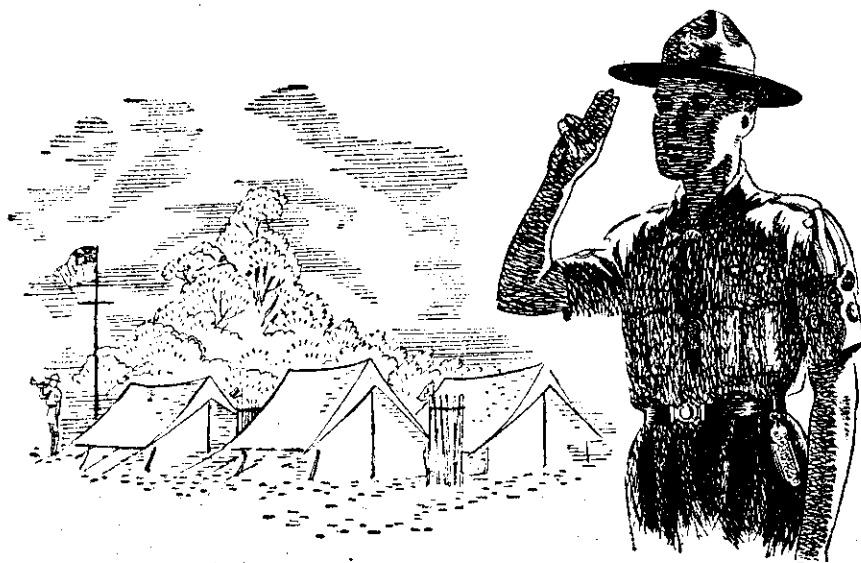
REGINALD ARKELL is a true countryman and plant lover, as anyone who reads just a few sentences of this book can tell. Quite obviously he has dug and hoed and weeded and cut grass over and over again, and has shared the disappointments and the rewards of all gardeners. But he needed some extra quality, something more than first-hand knowledge and experience to help him to write this very sympathetic and appreciative life of an old man who began as a gardener's boy and ended as

(continued on page 15)



ADMIRAL LORD MOUNTEVANS, whose "*Desolate Antarctic*" is to be reviewed by Lieutenant-Colonel T. Orde Lees in the ZB Book Review session on January 27. There will be three other books reviewed in the same session: "*Out of This World*," by Lowell Thomas, Jr. (J. J. Saunders); "*The Lovers*," by Robert Payne (James Bertram); "*Raymond L. Ditmars*," by L. N. Wood (C. J. Cutler)

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 18, 1952.



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