

the commentary of the biographer, they take a new strength and interest. Johnson was a great and good man; he grows in vitality as the years carry him further from us. And one reason for his survival, apart from his robust personality, is the excellence of his writing. He could not have been half the talker he was unless he had full command of language. These letters show that he could speak his mind with admirable force and clearness when he sat with pen in hand. Mannered he may have been; but the manner was his own, and those who love him will look for no other. It is only against his imitators and parodists that the word "Johnsonian" can be thrown reproachfully.

GLORY IN STONE

MONASTIC SITES FROM THE AIR, by David Knowles and J. K. S. St. Joseph. Cambridge University Press. English price, 55/-.

ONE may wonder how many New Zealanders, making a round of old English Cathedrals, fully realise the magnitude of achievement in an age when the population was only a small fraction of what it is now and the proportion of wealth was still smaller. Yet this is by no means the whole story. In addition to these churches in use, some of which incorporate old abbeys, and such starred sights as the ruins of Glastonbury and Tintern, there are numbers of other monastic relics. These are in various states of preservation. Some have been absorbed by country houses; others are piles of stones; others have left marks on the ground, visible perhaps only from the air. Professor Knowles, professor of mediaeval history at Cambridge, may well say that preparation of this book "has given a new sense of the genius for order and beauty of the 12th and 13th Centuries."

The book is an aerial survey, with detailed descriptions, of nearly 130 monastic sites in England, Scotland and Wales, arranged according to religious orders. Dr. St. Joseph, curator in aerial photography in Cambridge, supervised the illustrations, which were taken by the Royal Air Force. Beauty of building and landscape, together with scholarly written information, combine to make a magnificent production. Items range from the irony of Welbeck Abbey, where remnants of an ancient foundation are embedded in the visible and subterranean splendours of the seat of the Duke of Portland, on which the fifth Duke spent millions (his successor today is possibly glad to get the half-crowns of visitors), to Mfield and Yeavinger in Northumberland, where, on ground without house or tree, the past was revealed by crop-markings as late as 1948-49. This noble record, a monument to authors and publishers, is primarily for students of church history and architecture; but, as Professor Knowles says, there is the wider appeal to all interested in the life of the Middle Ages.

—A.M.

AFRICAN TERRITORIES

INTRODUCING EAST AFRICA, by Mona Macmillan; Faber and Faber. English price, 21/-.

MRS. MACMILLAN'S book is a breathless enumeration of facts — relevant and otherwise — about the British East African territories of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika. The only visible order in the book is that imposed by the chronology of the author's travels, and the reader must needs be agile to follow her as she leaps from the advantages of contour plough-

ing in the Kigezi district to the plumbing arrangements of the hotel at Kabale. Such comment as there is shows little insight. We are told, for instance, that the Kikuyu "seem to resemble the Irish in being easily inflamed with political or religious fervour, but strangely content with very low standards of personal living."

The general reader, for whom the book is intended, may well find valuable information in this introduction, but the labour involved in the search should prove a sufficient deterrent for most. There is a topographical map—where one of soils and vegetation would have been more useful—and an index adequate for the book.

—A.S.F.

OIL TANKER

INVISIBLE CARGO, by Leo Walmsley; Michael Joseph. English price, 21/-.

THOUGH by far the greater part of our transport by land, sea and air, as well as many other industries, are vitally dependent upon oil and motor-spirit, few New Zealanders know much about the tanker, an interesting and highly specialised type of ship, that is here today and gone tomorrow after delivering her invisible cargo. For those who would know more about tankers—and in this oil age all of us should know more—Leo Walmsley's book is what is wanted.

He made a passage in the motor tanker Dorcasia from Falmouth to Curacao and returned to Swansea in the turbo-electric tanker Theobaldus. In between he saw the great oil refineries on the island of Curacao, travelled in a small tanker to Maracaibo and the head of the great lake of that name in Venezuela and visited the oil-fields and oil prospectors by launch, car and aeroplane. Mr. Walmsley writes of all the places he visited and what he saw in a bright, entertaining style, and the whole process from oil-well to delivery of the product is described free from technicalities. His story of life in a tanker at sea in fair weather and foul is of the first order.

—S.D.W.

PARADISE LOST

THE HAPPY ISLAND, by Bengt Danielsson; Allen and Unwin. English price, 15/-.

STARRY-EYED optimists who are sure than an island in the South Seas must be a paradise on earth will find disillusionment in this tale by the steward of the Kon-Tiki expedition, particularly in the concluding chapter. But in the meantime they will have been through many pages of excitement and humour. Danielsson returned with his wife to Raroia in the Tuamotu Group (on which the famous raft was wrecked) to spend 18 months which in some ways were carefree and idyllic but in others dismaying; dismaying because they found a community whose enemies were their own primitive ideas of economics and the encroachment of the outside world.

Danielsson found the answer to South Sea dreamers crushingly simple. No foreigner would get official permission to settle on the island of Raroia; even if by some means he succeeded in getting permission, he would find nobody willing to sell him land. To try, as a last resource, to live without either land or income would be unthinkable, especially among people whose motto is "aita peapea" (it doesn't matter). The author discusses with feelings of alarm the swelling stream of Chinese into Raroia and gives a chapter to ways in which

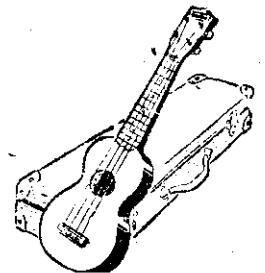
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