

BOOK RECORD

Conducted by ANTAR

"GALES, ICE AND MEN"

A Very Remarkable
Biography of a Very
Remarkable Ship

(Special to the "Record")

FIRST and last I have read a good deal about ships having personalities. Not being a seafaring man, I realised abstractly that they might have personalities—and left it contentedly at that.

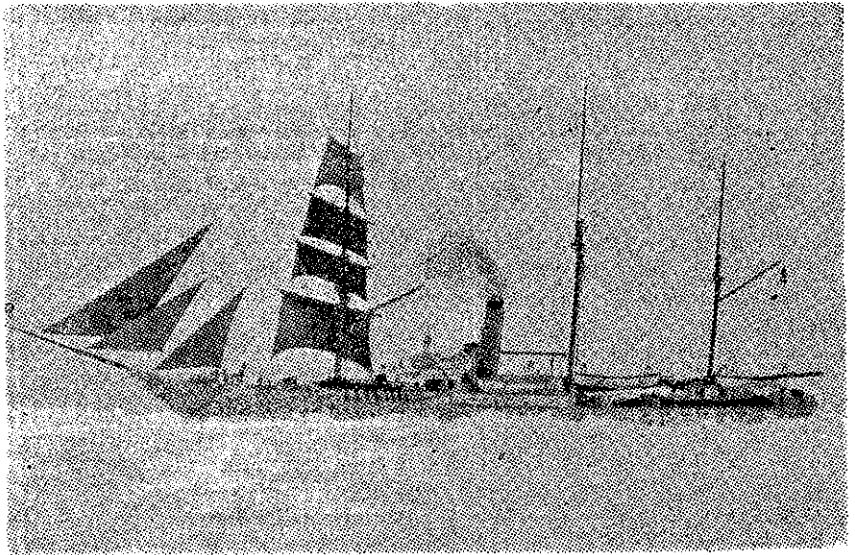
For the first time now, I have come upon a book which really *convinces* me on the point. It is Frank Wead's "Gales, Ice and Men," published by Methuen, of London, a biography—and a very remarkable biography—of the steam barkentine "Bear."

I imagine the story of that amazing ship has been written largely from her log, but also from some personal experience of the Arctic seas which she sailed for more than half a century. The story is bald, in a literary sense un-descriptive, but the very sparsity and simplicity of its style, the frequent repetitions, have a remarkable effect on the reader. They imbue him with a gripping sense of authenticity.

If you are tired—as I am—of reading millions of words written about "less and less," of footling and inane reminiscences by people whose existence is built on "publicity," and who will be happily forgotten before the turn of the century; if you are tired of emasculated gentlemen who live for Art, and close-cropped female wits who live on Artists; if you are tired of city streets and stories of tenement starvation—the biography of the Bear will come as an ice-cold shower on a hang-over. In some measure it has the breadth of an epic.

THE "Bear" was a U.S. coastguard cruiser in the days when America put up its bloody fight to protect the fur seals of the Pacific from extermination at the hands of commercial murderers. The "Bear" convoyed transport ships in the hectic days of the Klondike gold rush, rescued a score or more of whalers crushed in the terrible pack ice that sweeps down from the Pole in autumn, was driven time and time again into the frozen hell of the north to succour the shipwrecked and the hungry.

More than once her crew met face to face the terrible starvation of the Arctic—brought men back to life who had been reduced to eating the bodies of their dead comrades. She ferried reindeer from Siberia to the doomed Eskimos of Northern Alaska. Her life was too full of herculean braveries and labours for any reviewer to chronicle them at second hand in hope of giving an idea of its scope.



THE STEAM BARKENTINE "BEAR."

If your palate can still savour real adventure, and if you need no literary tricks to sugar-coat the pill of your reading, buy "Gales, Ice and Men," and enjoy every word of it. It is a red-blooded history for people whose blood is not too bleached by too-comfortable civilisation.

"Gales, Ice and Men" by Frank Wead (Methuen, London). Our copy from the publishers.

INDIAN SUMMER LOVE
OF A STATESMAN

MOST fascinating sidelight of history—to the average reader at least—is the romance in the lives of great men, which is not told in the bald political surveys of the textbook writer, but which has been for many years an inexhaustible gold mine rewarding the efforts of research workers.

Latest couple to figure in the Hall of Great Lovers is Lord and Lady Palmerston, put there by the pen of F. E. Baily, who has already achieved recognition with her similar work on Disraeli and the adoring Mary Anne. "The Love Story of Lady Palmerston" reveals the conventional Palmerston—bluff, obstinate, hard-swearing and fearless—in a surprisingly softer light.

Emily Lamb was the sister of Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's favourite Minister, and added to her extraordinary beauty all the graciousness and philosophic poise of the late eighteenth century—destined to be so cruelly snubbed by the repressive forces of Victorianism. As a young woman she married Lord Cowper and bore him five children—apparently without much interest. Then, after her husband's death, love for the first time entered her life. At the age of 52 she married Lord Palmerston, a bachelor of 55, and

her days became a saga of happiness that was not broken until the death of the statesman 26 years later.

It is a strange story—how in her middle age this lovely woman of fashion managed to tame the wild spirit of England's most arrogant Minister and yet never to lose his love or conquer his personality. The writer has recaptured for us all the serene charm of that Indian summer.

Nevertheless, as she herself too frankly admits, this book is no literary tour de force. The complexity of early nineteenth century politics in England makes careful selection of material a first necessity. Miss Baily is apt to digress, and indeed is very seldom concerned with her avowed subject—the love story. Interesting and

(Continued on next page.)

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