

NEW BOOKS

THE TALL TREES

English Woodland. By JOHN RODGERS. (Batsford; 10/6.)

Forestry is, at last, becoming recognised in this country. The war has helped in no small measure to bring home to us the vital importance of our timber. Here is a comprehensive review of the whole subject—the most comprehensive and at the same time the most concise that I have yet come across, and I, personally, doubt if it will be beaten on those scores. Mr. Rodgers has done a very fine job of work. The Forestry Commission (a body that has met with much criticism, a good deal of it well-deserved) is treated very fairly, but the author's contentions regarding the amenity aspect of forestry—he would fix the responsibility on individuals, institutions and planning authorities—would not stand any test. It should surely not be beyond the ability of the Forestry Commission to combine industry and amenity. If it is, then the outlook for the English woodlands is poor in the extreme, since comparatively few landowners will be able to preserve amenity at the expense of business efficiency in the future.

Mr. Rodgers, in a brief compass, gives us history and literature; a guide to individual trees; a light on scenery; and some introduction to the business and financial side. He never overwrites, and he is never anything but crystal clear.

As usual with a Batsford publication the illustrations are really excellent, and the book beautifully produced. B. V.F.

Good Days. By MEYRICK GOOD. (Hutchinson; 12/6.)

Lovers of racing will find interest in *Good Days*, written by Meyrick Good, "The Man on the Spot," telling of his experiences as a racing journalist. Apart from journalism the author has been owner—and amateur rider. He also had the distinction of giving the running commentary on the first race ever to be broadcast, the Grand National of 1927, won by Sprig.

He gives interesting glimpses of most of the famous men of the turf—owners, trainers and jockeys—and of the last named in his opinion, Steve Donoghue was the best all-round jockey and the most popular. He has memories, too, of Tod Sloan emerging from the weighing-room with a huge cigar, nearly as long as his whip,

which he proceeded to smoke while receiving his riding instructions! and he describes him as "the greatest wonder I ever saw." Many, no doubt, will find the chapters wherein he selects in order the six best Derby and National winners, somewhat controversial but none the less entertaining, as is the whole book, although for one connected with the art of writing for so many years, there is a stilted and unnatural tone about it and one feels that the author could have given us a more "live" book on a subject of such endless scope and diversity.

Passed as Censored. By MACDONALD HASTINGS. (Harrap; 8/6.)

Macdonald Hastings—a journalist well-known to all readers of *Picture Post*—has gathered together many of his extremely varied war experiences and presented them in book form. They make excellent reading, being short, snappily told and very much to the point. In later years the author will certainly be able to look back and feel that he has had a taste—however brief—of most war-time vicissitudes. As he himself says: "I've been rolled about like a marble on the monkey-walk of a minesweeping trawler. I've been bounced like a tennis ball inside the cockpit of an air escort over the Atlantic. I've been rattled like a pea inside the hull of a destroyer at speed. I've been shaken like a cocktail—and been as wet and cold as a cocktail—on the vibrating deck of a motor torpedo boat. I've been crumpled up like a shot rabbit in a car which crashed into the stern of a stationary lorry. I thought I had run the whole gamut of physical discomfort. I was wrong. Until just recently I'd never been taken for a ride in a tank!" With his official permits he was able to visit munition factories and many other places where few are allowed to penetrate and he gives all angles of this country "on the job."

Orzel's Patrol. By SUB-LIEUT. ERYK SOPOCKO. (Methuen; 5/-.)

This is the story of the Polish submarine *Orzel* which escaped from Tallinn harbour in 1939, where the Estonians had received her with courtesy, afterwards saying that the ship was to be disarmed and the crew interned. How they managed to escape without the aid of charts and with much important equipment missing and the guns breached, is told by Sub-Lieut. Eryk Sopocko, who was one of the crew, and makes thrilling reading. He also tells vividly of one of her subsequent nerve-racking and gruelling patrols, lasting for three weeks, during which time she sank an enemy

troopship. The author was transferred to another ship shortly after their return to harbour and six weeks later a communique was issued to the effect that the *Orzel* was overdue and must be presumed missing. A tragic end to a ship symbolic of the Polish people's heroic resistance to the enemy, and also to a crew of very gallant men.


In the Heart of the Country. By H. E. BATES. (Country Life; 10/6.)

A volume of country essays by a famous writer and in our opinion, the best he has yet produced. His publishers compare him to W. H. Hudson of immortal fame. This is, indeed, high commendation, but it is true that Mr. Bates does know the countryside and men and women and flowers and birds. He has an observant eye and a generous heart and his writing is warm and vital. Mr. C. E. Tunnicliffe proves himself once more the perfect collaborator. But why did Mr. Bates choose this rather silly title—a title which does a really good book no good at all—and which is not all applicable to the contents? It would surely have been better had the "in" been dropped?

One Man Against the North. By DAVID IRWIN. (Hale; 12/6.)

David Irwin wrote *Alone Across the Top of the World*, an account of his journey from Alaska to Fort Churchill. I have read that book many times, and I regard it as one of the greatest travel books ever written. It should be made available in cheap editions, for Irwin (whose name is not nearly so well known as it should be) ranks high on the roll of the world's intrepid men. This book, whilst picked up eagerly, is really a rather more detailed account of the second part of that journey. From the Alaska borders to Fort Churchill. Do not think that it is just a re-hash. It is much more than that and excellently well written. And yet; well I am a little puzzled. In one or two instances this account does not agree with the earlier book—the names of dogs for example—and the last terrific struggle with death does not read quite the same as in the earlier book. B. V.F.

In a few copies of last week's issue the review of Mr. Vesey-FitzGerald's new book *A Country Chronicle* (Chapman and Hall, 12/6) was inadvertently entitled *A Country Calendar*. We regret any inconvenience readers may have been caused.



**Abdullas**  
for choice

The most popular brands are:  
"VIRGINIA" No. 7  
"TURKISH" No. 11  
"EGYPTIAN" No. 16

Recently Published

**A COUNTRY CHRONICLE**  
by  
**Brian Vesey-FitzGerald**

Large Cr. 8vo. Illustrated. 12s. 6d. net.

"... a book the reading of which is the next best thing to taking a holiday... it is so instinct with the beauties and interests of the country that one lives there, while reading it, happily and profitably oblivious to the workaday life."—IDEAL HOME AND GARDENS.

"Like a breath of spring with its promise of brighter days ahead."—CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWSPAPER.

"No one who is living in the country ought to miss this charming book."—GUARDIAN.

CHAPMAN AND HALL