

lapse would constitute a major blow to the prestige of the United States in Iran and, moreover, would surely have serious repercussions in the rest of the Middle East. Because of these circumstances, a departure from the usual criteria of aid-worthiness would seem to be in order, as far as Iran is concerned. Otherwise all economic aid programs for the Middle East may be jeopardized."

In view of the present critical situation in Iran, Dr. Cooke's advice is much to the point. By expelling the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Iran, it is true, has destroyed the very foundations upon which the project was to have been built, namely the revenues from oil. Nor does the extreme nationalism make any rational schemes of social advance possible. Had a large-scale loan or grant been made to Iran in July or August 1950, however, the whole psychological atmosphere might have changed for the better. In Iran's case, where the stakes are particularly great, a loan sufficiently large for successful application might be a wise *political* investment even without any assurance that the money would be well spent.

Another country which Dr. Cooke favors as suitable for a model program along Point Four lines is Jordan. Since Jordan is the least developed of all Middle East countries, any marked improvement there will serve as a spur to other lands. Because of the necessity of absorbing several hundred thousand Arab refugees from Israel, Jordan has particularly acute economic problems at present. At the same time, it is one of the Middle East lands with relative tranquility and where land tenure is now well established on a basis of small individual holdings. In view of the fact that Point Four money and trained personnel are limited in quantity, it would be good to concentrate them in small countries where visible improvement in the general living standards could be more easily produced.

Dr. Cooke presents the serious student of Middle East affairs with a detailed and thorough survey of the economic plans and possibilities pointing towards long-range improvements of Middle Eastern living standards.

A Multitude of Grievs & Joys

MY INDIA. By Jim Corbett. New York: Oxford University Press. 163 pp. \$3.

By ARTHUR S. LALL

JIM CORBETT's India is an India at two levels. At one level there are eleven thrilling stories of adventure mostly in the remote foothills of the Himalayas. There are exciting encounters with tigers and leopards and, in most cases, human courage and good fortune prevail so that the ultimate outcome is satisfactory. As a book of adventure stories well told, this volume will be a deservedly popular publication, particularly at a time when tales of human bravery and courage, without the awesome results of these qualities, will make a strong appeal. But India has so long been associated with tiger-shoots that, at this level alone, there is nothing very special about Corbett's book.

"My India," however, is also written at another entirely different level, and it is here that it has uniqueness and special charm. Corbett did not live the life of the average Englishman in India. Apart from the time spent in performing governmental or other functions, the British in India lived in small exclusive colonies. They had little contact with Indians other than those who, by education and disposition, were themselves attracted towards England. The India of the British was the India of the administration and of the commercial world of Bombay and Calcutta. As a consequence, few of them have been able to write about the Indian people with a background of personal experience. Jim Corbett does not fall into this category. Born and reared in the Himalayan foothills, he spent most of his life living with the people of a remote village there. For the years that he lived outside the village, he was employed in a relatively humble capacity at a railway ferry where his life again

brought him into continuous contact with the Indian working man.

With this background, Corbett's India, as might be expected, turns out to be a very different place from the generally accepted idea of the Indian scene. Corbett's picture is not that of events happening to people, but of the underlying drama of the lives of the people. Thus, while on the surface the caste system seems to be operative, underneath there are human situations in which it is continually breaking down—as it does when the high-caste Brahmin priest slips off his sandals and makes obeisance at the deathbed of an untouchable. In a more practical sphere, caste prejudices break down when an untouchable is appointed head man of a gang of workmen drawn mainly from high-caste Brahmins and Kshatryas. Again, India turns out not to be a land inhabited by easy-going, other-worldly people. Corbett finds that there are no drones in a poor man's household in India. Young and old have their allotted task to perform and they do it cheerfully. Every passage of the book is alive with this kind of directness of contact with the life of the people of India. It is much to Corbett's credit that, though he must have been aware of other approaches by the English in India, his own approach remains completely unaffected so that no apology is tendered and no explanation given for what he sees. It is this quality which gives the book its significance as a current document on India. The people with whom Corbett lived display fortitude, charity, and a heroic quality in their daily lives. It is because of these characteristics that we in India see hope in the future.

Corbett is a natural writer. His education has been meager but he
(Continued on page 40)

Arthur S. Lall is the consul general of India in New York City.



Fiction. A week bringing three new novels that seem certain to be widely read and three novels distinguished for their good writing is exceptional enough in the heart of the winter season, but when it comes in mid-August it deserves to be remarked upon. In the wake of two tremendously popular sea stories, "The Caine Mutiny" and "The Cruel Sea," comes "The Distant Shore," Jan de Hartog's amusing and exciting yarn about a Dutch tugboat officer with the British rescue service in World War II (below). "Don Camillo and His Flock" (page 14) is a second volume of Giovanni Guareschi's funny, slightly sentimental tales of battles between a priest and a Communist mayor in a small Italian town. Edgar Mittelholzer's "Children of Kaywana" (page 16) is a lurid but engrossing story of white men and natives in Dutch Guiana. For those who relish fine writing we recommend "The Distant Shore," as well as Patrick O'Brian's beautiful Welsh love story "Testimonies" (page 14) and Richard Kaufmann's "Heaven Pays No Dividends" (page 16), one of the handful of novels to come out of a Germany emerging from her recent, dreadful past.

Crisis of a Salt-water Man

THE DISTANT SHORE. By Jan de Hartog. New York: Harper & Bros. 309 pp. \$3.50.

By HARRISON SMITH

FEW people are aware that during World War II there was an organized service of ocean-going tugs which were dispatched from British harbors to bring in the disabled and blasted ships still afloat. They were called ducks—sitting ducks—waiting helplessly for the submerged hunter. Many of the tugs came from occupied Holland along with their Dutch captains and mates, for most of the British towing fleet had been sent to the bottom. A young Hollander is brought over from Rotterdam in the third year of the war to command the sturdy *Vlieland*. His adventures and the two women he loved during and after the end of the war are the substance of this sometimes incoherent and yet fascinating novel.

The skipper's first momentous discovery was that most of the men in his command, whose life expectancy was less than three months, appeared to be in a state of concealed terror. And with good reason, since their boats were armed with antiquated and utterly useless pom-poms, while the ships they were to rescue were motionless but armed to the teeth. It was the habit of the German command to send a U-boat to a disabled ship and wait for a tug to show up.

His second discovery was that a captain he had known for years was living when ashore with a peaceful and loving girl who took into her tidy flat and bed one tug skipper after the other. When his friend's ship was

sunk by a submarine's guns, the skipper went to console her and inevitably took his place. One day when it was assumed that the skipper had died at sea he returned to find her dwelling peacefully with his successor. Since she had never had two lovers who were alive at the same time, her moral principles were so outraged that she fled to her home in the Hebrides. The skipper was deeply in love with her, but that momentary glimpse of her unconscious infidelity sent him on the picaresque adventures making up the latter half of the novel.

The second girl he met was a

modest English nurse who took charge of him after he was wounded during the invasion of Southern France. His reasons for refusing to fall in love with her for three years are somewhat obscure. A visit to her home, a small-town rectory, convinced him that to possess her he had to marry her—but his permanent mistress was the sea. He fled to the Mediterranean where one of his former mates, who had abandoned illicit smuggling in time to escape a jail sentence, was about to sail on an ancient schooner engaged in diving for sunken treasure. After a nightmare voyage among a crew of fanatic deep sea divers and alcoholics he came to his senses. The skipper, surfeited with adventure, discovered that he wanted marriage and a steady job. At the end of the novel he is a conventional husband and the mate of a Dutch tug sailing soberly about its ordinary affairs.

Mr. de Hartog is a gifted storyteller whose successful Broadway play, "The Fourposter," proves that he has a flair for invention and drama. In "The Distant Shore" he has perhaps had too much to say, like a garrulous sailor who returns to his home-town bar after adventuring around the world. In the opinion of this reader he would have been well advised to bring his novel to an end in the British harbor where it began. The story of the virtuous and lovely mistress of a series of tugboat skippers who ran away when she discovered that her latest lover was still alive is complete in itself, and it has all of the charm and suspense of an admirable wartime comedy.



—Illustration for "The Distant Shore," from the Literary Guild's Wings.