

**SOUTH TO THE POLE: THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE ROSS SEA SECTOR OF ANTARCTICA.** L. B. QUARTERMAIN. *Oxford University Press*. 1967. 10 x 6½ inches. 481 pages, index, selected bibliography, references, maps, illustrations. \$15.00.

Mr. Quartermain has performed an excellent service to historians of polar exploration by gathering together, in an easy-reading book, all activities in the Ross Sea Sector south of New Zealand from the beginning of recorded history to the close of the 1920's. In assembling the material for this book, he has drawn on long years of interest in Antarctic affairs and a direct knowledge of the Ross Sea area acquired in the past decade. His responsibilities as a guardian and restorer of the historic huts in the McMurdo area have given him insight into the great expeditions that were despatched from that area. Most of all, however, his untiring energy in conversing and corresponding with surviving members of the expeditions of the "Heroic Era of Antarctic Exploration" gives this book appeal.

The book is at its finest in this Heroic Era, the Scott and Shackleton Expeditions, and also the most voluminous. These expeditions, even excluding Shackleton's Weddell Sea exploits outside the Ross Sea Sector, cover three-quarters of the book. No part of these expeditions is slighted; and all the side trips, such as that of the Northern Party, come in for full treatment. Only once does Mr. Quartermain assume the role of historian: in his interpretation of the causes of Scott's tragedy. Though I would reduce his two basic reasons — the decision to rely on man-hauling, and inadequacy of rations — to the first, I agree with him that other reasons that have been given for the tragedy are only secondary.

The treatment given to Amundsen's triumphant journey to the Pole is, naturally enough for an English-speaking New Zealander, quite brief; most of the story was taken directly from Amundsen's own account. Part of this may be attributable to the language barrier and part to the paucity of diaries and journals of the Norwegians compared with the British. The author has little praise for Amundsen's critics: "Let us have done with carping criticism of a man who set out to achieve one result and achieved it."

The story of the *Kainan Maru* expedition, although also suffering from lack of references, is more adequately treated than in previous English polar books. Though the hopes of the Japanese for a sensational dash to the Pole never materialized, few polar enthusiasts have had the opportunity before to learn of their trials and tribulations.

The early history of antarctic exploration is somewhat disappointing, and even though the author admits at the very beginning that "any attempt to outline the history of the section in Antarctica south of New Zealand must touch briefly on the gradual unveiling of the southern world," the accounts given to such explorers as Bellingshausen, Wilkes, and Ross are weakened to the point where their efforts can be misinterpreted. The era from Ross to Borchgrevink is documented with the disappointments of would-be explorers. However, no mention is made of the searches in the Arctic for Franklin, which I believe was the prime factor that kept England, at the time the leading polar exploratory nation, from extensive antarctic work.

In the last chapter the author treats of the whaling industry, but far too briefly to tell this tragic story in an adequate manner. Limiting the activities to the Ross Sea Sector and to the period before 1930, he merely touches the edges of the great industry. Increases in the size and speed of the whaling ships gradually cleared the great leviathans from the southern oceans, to the point where now only a few thousand are caught annually.

The lack of good maps is a more serious omission. The scale of the antarctic map in the frontispiece, in error by a factor of about two because of reduction of the original, is entirely inadequate. A good map is available at the end of the book, showing the western side of the Ross Sea Sector, but there is no adequate map of the eastern side. The routes of the many journeys treated in the book are not shown on any maps. The illustrations are well selected but are not always placed in correct sequence: for example, in the middle of the Amundsen chapter, the reader is greeted with "The Hut and Barne Glacier."

Despite these few shortcomings, Mr. Quartermain has given a fine account of the Ross Sea Sector explorations, one which is highly recommended for any polar library.

*A. P. Crary*