

map showing the Northwest Passage is outstanding, but the endpaper maps are inadequate and badly out-of-date.

*The White Road* as it stands has considerable merit, both as a reference book and as an exciting narrative. It throws new, interesting and unusual light on the problems of polar exploration. If Mr. Kirwan can eradicate on the occasion of preparing a second edition the annoying errors and shorten his over-long comma-strewn sentences, the result will be the best book by far on the history of polar exploration.

JIM LOTZ

#### DICTIONARY OF DISCOVERIES

By J. A. LANGNAS. *Preface by J. Salwyn Schapiro. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959. 9¼ x 6 inches, vi + 201 pages. \$5.00.*

Mr. I. A. Langnas has undertaken a commendable task, but he has performed it badly. So many inconsistencies in dates and spellings can be found that no entry should be relied on as being perfectly factual. Whereas it is clear that the selection of whom to include in a limited space must be arbitrary, still the selections and omissions are frequently surprising. Included in the dictionary are not only explorers, but also pioneers, travelers, cartographers, empire builders, and scholars.

Professor Schapiro, who contributed the preface, should have examined the text more closely. To Professor Schapiro, making lands "known to the civilized world" is the meaning of "discovery", with the result that he judges Columbus to be the discoverer of the New World, not the Norsemen. Mr. Langnas has made no such distinction. For example, in the Carl Christian Rafn entry he speaks of a publication that "conclusively proved the discovery of America by the Norsemen, five centuries before Columbus", and the entries for Leif Ericson and Bjarne Herjulfsson also speak of "discovery" by the Norse. Anyway, few now deny that after 1000 A.D. the civilized world knew a good deal about Iceland, Greenland, and the northeastern coast of America.

The proper names of at least seven explorers (Cunninghame-Graham, Saint Isaac Joques, Thorfinn Karlsefni, Sir Francis MacClintock, Sir Robert McClure, Baron Adolf Nordenskiöld, Joseph Bush Tyrrell; which should be Cunninghame-Graham, Jogues, Karlsefni, M'Clintock, M'Clure, Nordenskiöld, and Joseph Burr Tyrrell) for whom entries are made have been misspelled, as well as a dozen or so more names occurring in the text. A few comments on what is said concerning some of the polar explorers may be of interest to readers of *Arctic*.

Those connected with the Northwest Passage are particularly troublesome for Mr. Langnas. Roald Amundsen, he claims, "was the second to manage the Northwest Passage", whereas most school children know that Amundsen was the first to negotiate the entire passage. He credits Sir William Parry, in 1819, with "discovering — after more than 300 years of vain attempts — the Northwest Passage". However, Sir Robert M'Clure, we read, in 1850-4, "completed discovery of the Northwest Passage". How he contrived to do this, when it was already discovered, is difficult to imagine. However, the honour and the reward were M'Clure's. Parry had not discovered a passage, although he did penetrate so far west as to leave the existence of such a route in no reasonable doubt. (Brown, R. N. R. Sir William Edward Parry. *Arctic* 12:104). Confusion is also abundant concerning the Northeast Passage. Amundsen, Mr. Langnas states, set out in 1918 to make this trip, "which failed after two years, as did another attempt in 1922-4". In fact, Amundsen arrived at Nome, Alaska in July 1920 after a successful passage on his initial attempt.

To say of Frederick A. Cook that "the kind of people who bought his old stock continued to believe that he had discovered the North Pole" is inaccurate journalism. In the sentences about Dr. Jean Charcot no mention whatever is made of his many visits to East Greenland and of his important work there. Dr. Hugo Eckener is described as using "heavier-than-air ships", whereas his fame rests

on his successful use of the lighter-than-air dirigible. Sir George Nares did not himself plant the British flag above 83°N., as Mr. Langnas says; this was done by a member of his expedition, Albert Markham, on a sledge trip. It appears from the dates given for the Soviet explorers Sergei and Vladimir Obruchev, that Vladimir was born two years later than his son — a “first” that even the Russians are unlikely to claim. In the sketch of Peary we read “a journey of the *Roosevelt*, 1905-6, brought him to 87°6’N.” This triumph of navigation, if true, would have been a more remarkable feat than the attainment of the pole on foot; actually the ship wintered at Cape Sheridan (82°28’N.). In reading about Sir Hubert Wilkins one gathers that the Canadian Arctic Expedition lasted only from 1913 to 1914, rather than for four years longer.

The biography of Vilhjalmur Stefansson (both of whose names, it is pleasing to note, are spelled correctly) is especially confused. Stefansson’s third expedition, as stated, did indeed reach “the northernmost point of Prince Patrick Island”, but Stefansson also discovered three important islands beyond Prince Patrick Island on a journey to the northeast of about 300 miles. Following this we read that “his ship drifted for 11 months until he was rescued at Wrangel Island”. Stefansson’s ship, the *Karluks*, had foundered in the ice near Wrangel Island near the beginning of the expedition. Some men were rescued there, but Stefansson was not among them, being otherwise occupied. We read further that “in 1921 expeditions under his command explored Alaska and northeastern Siberia”. The Wrangel Island expedition had nothing to do with exploration of Alaska. Its object was to claim for the British crown an island that was unoccupied and that was not then actively claimed by the Soviet Union. That “Stefansson now lives in New York City, where he has founded the Stefansson Library”, will come as a surprise to many of us who had believed that this residence was terminated a decade ago and that his books now form a special collection of the Dartmouth College Library.

The dust-cover of this volume claims that, among other neglected men, “justice is done to a remarkable group of Jewish explorers. . . .” Everyone is pleased to see justice done, but in such a short dictionary it is questionable whether to mention many minor figures of Jewish extraction is a better justice than to omit several important explorers about whom the reader might expect information. Nor is the reader greatly edified to learn of Sven Hedin, a Swedish explorer, that in his retirement

“He became a strong supporter of the Nazis, who paid him the compliment of ignoring his quarter-Jewish origin. In the middle of World War II, while Hitler was exterminating his fellow-Jews, he travelled to Munich to receive an honorary doctorate.”

Many errors in the book could have been avoided by more careful proof-reading, but there remain some important mistakes in fact. As it exists the book is too sketchy and too unreliable to be more than casually useful. *Webster’s Biographical Dictionary* would be a better investment.

ALAN COOKE  
Stefansson Collection

#### THE NEOLITHIC AGE IN EASTERN SIBERIA

By HENRY N. MICHAEL. *Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, Vol. 48, Part 2, 1958; 11¾ x 9½ inches; 108 pages, 7 maps, 100 text figures; paper. \$2.50.*

This excellent monograph surveys all important Soviet archaeological research on the Neolithic period of eastern Siberia to about the year 1950. Its geographical scope is confined to the official administrative territory of “Eastern Siberia”. This includes the region east of the Yenisey River as far as the watershed between the Pacific and Arctic oceans, and from the Mongolian Republic north to the arctic coast. Hence it is not concerned with the Pacific