

Books and Bookmen

THE PACIFIC WAR

"THE GREAT PACIFIC WAR," by Hector C. Bywater (Constable and Co.).

At the present moment, when the great majority of Australians are agitated with the perplexing problems incidental to a successful "Spring meeting," wars and rumors of wars are not likely to cause any immediate concern, even though these wars are to take place in the Pacific. One Australian at least shows serious consideration about a possible conflict in the Pacific. This is Mr. George Marks, who has expressed his decided opinions in a volume entitled, "Watch the Pacific." Now comes a work from an American author, Mr. Hector Bywater.

War in the Pacific is clearly an obsession with both writers, but the most arresting feature is the totally different angle from which they visualise the coming conflict. According to the American author, U.S.A. and Japan will be the two nations involved. Australia he scarcely mentions. Mr. Marks, on the other hand, views the problem with Australia in the foreground.

Though "The Great Pacific War" is only seen by Mr. Bywater in imagination, his work is quite devoid of the romantic atmosphere associated with such fiction. The narrative is a realistic recital written with a great deal of technical accuracy and knowledge of the latest scientific discoveries in warfare. The war begins in 1931, only six years hence, and is preceded by an era of industrial turmoil in Japan that assumes so serious a dimension that the Japanese Government in a desperate expedient to change the angry workers' industrial "Hymn of Revolution" to "Banzai," decides on making war with America. Events move rapidly, and though the United States makes a desperate effort to the point of humiliation, to avoid war, Japan unsheathes the sword.

With customary thoroughness, Japan gains first blood by delivering a smashing blow to the Panama Canal. The effect of this disaster makes it necessary for U.S.A. to send all of her Atlantic vessels round by Cape Horn. Scarcely had America recovered from this shock when there comes the news that the U.S.A. Asiatic squadron has been destroyed by a superior Japanese fleet, and that the Philippine Islands have been captured. And then the tide turns. An elaborate plan to capture the Bonin Islands meets with failure. The Island of Iruk is eventually taken by the Americans, and this victory is the beginning of the end. At the battle of Yap, in which the main battle fleets are engaged, Japan is decidedly beaten, and America is left undisputed champion of the Pacific.