

Reproduced by kind permission of Evensford Productions Limited and  
Pollinger Limited. Copyright © Evensford Productions Limited, 1934.

and I see a stroke made, he perceives also a psychological "signature." He enjoys his cricket in two times—the immediate, and the imaginary; and the thing just done may be to him, and to us who find our way by his magnetic guidance, the term of a permanent individuality. When men have attained the technical glory which we see abounding in modern cricket in its higher levels, then this question of personal values becomes intense. That underlying contest of will which proceeds round the wickets is interpreted to us by Mr. Cardus with all mastery of human nature and prose style. If he continues to add to the said intensity as a spectator apprehends it, I almost feel as though I should never again dare to witness a Test Match. The adventure already involves such a complexity of considerations. One bowls, fields, bats, umpires—all the lot, in the spirit; and yet, as Mr. Cardus shows us, the argument has still other acute passions.

Should this problem of a fascinated spectator keep me away, I must hope that Mr. Cardus will long continue his radiant art, by means of which the best of cricket seems at one's command though the fog blackens round. In *Good Days*, besides character studies of many great players and free discourses on aspects of the game, this summer's Test Matches are fully recorded (Mr. Cardus's recording being, as I have said, always pregnant with significances). Now, the Tests of 1934 must have appeared to many in the light of a bleak topic. When one was watching the opening of Australia's second innings at the Oval, with England reduced to appointing Woolley wicket-keeper (and a great many libels have been uttered on Woolley's *fielding!*), there could be felt round the ring a glumness, an opinion that the sublime was tumbling into the ridiculous. Weaker spirits rebelled, and only the use of a leg-theory attack cheered them up. Of that mood there is no expansion in Mr. Cardus's history. "For my part," he says at the beginning of the book, "I revelled in the Test Matches of 1934, and I shall remember the greatness of them all my life." He is a severe judge of the home side's performances, but his whole work shines with his genius for "getting on with the game."

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

## GIFTS THAT YOUR FRIENDS *choose for themselves*



There are probably few people with whose tastes you are so well acquainted that you can choose gifts for them without a certain amount of misgiving. But everyone reads—if it be only books concerning their particular hobbies and interests. What more ideal gift, then, than a BOOK TOKEN, exchangeable by your friend for the very book he, or she, has been wanting to read—and has hesitated to buy. However much you wish to spend, you can buy one or more BOOK TOKENS to that value.

Prices are:

**3/6 · 5/- · 7/6 · 10/6 & 21/-**

and multiples of these figures, plus 3d. in each case for an attractive little card to bear your greeting, your own name and your friend's.

## BOOK TOKENS

Your bookseller will be pleased to give you full information

## Watkins' Last Journey

Watkins' Last Expedition. By F. Spencer Chapman. (Chatto and Windus. 12s. 6d.)

At the conclusion of the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, led by Gino Watkins in 1931 and so well described by the author of this present book in *Northern Lights*, Watkins had many ambitious plans for the future. He wanted very much to sledge across the South Polar plateau from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea, taking aeroplanes with him, in order to find out if the Antarctica were one continent or two. Failing that he planned that he himself, Rymill and the author should go right round the Arctic circle with kayak and dog-sledge, a journey which would have taken three years or more and which would have been a splendid opportunity for mapping much Arctic territory that had previously been inaccessible and unknown. Unfortunately he found himself up against the one thing which had not troubled him while leading the wild life he loved—money. The Arctic Air Route expedition had cost £13,000, and it seemed likely that either of his new schemes, especially the Antarctic, must cost almost as much or perhaps more. But he was convinced that money would be found: so convinced with regard to the Antarctic scheme that he gave up the Arctic plan, though reluctantly. It turned out that money was not forthcoming at all. After a year of fatiguing disappointment and scheming Watkins managed to raise only £800: and this in such a way that he was really bound to the people who advanced it.

These facts are worth mentioning because they seem to indicate that every circumstance was working against Watkins: it was almost as if the expedition had not to take place. And it is bitterly ironical that, after all his desperate scheming, Watkins should have been drowned almost before the expedition had begun; and still more ironical that he should have been drowned by an accident in a kayak, the navigation and tricks of which he had learnt like a native. The kayak is a long, extremely narrow and light craft, like a slender canoe, into which it is just possible for one man to squeeze himself: it is both a sporting and hunting craft—that is, it is used not only for necessity, but for trick work, for pure amusement. The greatest of kayak tricks, though a necessary one, is the roll, by which it is possible for the navigator to turn clean over in the water and come up again without upsetting himself or the craft. Watkins was extremely proficient at this, and so capable in a kayak that he almost always hunted alone. How he came to drown is a mystery. For some reason, perhaps because of superficial newspaper reports, we had gained the impression that he was drowned while actually rolling a kayak. But there is no proof of this. Only the simple fact remains: that he was killed almost before this expedition, like his own life, had begun.

And his death, it seems to me, has taken something away from this book. After his death the remaining members of the expedition decided, rightly, to go on with their work, and this book is mainly an account of their journeys and surveys in the Angmazsalik district, with remarks on its flowers, birds, people, customs and weather. It is a great tribute to the three men that, though three is the minimum safe number for most Arctic work, and that one of that number had to stay at the base to record the weather, they came back with their work completed. They were very often in danger. Mr. Chapman does not hesitate to say when they were afraid, knowing very well that fear is inseparable from courage; though it is typical of him and his kind that he never mentions when they were courageous. And they were often courageous.

Even so, something is lacking. Indubitably it is the spirit of the man who died; the spirit of which Mr. Augustine Courtauld speaks in his excellent preface:

"He went neither for adventure nor for fame, nor for science, but because he wanted to do what he did. It was the life he loved. If there is little about him in these pages it is because he died so soon. Such is the way with men of his spirit who cannot accept defeat when their plans fail, who ask no help where none is offered."

Reading that, one realizes how hard it must have been to write some part, if not all, of this book. And to say that the book is not only worthy of Watkins, but a tribute and a memorial to him also, is to give it the kind of praise that at least these men will understand.

H. E. BATES.