

## "DARWIN DRAMA"

"This is the story of Darwin," writes the author, Owen Griffiths, at the beginning of "Darwin Drama." "It is a simple story of some of the every-day things which I saw and experienced during my service in and around the romantic frontier post." He has made it the story, not only of places and events well-known to the public, but of men and women whose names most of us have never heard. Darwin itself he describes as a cross between an American Western town, a tropical port of the East Indies, and an ordinary Australian bush town. To this cosmopolitan place went the author on service with the Navy; during his eighteen months there he collected material for his book. Forbidden to keep a diary whilst on active service, he has relied on memories, out of which he has woven a vivid and sometimes exciting picture of eventful days.

With the passing of time, the outlines of history become blurred and incidents which should be remembered are for-

gotten when their first significance is past; for this reason Mr. Griffiths' account of the coming of war to Darwin is valuable.

He conveys in the pages dealing with the first attacks an impression of the tension and apprehension of those days, relieved with touches of the grim humour that comes to the surface when men are up against trouble. The horror of that first air attack, with its sudden tragedy and the bitter aftermath, is told in a direct and personal manner, which makes it the more effective. Mr. Griffiths points out the interesting fact that Darwin was warned of the impending raid by Father Mc-

impending raid by Father McGrath, of the Bathurst Island Mission, who sent a signal to say that a native had seen a number of planes flying towards Darwin. As he himself had not seen the planes, and as there were ten Kittyhawks which had been flying from Darwin to Koe-pang, but which because of adverse weather conditions were returning to the town, the authorities at Darwin assumed that these were the 'planes which had been seen by the natives, and no action was taken. The air raid warning was sounded eighteen minutes after Father McGrath's message had been received, and approximately half a minute before the first bombs were dropped.

"Darwin Drama" is a book full of interest for Australians, most of whom know too little about the town which suffered the direct impact of war which the nation as a whole was spared. Mr. Griffiths has collected interesting data, and has presented it well; his book is a first-hand account of stirring times.

**Darwin Drama.** By Owen Griffiths.  
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—L.M.

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