

Books of Special Interest

A Pioneer Book

UNDER THE NORTH POLE. By SIR HUBERT WILKINS, VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON, and others. New York: Brewer, Warren & Putnam, 1931. \$3.

Reviewed by DAINES BARRINGTON

WE have all seen too much in the last few years of the widespread idea that the work of the explorer consists mainly of heroic showmanship with little or no real aim or purpose. The world today may have that idea of Wilkins's own "Nautilus" expedition.

In a sense that unfortunate attitude has been the fault of the explorers themselves. Most of them have been so dominated by their publicity agents that they hid their lights under bushels and gave the public what it is supposed to want. They said plenty about their thrills and little about their real solid achievements, plenty about what they did and how it felt to do it, and little about what sense there was in doing it.

It was with some misgivings, therefore, that I first saw the book under consideration announced to the public as "a novelty in that it is the first time an explorer's story has been published in advance of the exploration concerned." The statement seemed to indicate that Wilkins could not wait until there was a real excuse for breaking into print.

On the contrary, the book is a real novelty because, as far as I know, it represents the first effort of an explorer and his associates to put out, in advance of the exploration concerned, a dignified, thorough, and well substantiated account of what they hope to accomplish, why they hope to accomplish it, and what real need there is for the job to be done.

It is eminently fitting that Stefansson should have written the first part of the book. It was he who gave Wilkins the idea of using a submarine. He was the first polar authority to preach the use of submarines to the public, and he had troubles aplenty in getting editors to accept his writings on so fantastic an idea. And the whole plan is feasible only if the real north is Stefansson's north rather than Amundsen's.

The controversy between those two men is well worth reviewing at the present time. To the former the Arctic seems vastly maligned—friendly enough, and usable, calling only for common sense and experience on the part of an explorer who wants to be safe. To the latter it was always dangerous and awe-inspiring, calling for grim, defiant heroics. But while Amundsen went so far, in the Norwegian original of his last book, as to call his antagonist an outright liar, both he and his followers seem to have overlooked the fact that the observations made on his two aerial polar expeditions bore out Stefansson's contentions almost completely. Calm weather, much open water, seals at eighty-eight degrees north latitude—these are the very things the Canadian had for years been talking about as making the Arctic safe, among other things, for submarine travel and for an over-ice retreat led by an experienced commander, in the event of an accident.

But Stefansson is honest enough to voice his grave doubts about Wilkins's ship. In his opinion the "Nautilus" cannot dive deeply enough, the under surface of the ice is probably too rough to allow any inverted sliding along it, and the ship's twin screws are fearfully exposed to possible breakage by the ice. But even if there is an accident, the risk is worth taking, for: "Ten thousand years of the bloody history of mankind have accustomed us to thinking that armies and fleets are well lost if governments are sustained and social principles are maintained. But—we are not all as yet reconciled to proportionate sacrifice in the crusades of peaceful knowledge."

Wilkins, in his section on the plans of the expedition, answers his friend and old mentor in exploration. Granted that the "Nautilus" is not everything he wished for, and that he hopes eventually to get the money with which to build a really suitable ship, he still doesn't entirely agree with Stefansson. He thinks that the latter's fears about the under surface of the ice are exaggerated; and the twin screws, sticking out like two sore thumbs, may in themselves be a factor of safety. For if both of a man's thumbs are sore he is much more careful of them than if they were well and out of mind.

His resumé of his own life as an explorer and adventurer is one of the most amazing autobiographical sketches we have ever seen. In the far corners of the world, on one exploratory adventure after another, he gath-

ered the experience and the knowledge to make him eminently fit to undertake his present venture. His account of the aims and the value of the "Nautilus" expedition, amply upheld by the endorsements of several scientific groups, cannot help but convince the layman of what the specialist has known for years: if Wilkins should fail this year, it will not be very long before either he or somebody else will carry out his plan, and the submarine will be widely looked upon as the ideal tool for Arctic exploration and exploitation.

In another twenty years "Under the North Pole" should be highly valued by collectors as one of those rare "pioneer" books. So should "Mathematical Magick," a portion of which is reproduced in the Wilkins book. Here is one of those amazing coincidences that would be dismissed as impossible in the realm of fiction but must here be accepted in the realm of fact. It was not Wilkins, or Stefansson, or Simon Lake, or Jules Verne, who was the father of the idea to explore the north by submarine. It was John Wilkins, bishop of Chester, ancestor of Sir Hubert, writing in 1648. He predicts not only the submarine but the exact use to which his descendant is now planning to put it.

Simon Lake, with a historical chapter on the development of the under ice submarine, Sloane Dananhowe, with a description of the "Nautilus," Professor Sverdrup with an account of what there is to gain from modern polar studies, go to complete this book that is destined not only to take its place as a valuable historical record but to give real sense and meaning to an outstanding expedition as well.

A Nomad's Autobiography

TURI'S BOOK OF LAPPLAND. By JOHAN TURI. New York: Harper & Bros. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CLYDE FISHER

American Museum of Natural History

JOHAN TURI was the first Lapp to write a book about his people. He has always felt that the Lapps cannot explain their life and circumstances because "when a Lapp gets into a room his brains go round. . . .

They're no good unless the wind's blowing in his nose." Yet with the help of his Danish friend, Mrs. Emily Demant Hatt, he has given us a unique and colorful record of these hardy little nomads who inhabit the northern part of Scandinavia. Mrs. Hatt tells us in her illuminating introduction that "this book has lived in Turi's head for many a long year," but at the time of writing "about fifty years had passed since he was first wrapped in a reindeer-calf skin." In their primitive state the Lapps had no written language, and it was only after he grew up that Turi learned to read and write.

In recognition of his literary work, the Swedish government gave Turi a moderate pension, and Dr. Hjalmar Lundbohm built a comfortable cottage for him on the shore of Torne Träsk, a large lake in northern Lappland. Here Turi, now past seventy, lives the year round, fishing and doing a little writing. In 1924, while on an expedition for the American Museum of Natural History, in company with Carveth Wells I visited him at his home. We found him a fine, likable person, and very hospitable. We stayed to dine with him on dried reindeer meat, smoked with dwarf juniper.

Turi's story is frank, naive, and convincing—unspoiled by civilization. It deals with the origin of the Lapps, their traditions and superstitions, their migrations, reindeer culture, care of children, treatment of various diseases, courting and marriage customs, Lapp songs, and primitive Lapp astronomy. Their legends remind us of those of the American Indian. There is the following little tale about the loon's feet: "When God had made all the birds and had not remembered to give the loon any feet, he said: 'There, you take those gray feet.' But the loon didn't like gray feet, he wanted to have red feet, like the geese, and when he didn't get them he flew off, saying: 'I'm handsome enough in other ways, but I haven't got any feet!' But as he flew away, God threw the feet after him. And that's why the loon's feet are so far behind."

In the chapter about "Lapp doctoring" Turi gives an original and heroic cure for headache: "There is one method of curing a headache—you pull the hair, but you must only take a few hairs on the top of the head, and then you pull them suddenly, so that the skin loosens where it was stuck (to the skull), so that the blood can run in its usual channel." And, "During the Lapp

migrations and while they are watching reindeer, it often happens that a woman bears a child, and then there is nothing to do but to tuck it into her tunic and go on till she reaches the tents. . . . And if the woman does not get frozen then she will be well again in a week's time."

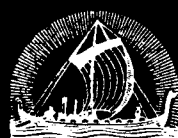
In these nervous, over-civilized days, after reading "Turi's Book of Lappland" we feel the fresh winds of the Arctic tundra blowing in our noses, and for the moment wish we might be nomad Lapps following our reindeer on migration. The Lapps live on the same earth as we do, but their life is so different from ours that it might well be on another planet. Yet they are content and pity the civilized man, much as the American Indian does. Hardships met and overcome daily soon lose their terrors and become part of the routine of living. And I feel sure that no Lapp would willingly exchange his harsh circumstances for the luxuries of civilization.

Good Yarns

FOLK TALES OF ALL NATIONS. Edited by F. H. LEE. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1930. \$3.

This is a book which is worth its moderate price to anyone who is interested in yarns for their own sake. The publisher's blurb announces it as "a superb collection of stories," whereas it is a tolerably good collection; as "a bumper book of delight for casual reading," whereas it is a fair bet that it will mildly dispel the ennui of idle hours; and as "an invaluable book for libraries, private or public," which is not even remotely true. It has no scientific value as a guide to folk tales, although it might serve to awaken an imaginative interest in this field; it has no significant organization, either as to the levels of culture represented by the various groups of tales or their distribution in time and space, but is content with an awkwardly alphabetical grouping in which "nations" and geographical areas figure indiscriminated; its introductory notes are essentially copyright acknowledgments, and in no sense painstaking or enlightening—indeed, in instances, quite the reverse. As the stories are chosen with an eye to the mind's relaxation, and the pages are readably printed, the volume is well worth its three dollars to all who like yarns with a folk-lore turn to them.

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CROCE
HANS
DELBRUCK
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MEN AND FORCES OF OUR TIME

by Valeriu Marcu

With his life of Lenin, three years ago, this young European joined the ranks of first-rate minds who are writing on thought-provoking subjects. His new book shows him to be a man-of-affairs who is also a philosopher. Eden and Cedar Paul, the translators, say of him: "Though Marcu is unique, there is in his writing a curious mingling of the flavors of Montaigne and Strachey—which means that Marcu is a great writer, and not just a man of the fleeting moment." \$2.50

18 East 48th St. THE VIKING PRESS New York City

NEW **MACMILLAN** BOOKS**THE NIGHT'S CANDLES**By **RENÉ ROY**

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STEPHEN LEACOCK

DODD, MEAD & CO., 449 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK

Points of View**Cool Coolidge**To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

If fingers could protrude from the grave, and write words, we should expect them to write such death-chilling sentences as drip from the pen, or icicle, of Calvin Coolidge, and freeze as they drip. Day by day his little pieces (of ice) cool the pages of many newspapers, like stalagmites and stalactites. In view of the various evils that afflict the country, it is almost inconceivable that Mr. Coolidge can write day in and day out, week in and week out, without ever once getting "hot under the collar." There is one prize that no one will ever win—a prize offered to any one who has ever seen a piece by Calvin Coolidge written in a spirit of righteous wrath and indignation. The country would draw a big breath of relief if Coolidge would only burst out once with, "You infernal scoundrel, I'll break every bone in your body!"

I imagine that Mr. Coolidge away inside is not so very much different from other people. My private opinion—being a nobody, I can utter in public my private opinions—is that Mr. Coolidge's unimpassioned style is due to the position that he regards himself as occupying in the public estimation. Having been very much glorified as President, he thinks that any word of his that has not been weighed and measured and freed from all fire and explosive material, will set the country in flames, or blow it up. The people wait upon his words, and look to him as to a teacher, leader, and law-giver. Hence he must be careful, very careful, what he says.

He says: "Much attention, very properly, has been given to the damage from lack of rain." "Very properly": O Mars and Jupiter Tonans!

He laments crime, but his chief concern seems to be that crime costs the country \$7,500,000,000 a year (hope I got all the noughts in). Why is it he can't write a piece without mentioning dollars? Is it a "complex"?

Yours very truly,

CHARLES HOOPER.

Cœur d'Alene, Idaho.

John Bunyan?To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

In the issue of the *Review* for January 31, I find the query of Mr. J. M. Matthews in regard to the quotation, as given by him, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

For many years the quotation has lingered in my memory as from John Bunyan who, looking from the window, saw a drunken man, and said "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bunyan."

Will you kindly let the *Review* tell us which, if either, is correct?

M. E. TORRENCE.

Washington, D. C.

As to OsteopathyTo the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

I realize that there are many kinds of book reviews. Some reviewers write about the books, some write about the authors, some write in general about the subject, some just write.

Why must Bernard Sachs, M.D. (*Saturday Review of Literature*, April 25, 1931, p. 771), drag into his review of "Body, Mind, and Spirit" the wholly irrelevant statement that "the medical profession is set against the unwarranted and almost absurd claims of osteopaths"?

The pages of the *Saturday Review of Literature* are not the place to drag in a battle of words about systems of therapy. However, since the thing has begun, let us ask what are the "almost absurd claims of osteopathy?" and how absurd are they? The doctor will agree with us as to the importance of proper diet, clothing, working conditions, rest, mental attitudes, hygienic and sanitary conditions. He will agree that age, sex, and climate play their part. What he objects to is that, giving due consideration to these things, we claim that the living body has within it the power to maintain its own health so long as it is mechanically in right adjustment.

I have just been reading the address of Dr. Robert D. Osgood, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery in the Harvard University Medical School and one of the best known physicians in the world, which he made before the committee on orthopedics and body mechanics of President Hoover's Conference on Child Health and Protection on February 19. He said that body mechanics

"may be defined as the mechanical correlation of the various systems of the body with special reference to the skeletal, muscular, and visceral systems." It is a more inclusive and more descriptive term than "posture," he said.

Dr. Osgood talked at considerable length, showing that the committee had found over and over again that poor functional health had changed to good when there was a change from poor to good body mechanics, "especially in those instances in which there have appeared to be no other factors which could fairly have been held responsible."

Body mechanics form one of the chief foundations of osteopathic therapy. Is Dr. Sachs correct then in saying that "the medical profession is set against" such things? It is to be feared that he is, for Dr. Osgood showed that "the average general practitioner has been insufficiently informed and is consequently not vitally interested in the details of body mechanics."

His committee had sent a thousand questionnaires to a selected group of doctors specializing in diseases of children. When these doctors were asked about examining their patients for poor body mechanics in relation to poor health and also instructing such patients, "about sixty per cent answered that they did not feel personally able to give such instruction." Not only that, but "twelve per cent (120 out of 1000) replied that there was no one in their community whom they considered capable of giving the desired instruction." As to the importance of such instruction, 40 per cent believe it of "considerable" and 55 per cent of "a great deal" of importance.

There are many of your readers who recognize the fact stated by Dr. Sachs that "the medical profession is set against" the truths of osteopathy, but that is no credit to the profession—nor has it any place in this book review.

RAY G. HULBERT, D.O.

Chicago.

Wordsworth's SonnetTo the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

There is an interesting anticipation of images and phrases of "Scorn not the Sonnet" in an eighteenth century poem, "Epistles," by Michael Wodhull (1710-1816). This poet mentions the lyre of "Sulmo's gentle bard" and adds (Book I, Epistle 1, 64-5, "Poems," 1804, p. 158):

*Though Milton's trumpet loud and clear
Oft vibrates on the raptur'd ear,
Gentler accompaniments sound,
Nor is the lute of Waller lost,
In his superior magic drown'd.*

A few lines farther on he writes:

*Great Milton stemn'd with noble rage
The torrent of a barbarous age;
And at his close of Life, when Time
Had damp'd the fire of Poesy.*

Echoes of the lines on Spenser also occur (Book I, Epistle vii, 203-6, 158):

*Full many are the paths which lead
Thro' Life's perplexing wilderness;
The creeping bramble, noisome weed,
Here darken an uncultur'd scene.*

And lines 219-20 (p. 159) where the pilgrim

*... cheerfully pursues his way
O'er rugged hills and shelving dales.*

Also (Book I, Epistle ii, 37-38, p. 178):

*As one bewilder'd in profoundest night,
Who faintly kens some vapour's dancing
light,
At random led.*

Woodhull (a well-known book collector and the first translator into English of the works of Euripides) issued his poems in 1772, 1798, and 1804, so it is not impossible that Wordsworth may have seen and unconsciously incorporated these phrases when he composed his sonnet on the sonnet.

MARION H. ADDINGTON.

The American Tagore Association, of which Mr. William H. Woodin, of 30 Church Street, New York, is president, has been formed for the purpose of extending coöperation to Dr. Tagore in his educational work. The poet and educator was seventy years old on May 8th, and has composed a "birthday message" to America which the association is distributing.