

for us, as also the Supreme Courts of the British Dominions. So closely, for example, does the Australian Court follow ours that even our decisions are not infrequently used by it as precedents.

These comments do not mean that the book is not interesting and often highly suggestive. It is, even though many may not agree with the author's insistence that the Legislature, and the Executive possibly, should have final review of laws instead of the Court. His own cure for what he believes the evils of Court action is

that the "veto," as he calls it, of the Court could be over-ridden by Congress as the Presidential veto may be. He also suggests that it might be well to have laymen on the bench, which is a little odd in view of his repeated criticism of Marshall for the inadequacy of his legal training and practice. However, here one may find the New Deal ideas as to the Court set forth in readable and popular form and on the whole with accuracy. Of the many books of recent years attacking the Court it is the easiest I know for the layman to read.

Evocation of Life and Living

AN ACTOR'S DAUGHTER. By Aline Bernstein. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1941. 228 pp. \$2.

Reviewed by MARGARET BREUNING

TRUTH, as has been observed, is often stranger than fiction; it is, also, at times more interesting. When an "Actor's Daughter," a veridical autobiography, is compared with the popular fictional autobiographies which reach from cradle to grave in thousands of words and exhausting detail, this little volume goes to the head of the class in its power to absorb the reader's attention. It is not so much the "Remembrance of Things Past" as it is an evocation of life and living, a kaleidoscopic stream of picturesque incidents involving remarkable personalities, shot through with the emotional response of the author to people and events which gives warmth and color to the flowing narrative. An ability to give a swift characterization, a veritable gift for apt similes, recreates this world of gas lights, clapping horses' hooves on the cobbles, elegant ladies who knew how to hold up their trains becomingly as they minced across the street—a New York hardly more than of yesterday.

We are made to see Aunt Mamie, sitting at the head of her boarding house table ladling out soup or carving, her diamonds flashing with every movement; Nana with her luxurious costumes of velvets and silks and her sparkling jewels—Nana who was said to "always have too much on or too little"; tables groaning with rich foods and the merry company who sat around these gargantuan dinners every night. Of course, much of the background of the child's life was the theatre, for her father was an actor, who wakened her to Shakespeare. Not only was she familiar with backstage and dressing rooms, the smell of grease paint and the glare of footlights, but the whole family accompanied the father when he secured an en-

gagement in London, where the formality of living and staid conventions of a cousin's house as well as the astonishment of the clipped English speech made a deep impression. A later road tour in America of one-night stands was not so luxurious or so profitable, yet it, too, left an indelible mark on the impressionable child.

Adversity as well as luxury comes into the story, for the ups and downs of an actor's life formed an uneven basis for the household. Finally, the mother opened a boarding house, which, if not on quite the same scale of magnificence as Aunt Mamie's, was still a profitable undertaking for the family budget, if an overwhelmingly exhaustive strain for the mother. Pictures, music, intellectual stimulation of many kinds entered into the mosaic of the young girl's life, but not in any formal pattern of conventional education. Loyalty to family, quick sympathies, and deep humanity, also, entered into this life-pattern, so that while the curtain rises on the spectacular happening of being born on the present site of Macy's store, the last curtain drops on an untheatrical, yet moving episode in a young girl's life, the quiet assumption of duties and responsibilities for those dear to her—the pack which someone had prophesied would always be on her back.



Louise Dahl-Wolfe

Aline Bernstein

Eskimo Woman

LAND OF THE GOOD SHADOWS.
By Heluiz Chandler Washburne and
Anauta. New York: The John Day
Co. 1940. 329 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by MARIE AHNIGHTO PEARY

HERE is an absorbing story, all the more fascinating because it is true; a story that should appeal not only to readers of Arctic literature but, as a human document, to all those who admire a brave heart and a gallant spirit.

Anauta is an Eskimo woman from Baffin Land and her story brings out strikingly the fact that one cannot generalize about the Eskimos. An Eskimo's tribe and habitat determine his characteristics and customs and there are few of these which the entire race has in common. To one familiar from childhood with the Eskimos of North Greenland, practically the entire account of Anauta's childhood and upbringing in Baffin Land was a complete revelation. Even her own language, with the exception of a few words here and there, was strange.

Anauta was named for a brave hunter who died the night she was born and because his spirit needed a safe haven into which to retreat, the newborn babe, in spite of her sex, was given his name and thenceforth trained to take his place as a hunter and trapper for the tribe. Mrs. Washburne has done an outstandingly excellent piece of work in setting down the story from the time of Anauta's earliest recollections until the present. She must have lived the events in her own imagination and steeped herself in the traditions of the Eskimos in order to produce such a smoothly written narrative, told with the greatest understanding and sympathy and insight.

In contrast to the kindly and genuine life led by the Eskimos, our treasured civilization does not show up very well. Anauta had never seen money nor had she any idea of its use. She had never seen electricity or schools or churches; yet before long she was supporting her children and herself, part of the time working on a factory assembly line.

Today when life seems more than ordinarily difficult, when it is almost impossible to adjust ourselves to changing conditions and the shattering of ideals and illusions, it will give courage to many to read the story of this simple Eskimo woman with her unspoiled culture and the plucky way in which she uprooted herself from her old life and managed to find herself a new one.

Torches Awaiting Fire

HUDSON STRODE

"BUT all your great poetry is about wars you have lost," Field Marshall Goering protested to a Finnish friend of mine. The statement is not without some truth in regard to Finnish verse produced within the last hundred years. And except for oral folk poetry there was really no Finnish literature whatever before 1835 when Elias Lönnrot published a part of the "Kalevala," the national epic, from which Longfellow took his verse form for "Hiawatha." But beginning in 1835 it was her literature—even though the work of the patriot Runeberg was done in the Swedish language—that influenced Finland's awakening to a national consciousness and finally culminated in her independence as a democratic state. Caught between Sweden and Russia and used as a buffer for their quarrels for some seven centuries, Finland had had little encouragement or inclination to produce a written literature. And only in the decade between 1860 and 1870 when the liberal Czar Alexander II permitted Finland free breathing, did modern Finnish literature have its birth in the work of Aleksis Kivi.

When Kivi died from want and that form of madness called melancholia, the national and personal mourners had been few. Now he is accorded the place in Finnish literature that Spain gives to Cervantes and France to Molière.

Although the Finns had spurned Kivi's masterpiece "Seven Brothers" when it first appeared, today it is a kind of Finnish testament. The novel is a red-blooded book, broad of shoulder and lusty of lung, as honest and earthy as a peasant's sweat, resoundingly humorous, and yet tinged with mystical speculations and nostalgic beauty. It is a patriotic book, too, full of adoration for the land and the people who inhabit it.

Kivi possessed in rich measure that special quality of writing that is known as *gusto*—that quality which Rabelais had and which Shakespeare gives to Falstaff. He is often called the Henry Fielding of Finland, and "The Seven Brothers" is the Finnish "Tom Jones," as in another sense it has been called Finland's "Huckleberry Finn." But whereas Mark Twain was a superlative humorist, Kivi was also a poet, with compelling accents in his overtones. To me, the funniest scenes in Kivi are funnier than any scenes in Mark Twain.

Among the Northern Countries today only the contemporary literature

of Norway may be said to surpass that of Finland and that is because of towering figures like Sigrid Undset, Olaf Duun, and Knut Hamsun. To me, there is far more vitality and refreshment and promise in Finnish literature than in present day Swedish or Danish literature.

Throughout Scandinavia the Finnish writers are already well-known, because of a sympathy of climate and problems. As the Finns today read with avidity and understand easily present-day American novels, so the Finnish literature will soon be more easily understood by Americans, because of that common denominator—modern civilization—which has penetrated with amazing rapidity into the remotest backwoods of Finland.

It is to be regretted that foreign translations of Finland's authors are so few. Although the best books of England and America, as well as those of France, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries, are to be procured in Finnish, there is hardly more than a one-foot shelf of Finnish books in English. Almost all of these are done by one man, Alex Matson. Because Matson is such a painstaking artist in his translation, a stack of Finnish successes crying out for English translation are delayed—he has not had time to get to them. Conversely, while virtually every well-read Finn knows not only American classics but Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, and the late Thomas Wolfe, only a handful of Americans know Sillanpää and Seppänen, who have been translated, and fewer know Mika Waltari (invariably a best-seller among the younger Finns) except for having read him in German or French.

Sigrid Undset had sent Mr. Waltari her love by me, and I went to have coffee with him at his apartment in

Töölö, the shining new residential section of Helsinki that spreads a square mile between the parliament building and the sport stadium. We sat talking of the lack of translators. "It would be well-nigh impossible for one not born to and saturated with Finnish to make a translation that retained the initial power of our language," Waltari said. "Besides, to an alien, apart from the pungent infusion of dialect and homespun, Finnish is considered one of the most difficult of tongues."

IT was a rare pleasure to be with a young author who made enough on his writings to have as choice a modern apartment as Waltari's. Completely without pretentiousness, the place had just simple charm and simple comfort, but the pictures and vases and rugs had been selected with infallible taste and without stint on price. Except to the shrewd observer there was nothing obviously Finnish about the furnishings, unless it was in the little daughter's playroom. But Waltari himself was decidedly Finnish in type, strongly built, pale-complexioned, soft-voiced, and economic in his movement. Except for his eyes, he gave an impression of indolence. Yet he wrote steadily from nine to five, with an hour off for lunch, in summer. As prolific as Daniel Defoe or H. G. Wells, he was yet more versatile than either of those powerhouses. At seventeen he had published a volume of poetry, and at twenty his first novel, "The Great Illusion." He wrote not only poetry and novels but novelettes, short stories, murder mysteries, plays, and cinema scripts. He was more or less a perennial prizewinner in one field or another. At the age of thirty-two he had twenty-odd volumes to his credit, eight of them novels. And up to 1937 he had held a salaried job as editor, so that his writing had been perforce an avocation.

I was considering the boundless fertility of the Finns when I recalled that Sillanpää, the greatest writer of them all, sometimes takes four or five years to do a shortish novel. While the young Mika Waltari produced one child and lots of books, the aging Sillanpää had lots of children but had produced only a few books.

"But Sillanpää," said Waltari, "has long periods when it seems impossible for him to write a line. And he revises as much as Hemingway is reported to do."

"Hemingway himself told me he wrote the last page of 'A Farewell to Arms' seventy-six times," I said.

Waltari raised a blond eyebrow slightly and then shook his head almost wistfully. To him invention comes easy, and when he writes he rarely revises a line. "By the way," he said, "I think

