

The Story of Finland

FINLAND FOREVER. By Hudson Strode. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1941. 443 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by GÖSTA LARRSON

THIS is a fascinating and comprehensive book about a gallant people in peace and war, a people who "seem to understand that spirit is fundamentally life's only substance and reality." With the chapter on Finnish history we are plunged into an absorbing account which mounts in interest as we read of the Russification of Finland under the last Czar. Throughout the book are scattered interesting word portraits of great Finns—composers, athletes, poets, and literary men. Unforgettable is the moving description of the courageous Kuusjärvi people. Yet the book offers lighter touches as well: consider, for example, the piquant episode of the mistress of Queen Wilhelmina's husband.

Mr. Strode gives a good account of the remarkable progress in agriculture, industry and export trade Finland made after 1919, also of the upward surge in living standards caused by the coöperatives, with the accompanying exhilarating effect on the people's morale. A special poignancy is lent to the story by our fore-knowledge that this peaceful land will in a few months be brutally attacked by the Soviet hordes. And we are constantly reminded of the close proximity of Russia; there's that interesting visit to "The Fateful Southeast" with its rotting summer residences of Russian noblemen murdered in the Revolution. Now, from watchtowers on the Russian side of the boundary line, silent sentinels stand on guard.

Toward the end of the book we are among the keen, rugged and hard-working Finns as the news comes that



Hudson Strode

Hitler has seized Danzig and England has declared war on Germany. Having read thus far about a sane and sound people, the whipped-up Pravda stories sound grimly funny as they tell of the "sad plight" of the Finnish proletariat trampled underfoot, if you please, by the "war-mongering rulers." Hollow and pitiful seems the faked incident used by Molotov as an excuse for the attack on the Finnish Republic.

The Russo-Finnish war provides a stirring climax to this record. But when the author says that none of the three sister Northern countries dared stir to aid the fourth, we must take issue with him, for Leland Stowe's recent accusation against Sweden has roused fierce controversy on this very point. The calm strategy of the Swedish government provided for Finland a maximum of possible help. Facts disclose that by staying neutral officially, Sweden was able to send enormous quantities of arms, munitions and food-

stuffs to the embattled Finns. By using the strategy of official neutrality, Sweden was able to help the Finns with more than \$85,000,000 worth of material, 8,500 fully equipped volunteers, 200 doctors, 400 nurses, and 1,200 laborers to help with Finland's defense work. Mr. Strode says rightly that "it is possible that Sweden's official neutrality saved not only Sweden but Finland from destruction." Finland is still an independent nation; it has suffered grievously, but its population is not destroyed, and land ceded to an enemy—might be ceded back some day.

A knockout revelation comes in the afterword as one dazedly reads that "there was no Mannerheim Line."

The book is not entirely without flaws, however. Some of the descriptions are a little long-drawn and tiresome, and too much trivial detail makes the volume longer than necessary. Yet, that is a minor thing. Mr. Strode has written an inspiring book about an heroic people caught by destiny at a crucial moment of its nation's history.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

IF LITERARY CHARACTERS ADVERTISED

Let us suppose for a moment or two that certain famous literary characters have decided (and with what appropriateness!) to avail themselves of the advertising columns of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. Printed below are ten unclassified ads, some of which were actually run by fictional figures and some of which merely might have been. The names of the advertisers have been omitted, just to make it harder, but can you identify them anyhow? Allowing 5 points for each one correctly named, and another 5 if you recall the story in which each appeared, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 13.

- DO YOU WANT someone to handle your business? Someone to take the dog for a run? Someone to assassinate your aunt? I will do whatever job you have to offer provided it has nothing to do with fish. 1
- FOND—Horse on Saturday morning owner can get him by applying at stable behind Mr. Schofield. You will have to prove he is your horse he is white with kind of brown specks and workout tale. 2
- LOST—A diamond necklace, somewhere between the minister's palace and the Rue des Martyrs, after the ball last Monday. Reward. 3
- LUMBER—The finest in Atlanta at bargain rates. Office and mill located on Peachtree road. 4
- MY PATENT SMALL CLOTHES, trousers with a pneumatic inflatable seat, are a boon to those whose occupation is sedentary, a comfort to all travelers, indispensable to first nighters. 5
- OUR SHOP IS HAUNTED by the ghosts of all great literature in hosts; we sell no fakes or trashes. Lovers of books are welcome here, no clerks will babble in your ear, please smoke—but don't drop ashes. 6
- REWARD OFFERED for information leading to the arrest of a tall man with a black patch over his eye who robbed me of 327 guineas. Apply at my public-house in Battlebridge. 7
- SHAKESPEREAN REVIVAL!!! Wonderful attraction! For one night only! The world renowned tragedians, David Garrick the younger and Edmund Kean the elder, in The Balcony Scene in Romeo and Juliet!!! 8
- TONIGHT ONLY! "East Lynne." To be presented at the Cotton Blossom Floating Palace Theatre. 1,000 Seats! 10 Piece Band! A Luxurious Floating Theatre within an Unrivalled Floating Palace! 9
- WOMEN OF ATHENS, Sparta, Thebes, and Corinth! An important mass meeting will be held at dawn tomorrow in front of the temple of Pallas, at which time a plan to end the present war will be presented. 10

English Testament

ENGLAND'S HOUR. By Vera Brittain.
New York: The Macmillan Company. 1941. 230 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

MISS BRITTAIN has done another deeply moving book. It is not, of course, as great as her "Testament of Youth," which remains one of the three or four outstanding books of the first World War. That was the intimate picture of her own life in the maelstrom of that tragedy with its heartbreaking suffering and losses. In this new book she gives us the day by day picture of London and England from the beginning of the war. Others in plenty have written similar accounts of how England has been bearing up under the most horrible and cruel and inexcusable of assaults, but I have found no other that has brought it home to me and stirred me as much. Perhaps this is partly because I was in England at the outbreak of this war and I can therefore visualize some of the things Miss Brittain pictures as others cannot. At any rate, I found my eyes suspiciously moist several times, notably in her description of her parting from her two children when she sent them via Canada to the United States for safety. It would take a very hard-boiled person indeed to read her chapter and remain unmoved. I stood in several stations in London when they began evacuating the children at the outbreak of the war, and I thought I could imagine what it meant to the weeping mothers whom I saw bidding their children farewell.

But the value of this volume lies not merely in the earnestness and sincerity and the descriptive powers of the author. It is again a revelation of her own fine, noble, generously humane, and wise personality. There is no bitterness in the book, though she is deeply tempted to bitterness when she writes of the destruction of so much of the beauty and the history of England. "Tears," she writes, "come into my eyes when I recall the grotesque transformation of lovely St. Clement Danes, the windowless arches of Westminster Hall, the roofless shell of Our Lady of Victories, the ugly fire-scarred ruin that was Turner's House in Cheyne Walk." But she is big enough to say: "When I look at the damaged face of Westminster Abbey, or the blackened shell of St. James's Church, Piccadilly, I am left with only the greater desire that our bombs may spare the Cathedral of Cologne and the Duomo in Florence. Beauty and history, whatever their locality, are the jewels of human civilization." When

she wrote this book thirty-two London churches, among them a number of Wren's masterpieces had been wholly or partially destroyed, forty-seven seriously damaged, many more injured and defaced. With them England has lost "not dead monuments, but a part of the centuries which have gone to make England herself." She quotes one writer as saying that that can never be forgiven. She herself finds a different answer:

I believe that we must indeed forgive; that if we do not, we shall sacrifice an essential part of our national quality.

If Miss Brittain's spirit does not control the next peace it will be lost as surely as the last was lost. But it is not only in her own words and her own attitude that this book brings us hope and cheer and faith; what she records of the heroism, the coolness, and calmness of all England under fire raises one's faith indeed, for here is the spirit triumphant over suffering, misery, wickedness, injustice, and death itself. Never was there a more wonderful illustration of what the human spirit is capable, never a more complete demonstration that a better way of life can be achieved if only human beings would set themselves to accomplishing it with the same glorious heroism and unflinching determination to survive victorious which marks England at bay. Miss Brittain sees that very clearly, for when she was in her twenties she pleaded with her own people for a peace of justice and understanding in the spirit of Christ.

I hope Miss Brittain's touching and beautiful book finds its way into every library as the monument for generations to come of the very finest side of England, the England that come what may will live on.



From "Their Finest Hour: First-Hand Narratives of the War in England." (Harcourt, Brace & Co.)
"Night Fighter"

Parson's Daughter

"THERE'S ROSEMARY . . . THERE'S RUE. . . ." By Winifred Fortescue.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1941
428 pp., with index. \$3.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

WINIFRED BEECH was the eldest daughter of a country parson in Suffolk, England. Her life, told here with charm, modesty, humor, and dignity, is a curious illustration of the part played by chance in human affairs. She was one of a large family: had beauty, a certain talent for writing, and gave pleasure by her very bad recitations to village rustics. Her father had an old Oxford friend who was vicar of Woodstock, near Oxford, and chaplain to the Duke of Marlborough. He was ill, asked Beech to take his place, and so Mr. and Mrs. Beech, who had a son at Oxford, went to Woodstock with Winifred, who was then seventeen years old. There Winifred made friends with the Duchess, née Consuelo Vanderbilt, and knowing her father's financial worries, consulted her about a career—and Consuelo advised the stage and helped her young friend to get a start.

The charm of Winifred Beech was evidently great; even the formidable Mrs. Pat Campbell fell before it; and while she was never a star, Winifred was leading lady on tour. Then, when she was twenty-five, she met John Fortescue, Librarian of Windsor Castle, author of the great official history of the British Army. Fortescue was over fifty, a confirmed bachelor, and a man of maddeningly regular habits which included leaping out of bed every morning at 6:30. He loved Winifred, was gallant, silent, and after three years of friendship, told her they had better part. She, who had loved him from the day of their first meeting, did not hide her bitter disappointment; the strangely matched pair married and had a wedded life of exceptional bliss, in spite of poverty, ill-health, and a good deal of incompatibility. These are the bones of this fascinating and beautiful record of a devoted life. Lady Fortescue has a rare gift for intimate writing; she never says too much, and she establishes a friendship with her readers which justifies her invitation to them to share her happiness and her sorrow.

The book is full of stories of the great and the well-known. Here the curious reader can learn how Queen Mary took the part of a grasshopper in a charade portraying the entrance to Noah's Ark; how round the bracket of the alabaster Venus in Thomas Hardy's house hung a card saying