

Her Answer to Life Was Always Yes

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Friend's Memoir, by Joseph P. Lash (*Doubleday*, 374 pp. \$4.95), recalls with affection a thirty-year association with an extraordinary First Lady. Dore Schary wrote the play "Sunrise at Campobello."

By DORE SCHARY

WE HAVE lived in the days of giants, and one of them was Eleanor Roosevelt. Two years after her death, Joseph P. Lash has written a memoir of his friendship with this incredible lady.

Mr. Lash brings good equipment to this labor of love. He has kept voluminous personal records; he has researched his subject with scholarly thoroughness. Only once or twice does his affection lapse into sugary sentimentality. And out of this comes a new glimpse of Mrs. R.—new at least to those who did not know her well. We see her as a tough-fibered woman, compassionate but resolute; a woman who was not intimidated by threats nor susceptible to flattery.

This book, which deals in great measure with the years in the 1930s when Mr. Lash first formed his friendship with Mrs. Roosevelt, also reveals with freshness and disarming candor how many young liberals were beguiled by the Communist party line and by some Com-

munists. It sets the record straight on the strange road traveled by the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union, and for his pains to tell the truth, Mr. Lash emerges a taller man.

There are fascinating views of life in the White House and at Hyde Park, and we are impressed again and again with the portraits of FDR and Mrs. R. at work. A cast of characters of extraordinary dimensions parades through the pages: Louis Howe, Sara Roosevelt, the Roosevelt children, Henry Morgenthau, Winston Churchill, Herbert Lehman, Harry Hopkins, Lord Halifax, Bernard Baruch, and scores of others who evoke the dramatic era of the Roosevelts are all here, some of them in anecdotes previously reported, others in new scenes, unfamiliar at least to this reviewer, who has read fairly extensively on the subject.

The conflicts within the official family of the Administration are related quite frankly. Of particular interest are the references to the friction provided by Hopkins's close relationship to FDR, a friction enjoyable to Harold Ickes but vexing to Mrs. R.

Vividly the book recalls the commitment of this extraordinary First Lady to the world around her. She found Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* "compelling" reading, "because the people, the everlasting mixture of good and bad, of coarseness and sensitiveness, of cruelty and gentleness, are real." When it was suggested that she not praise the book publicly because it might be taken as support for the book's theme "that three days of full, perfect living by the two lovers were worth more than a lifetime of half-living," Mrs. Roosevelt disagreed. She felt that "only those who love really live, in spite of the pain loving so often brings."

She was, in Mr. Lash's words, "a 'yea' rather than a 'no-sayer' to life." Summarizing an address to students at Todhunter, she said, "Don't dry up by inaction. . . . but go out and do things; learn new things and see new things with your own eyes. Don't believe what somebody else tells you, but know things yourself by your own contacts with life."

This philosophy she lived conclusively. During her staggering journeys to all corners of the earth, her endless criss crossing of this country, her searching eyes and heart felt any pulse she could reach.

The multiplicity of her interests are sketched in with just enough detail to

FRAZER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1111

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1111 will be found in the next issue.

ZGPHU NHHUBCKHU Z MFPNMF

YNDMHUUVDO; VA ZKEZSU

NHAPNOU AD AFH YDVOA

XNDB EFVMF VA UHA DPA.

BDOAV

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1110

I must complain the cards are ill-shuffled, till I have a good hand.

—SWIFT.

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make us eager to know more. We are reminded of her warm, unfeigned hospitality, her discipline and courage as a columnist (displayed, for example, in the well-known ruckus with Cardinal Spellman), her skill in handicrafts, and her abiding lode of affection for the underprivileged, handicapped, and disadvantaged.

The book ends with words written by the author's wife, Trude Lash, to a friend, and it is the most moving account yet published of Mrs. R.'s last days. The last paragraph reads:

I had never seen anyone die this way and it seemed to me like a crucifixion.

Maybe every death is. The only comfort is that she was not afraid of death but welcomed it. I kept thinking of the Bach cantata "*Ich habe genug*." Is the absence of fear a form of religious belief—a sign that one "abideth" in His love?

The book is what its subtitle says it is: "A Friend's Memoir." It is not the definitive volume on Mrs. Roosevelt. Others have been written before; many more will be written in the years ahead. But this one will serve well to tell future Americans what manner of lady this Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was—how she lived—and, yes, how she died.

Never a Farewell to Arms

The Model Major-General: A Biography of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley, by Joseph H. Lehmann (Houghton Mifflin, 415 pp. \$6.50), brings to "outrageous life" a Victorian military hero whose personality combined the typical strengths and weaknesses of Britain's empire builders. Forrest C. Pogue wrote "George Marshall: Education of a General."

By FORREST C. POGUE

IN THE late 1870s when British imperialism was at its ebullient best, the expression "All Sir Garnet" was used to indicate that General Sir Garnet Wolseley had the situation—at some troubled spot in Victoria's far-flung holdings—well in hand. That phrase, employed as the title of the British edition of this biography, states more aptly the author's assessment of the Field Marshal's place in nineteenth-century military history than does Gilbert and Sullivan's satirical description of Wolseley used as the title of the American edition.

Wolseley's military career, extending from the Second Burma War in 1853 through the Crimean conflict; the Indian Mutiny; the rebellion in Canada; the war with the Ashanti, the Zulus, the Chinese rebels, and the forces of the Mahdi, sums up more than forty years of fighting in which the British colored the world map with continuous splashes of Empire red. Despite a lifelong running fight with Victoria's cousin, the Duke of Cambridge, commander-in-chief of the Army, and the Queen's own disapproval, the Field Marshal won rich cash awards and titles and the applause of the British public. Thirty years after his death, his fellow countrymen confused

his name both with that of Henry VIII's great adviser and with Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington). In the United States, he was remembered best for his writings on his visits to the headquarters of Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee.

The author, an American professor of history, has brought to outrageous life a fabulous personality, whose deeds and character combine the strength and courage that led Britain to world dominion with the qualities of Colonel Blimp that hastened the setting of the sun on the Empire. He detested Frenchmen, disregarded the natives of the countries he helped conquer, and rated



—From the book.

Field Marshal Lord Wolseley—
"All Sir Garnet" was A-Okay.

the political leaders of his own country only slightly above the enemies he fought in the field.

Happily for his biographer, whether Wolseley was attacking the institution of marriage (after some years of unwedded bliss he contentedly succumbed to married life), deriding his contemporaries in the Army and in politics, or zestfully describing the excitement of his campaigns, the Field Marshal wrote imprudently and well. His thousands of letters, many of them used here for the first time, and all as colorful and opinionated as Wolseley himself, are such stuff as biographers dream of. An Anglo-Irishman, he had no use for the earlier owners of the Emerald Isle; he characterized the Irish Catholics as "a strange, illogical, inaccurate race, with the most amiable qualities, garnished with the dirt and squalor they seem to love as dearly as their religion." In a handbook for soldiers he wrote that military men should "be taught to despise those in civil life" and that they should "not be brought into contact with the softening influences of old men and respectable women." He was only partly jesting when he wrote to his aunt from the Crimea that "man shooting is the finest sport of all . . . the more you kill the more you want to kill."

While the letters show us the Blimpish side of the man, Lehmann makes clear that this was only part of the character. Wolseley was a fine soldier, an enemy of military incompetence, and a fierce supporter of efficiency in the profession of arms.

In writings and statements that for self-assurance have been matched in our day only by the pronouncements of Field Marshal Montgomery, he trumpeted the cause of the ordinary soldier, demanding proper care of the men who did the fighting, better leaders, and a decent supply system. To get his reforms he defied the Queen and the commander-in-chief of the Army, and made common cause with Liberal statesmen, for whose political principles he had only vast contempt.

With a volatile and indiscreet subject, whose deeds are set in picturesque locales around the world, few biographers could write a dull book. But Mr. Lehmann has improved on his excellent sources by his ability to evoke the atmosphere of battle whether in India, the Crimea, or Africa, and to recapture the equally martial noises of savage conflicts between the Field Marshal and his antagonists in the War Office.

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