No Place for a White Man


Reviewed by Arthur Ruhl.

Mr. Hurley, track-team captain at the University of Oregon, Class of '23, has decided, after a brief bout with a proasie job, to chuck it all and go down to a spot on the Southern Pacific map and raise coconuts. The dot on the map was Zamboanga, which is on the Philippine island of Mindanao, some five hundred miles south of Manila, and the home of a man without capital or some sort of help and backing beyond his own hands. Everything was against him—malaria, a snake more or less hospitable to a thing Moros and PAGAN FAMILY OF MINDANAO scarcely breathed, and Hurley seems to have picked about the worst. It was no place for a wild man with capitol or some sort of help and backing beyond his own hands. Everything was against him—malaria, a snake more or less hospitable to a thing Moros — and nothing with him except a romantic dream of life in the tropics, which blew up before he had his shack built, and his own Yankee pride and stubbornness.

He slept with a gun for a year or so and then pulled out, bush-whipped, broken by dysentery and malaria, and glad to quit. His discharge from the hospital brought him a new life in which he more or less made his original dream come true. He worked three years for a coconut corporation and spent three more on a rubber plantation. But that was with a big company behind him and in a screened bungalow with tiled bathroom and electric lights—much the sort of life led by young Americans working for the United Fruit Company, for instance, in their banana plantations in Central America. The Robinson Crusoe sort of thing is quite another matter and the value of Hurley's story lies in its accurate reporting of just what that sort of thing is or may be like.

The Cotobato grass-country isn't jungle in the popular sense of the word but it was jungley enough. At night Hurley would go out with a flash-lamp and shoot at the eyes which glared at his little shack from every side. After he had shot, he might find a big cat of some sort, or a deer or wild pig, or maybe a big python would come flapping down out of a tree. Snakes of all sorts, poisonous or constrictors, seem to have been all over the place. The grass was full of rats at night and the snakes came out to eat the rats. Once, just as he was about to shoot a wild boar from a tree, a big python suddenly reached down from a neighboring tree and grabbed the boar. Hurley fired into the writhing mass and both pig and snake disappeared into the bush before he could get down to them. Another time, in the same position, he looked down to see a deadly ringed snake crawling across his leg. He shows a photograph of a big python with a bump in his middle. The bump, when the python was cut open, turned out to be a partially digested deer.

He woke up one morning on his cot to see a seven-inch centipede crawling over his chest. The centipede nestled for a time in his arm-pit, while Hurley scarcely breathed, and then skittered away again. The river was full of crocodiles, which, in these parts, seem to forage even out into open sea-water. And with all animal, and loneliness had pretty well got his nerves, he turned his flash-lamp one night on a pair of Moros, spears drawn back, glaring into his shack window. Firearms are forbidden to the natives, Hurley had a small arsenal, and the Moros were doubtless looking for guns. They said they were making a friendly call. The experience still further shook his nerves. Snakes and rats ate his chickens, monkeys pulled up his corn, and the coconut trees didn't grow. It turned out that there wasn't any subsoil water. The life might have been more bearable if Hurley had gone native to the extent of taking on a woman or two, to help about the place and give him some companionship—for his partner quit long before he did—but although there are frequent rather coy references to this subject, he seems to have remained by his wild lone.

The book is easy reading. Max Miller, the 'I Cover The Waterfront' man, a classmate of Hurley's, adds an introduction.
The Picture of a Character


Reviewed by Katharine Anthony

Frau Gina Kaus bases her biography of Empress Catherine on a spiritual kindship which exists between herself and her subject. She brings her personal sympathy to bear on Catherine's character. Banned by the Nazis in recent years, Frau Kaus has no doubt added much to her understanding of a woman who repudiated her nationality and made a great career for herself.

In a volume of nearly four hundred pages, she tells the story of Catherine's life from the cradle to the grave. If less time and space is given to her childhood than might be expected, more time and space is correspondingly given to the mother under whose dominant and overshadowing personality Catherine's girlhood was passed. The relation portrayed between the boy and girl lovers shows keen appreciation of all its values, especially those which lead to alienation and estrangement. The book is at its best when, with every ambition satisfied, its author dares to cast herself at the end of the memoir of a gigolo, is a question no theory could not retain just one of the men who loved her beside her to the grave instead of casting herself at the end of her life, when, with every ambition satisfied, her heartbroken weeping for her father's death, her dramatic trial for treason by the empress and her lone-handed defense. Out of these tests and tribulations, victoriously surmounted, the quiet, determined leader of a revolution is born. She rides out before us, a demure matron, at the head of a noisy and badly organized following, to seize a monarch's throne. The amazing ability of this woman, who stood head and shoulders above the men and women about her confounds us anew in this portrait, as it never fails to do. The full-length figure combines many characteristics of Catherine in one: the philosopher, one of the most prominent individuals. Their conflict is put—especially during war time. EFFORTS TO PREVENT WAR.