

- Uncle Sam's Attic. An Intimate Story of Alaska.* By MARY LEE DAVIS. (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1930. Pp. 402. \$3.50.)
- Alaska, the Great Bear's Cub.* By MARY LEE DAVIS. (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1930. Pp. 314. \$3.50.)
- Seppala, Alaska Dog Driver.* By ELIZABETH M. RICKER. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1930. Pp. 295. \$3.00.)
- Tundra, Romance and Adventure on Alaskan Trails.* Told by former DEPUTY UNITED STATES MARSHAL HANSEN to the ED- DINGTONS. (New York: The Century Company, 1930. Pp. 334. \$2.00.)

With the insistent urge to shed true and illuminating light on every imaginable nook and cranny of the long-darkened "Attic," Mrs. Davis has her every page teeming with a veritable wealth of information—accurate and authentic, from first-hand observation. Pigeon-holed and brought up-to-date are misconceptions galore as to Alaskan geography, climate, settlers, towns, totems, trails, industries (fishing, farming, mining) and all the present-day activities and ventures. The new Alaskan spirit is typified as emerging from the white-hot crucible of earlier days. Flowers are stressed instead of sordid pioneering, homes rather than dance halls. With more than a touch of art and artfulness, everything is truly and wholly Alaskan—illustrations, stories, settings—all except the vocabulary, which is "Mary Lee's" own inimitable contribution to "Alaska as IS"—the last United States colony, an empire in the building.

Alaska, the Great Bear's Cub portrays in a narrative, entertaining way the new Alaska, young but vigorous, wild but conquerable. The effect is considerably and refreshingly enhanced by actual photographs and by the many artistic and illuminating Murie sketches. Fascinating to children would be this "cub." Told from an intimate, personal viewpoint we find included Indian code, speech, lore, potlatch, caste and customs. Nothing seemingly left unexplained: traps, meat, wampum, over-the-ice eggs, ptarmigan, glaciers, mosquitoes, animals, fur, cache, mush, skookum, clean-up, poke, tillicum, "canned white man" and the Fairbanks dog derby. Both of these Mary Lee Davis books would be indispensable to a school, college or university library and of paramount interest to the general reader. Neither one to be taken at a gulp but assimilated leisurely. Just enough historical background to make them educative and instructive.

Seppala, THE dog musher of Alaska, kindly, modest, uniquely typical of the land of his adoption and universally famed for the

diphtheria serum relay—all the credit attributed to Togo, the famous leader of that picked string from Seppala's kennels. In simple, forceful language is sketched the story of Seppala's eventful life. Incidentally a dove-tailed collection of northern episodes, relief expeditions, exciting, exhilarating races—free-for-all and burden handicaps, won by superior headwork and motor power of dogs and driver. Incident upon incident, inevitable tragedy and toll-taking, stories of the early days in Nome, with the unmistakable tang of the north, but with all "exaggeration deplored." Well-known names are interspersed throughout, of men who meant much to Alaska. Of interest also, the rules and regulations governing the All-Alaskan Sweepstakes Race—with "my wife, Constance" as the Sweepstakes Queen. Enlightening the expert dog-dope as to the training, care and feeding of the teams. No dogs of his with bleeding feet, torn pads or frozen flanks. Essentially a dog story, not of just one but of many. The "King of the Alaskan Trails"—proud of his Siberians, their cups and their records—"slow starters" but surely nosing in at the finish.

Tundra. Romance and Adventure on Alaskan Trails, as a title is well chosen. Visualize a vast, cold, terrible, dead-white, frozen waste, powerful, unrelenting and irrevocable—the silent but actual and physical menace of it, with death lurking everywhere. So, the book: strong, palpitating, but vividly alive. Sordid, yes; cruel, decidedly; gruesome, unmerciful but vivid, fascinating and dramatic in the extreme. The authors have made no visible effort to embellish the tale as told them by Bert Hansen who certainly knows his Alaska as it was in the early stampede days, when "gold was God" and when life was raw and individualistic, each man a law unto himself. A reviewer naturally wonders if it is absolutely necessary to chronicle the unmerciful beating—with a doubled dog-chain—of Major, the unconquerable? In Bert's own words, "it may not be interesting reading" but the stark, staring truth nevertheless! "Mud and curses, animals, muck and men," then snow and cold, blizzards and miraculous escapes from stalking death. Some touches of humor, of naive boasting not a little, of pathos considerable—danger, despair, dogged excitement, unquenchable determination, long forced mushes, weathering all, enduring all, conquering all in the service of the government! United States Marshal Love, the Edingtons and "Isabelle" (afterward Mrs. Bert Hansen) had certainly "picked a MAN."

JESSIE JOHNSTON CLEGG.