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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
LIBRARY EXTENSION PUBLICATION

VOL. VII

JULY, 1941

NO. 6

ADVENTURES IN READING

Fourteenth Series

AGATHA BOYD ADAMS



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS
CHAPEL HILL

MCMXLI

STUDY OUTLINES

EXTENSION BULLETINS

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Adventures in Reading Series, 1926-1927; 1928-1929. Russell Potter.
Adventures in Reading Series, 1929-1930; 1930-1931. M. N. and R. P. Bond.
Adventures in Reading Series, 1931-1932; 1933. M. N. Bond.

BIOGRAPHY

Other People's Lives, 1928; 1931; 1933. C. S. Love.
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Studies in Confederate Leadership, 1931. F. M. Green.

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The South in Contemporary Literature, 1930. Addison Hibbard.
Recent Poetry from the South, 1928. Addison Hibbard.
Twentieth Century American Literature, 1933. M. N. Bond.
Our Heritage: A Study Through Literature of the American Tradition, 1927. J. H. Hanford.
American Literature, 1927. Addison Hibbard.
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Of the Library of the University of North Carolina



*Published six times a year, October, January, April, May, June, and July,
by the University of North Carolina Press. Entered as second-class
matter February 5, 1926, under the act of August 24, 1912.
Chapel Hill, N. C.*

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4. May, 1938. *Building and Furnishing a Home*. E. C. Baity.
- *5. June, 1938. *Adventures in Reading, Eleventh Series*. A. B. Adams.
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5. June, 1939. *Adventures Around the World, Second Series*. Lucile Kelling.
6. July, 1939. *At Home with the Fine Arts*. M. G. Holmes.

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6. July, 1941. *Adventures in Reading, Fourteenth Series*. A. B. Adams.

VOLUME VIII

Programs now in preparation on: *The Story of Gardens*, by M. N. Bond; *Other People's Lives*, No. 8, by Cornelia Spencer Love; and *The Modern Woman's Unfinished Business*, by Elizabeth Chesley Baity.

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CHAPTER I

NO ISLANDS ANYMORE

Until revived by the *New Yorker* in the section called "Talk of the Town," it seemed likely that what Genung's *Rhetoric* somewhat stiffly used to classify as the informal essay would perish from the English language. For no apparent good reason the modest but often charming and pithy sketch had fallen into disfavor, in spite of its honorable association with such names as Addison, Lamb, and Irving. Now comes a new and unassuming English author, who writes in the tradition of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, and proves herself quite captivating.

The sketches which make up *Mrs. Miniver* came into being when Peter Fleming, who was Literary Editor of the *London Times*, wrote to Jan Struther that the court page of his paper was given over almost entirely to letters about woodpeckers, and he felt something should be done about it. He then suggested that she write, as a substitute for the woodpeckers, a series of sketches about an ordinary woman, a woman like herself, he added flatteringly; hence that delightful personality whom we have become acquainted with as Mrs. Miniver. The author tells us that she has tried to continue the series in war time, but has found it quite impossible, since for her writing must result from "emotion remembered in quietude." We have, however, her poems, which extend the boundaries of that humor and perceptiveness which make up the magic of *Mrs. Miniver*; in both her prose and her poetry we find that urbane light touch on slight but universally experienced things; that elusive chrysanthemum fragrance, that combination of delicacy and poignance.

The poignance derives undoubtedly in part from the fact that these London sketches remind us of the thousands of Mrs. Minivers who today have lost all the tender and humorous home associations set forth here. They remind us too of the strong deep-rooted substance of British courage, which we find again in *Landfall*, Nevil Shute's novel of the R.A.F. This is as streamlined and contemporaneous as an airplane; compact, taut, and clear. Its characters are of a very different social group from Mrs. Miniver and her friends; perhaps they are even more essentially British. It is a story of undramatic courage, muted

heroism; the story, in a small segment at least, of those men of whom Winston Churchill has said "Never before in human conflict have so many owed so much to so few."

1. IN THE ADDISONIAN TRADITION

Mrs. Miniver, by Jan Struther

Is this book really a novel? Does it carry on the tradition suggested above? In what sense?

Note the elements in it which are local; that it is not only very British, but British of a very highly specialized class.

Note also the elements which give it universal appeal; which of Mrs. Miniver's experiences do most of us at some time experience?

How is the shadow of the war indicated? Is the tragic note overstressed?

Discuss the clear beauty of the author's prose style, and select some favorite parts to read aloud.

The sentences on page 286, beginning "It oughtn't to take a war . . ." might suggest a program for women's clubs. What do you think?

2. MRS. MINIVER'S POETRY

The Glassblower, by Jan Struther

The author's biography, on page 67, forms a good introduction to her. Show how this applies both to *Mrs. Miniver* and to the poems.

The author has objected that even her friends and relatives tend to identify her with Mrs. Miniver. After reading the poems can you see why?

What similar qualities do you find in both these books of Jan Struther's? In which medium of expression do you think she is most at home?

Why the title? Is it appropriate?

Do any of these poems remind you of Dorothy Parker?

Select some of the poems to read aloud.

Additional Reading:

The White Cliffs, by Alice Duer Miller. (If you wish to extend the program, some of this might be read, since it expresses also the England of *Mrs. Miniver*.)

England Was an Island Once, by Elswyth Thane.

3. R. A. F.

Landfall, by Nevil Shute

The story here is an old one—boy meets girl—in a setting as new as this morning's paper. Describe the setting and the elements which give it special interest.

What are the author's qualifications to write a story about flying? Has this interest been manifested in any of his other novels? Remember *An Old Captivity*.

Does he put in too much technical detail about airplanes? Does this make it a man's rather than a woman's book? Does it thus provide a balance for the femininity of *Mrs. Miniver*?

What sort of a person is Jerry Chambers? Do you think he is a typical member of the R. A. F.? What are his main interests?

Note that Mona has her own courage too. Show how she supplements the women of *Mrs. Miniver*.

Landfall has some of the elements of a mystery story; show how the dramatic situation is handled without melodrama. Do you think that interest is sustained in spite of this playing down of drama?

From the three books grouped together here, what British qualities are suggested? Do they give us an increased insight into the values in British life which have the power to survive?

Additional Reading:

An Old Captivity, by Nevil Shute.

Ordeal, by Nevil Shute.

THE FRANCE WE USED TO KNOW

Among the almost endless variety of modern novels, it is always a delight to discover the genuine novel of the imagination, one which has been brought into being by an act of creation rather than by years of musty research. So much recent fiction has been either faintly exaggerated and dramatized autobiography, or somewhat sentimentalized history, heavily freighted with obscure learning, that we hail with cheers a novel in which the author has created both characters and events, bestowing upon them real life and an authentic setting. Here, for good measure, are two of them.

The Voyage and *Cousin Honoré* both present vividly imagined characters acting out their personal dramas in the setting of a well-remembered and well-beloved France. Their background is not the France of the present day, about which we have perhaps heard too many hysterical expostulations, apologies, and prophecies, but that older France which we also hope is the France of the future. Both authors are concerned with the permanent values in French character; both of them write from a genuine understanding and appreciation of France. Both are British, but they describe the hills of Alsace and the vineyards of the Charente as lovingly as if they were in Yorkshire or Devon. It is good to have our newspaper pictures of a starved and beaten France replaced even momentarily by these skilfully evoked pictures of the copper tints of autumn vineyards and the warm security of a French farm kitchen; of the ornate Gothic of Strasbourg's spire, dark red against a blue Alsatian sky, and of the complexly interwoven strands of Alsatian life, as intricate as the decoration of the cathedral.

1. THE WISDOM OF THE HEART

The Voyage, by Charles Morgan

Two very different backgrounds are mingled here: provincial France, and Paris in the eighties. Describe each in its relation to the story of the novel.

Two strong individuals are also counterpoised and contrasted: Therèse and Barbet. Show how each represents one of the two backgrounds described above, and how each is also a vivid and unusual personality.

Some of the minor characters are worthy of comment; for instance the priest, Lancret, Mme. Hazard, Blachère.

The prison has a symbolic as well as an actual rôle in the story; discuss it from both aspects.

What is the theme of the novel? What are both Barbet and Therèse seeking? Why does Barbet free the prisoners?

Notice the headings of the different sections, and relate them to the title of the novel, noting the quotations given with each, as well as the lines from Santayana on the title-page.

Comment on Barbet as the man of simplicity, who acts naturally, regardless of conventions.

Does the author prolong unduly here, as he did in *Sparkenbroke*, the tentative approaches and withdrawals of Therèse and Barbet?

Compare this novel with *The Fountain*, the theme of which was man's search for inner peace.

Do you like the author's way of writing? If so, read aloud some passages to illustrate his style.

Note that Charles Morgan received the James Tait Black Memorial Award for 1941 for *The Voyage*.

Additional Reading:

The Fountain, by Charles Morgan.

Sparkenbroke, by Charles Morgan.

Once There Was a Village, by Katherine Dunlap. (A recent novel of French village life.)

Paris France, by Gertrude Stein.

2. AN INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

Cousin Honoré, by Storm Jameson

Report on this book by dividing it into sections in which the story is told. The setting is the same throughout, but the dates range from 1918 to 1938, and are important.

Show how truly international and how typically Alsatian were the Burckheims; "an Alsatian herb, its roots planted by Swiss, German,

Swedish, and even Italian, as well as by French hands." Do you think this is true of other European families?

Describe the dramatic opening of the story, and show how in a way this suicide is responsible for all that follows.

Comment on the personality of Hoffmayer, as one of the most important and significant in the book.

What of the character of Cousin Honoré? Is he a hypocrite, his honored life based on a pretense? Is he too easily manipulated by Reuss and by Siguenau?

What is the significance of Dietrich? His relationship with Honoré, is it feudal, or that of one free man toward another?

What facets of French character are shown by Berthelin?

Does the novel seem choppy, because of the way in which it is divided? How does the author's style compare with that of Charles Morgan, in *The Voyage*?

What traits of French character do both of these books bring out? What elements of weakness are particularly strongly illustrated in Cousin Honoré? What similarities do you find in the two?

Cousin Honoré may best be studied as a drama of intrigue among men. Are the women characters important to the story? Note that the author is very much at home in this atmosphere of industry, because of her previous novels about ship-building.

What do you think she is trying to tell us here about France? Does she succeed?

Additional Reading:

The Lovely Ship, by Storm Jameson.

The Captain's Wife, by Storm Jameson.

Europe to Let, by Storm Jameson.

France Will Live Again, The Portrait of a Peaceful Interlude, 1919-1939, by Samuel Chamberlain. (Drawn with Etchings, Lithographs, Sketches and Photographs, with an Introduction by Donald Moffatt.)

CHAPTER III

OUR HERITAGE FROM SPAIN

It is only recently that we have begun to recognize and appreciate some of the minor strains that have contributed to the richness of United States culture. Our earlier historians, especially the writers of textbooks, stressed the Anglo-Saxon strain, with an occasional nod toward the Scotch-Irish and German. While it is probably true that most of the settlers of the original thirteen colonies were from these groups, it is none the less true that a large portion of the country as it is today bears the stamp of a different origin. California, the Southwest, and Texas, are indelibly engraved with the seal of Spain; and Louisiana, Florida and Georgia still bear traces of that most individual of nations.

Too few good books have been written about our Spanish heritage, although Spain itself has interested some of the best of our writers, from Longfellow and Washington Irving on down to Ernest Hemingway. An unmined treasure awaits further writers of historical novels in this part of our national heritage. The Archives of the Indies in Seville, the National Library in Mexico, are crammed with fascinating source material which has never been fully investigated. The authors of the two novels to be studied here have at least tapped these sources, and later on, when we take up *Hilton Head*, we will find that Josephine Pinckney has used some of the same material for one section of her book.

1. ZEALOT AND DISCOVERER

To the Indies, by C. S. Forester

What was the position of Spain at the close of the fifteenth century, when Columbus's voyages were made?

Make clear at the beginning which of the voyages this novel deals with, what was its purpose, and what its status with Ferdinand and Isabella.

The Columbus of this novel is not at all the heroic figure of Joaquin Miller's poem, nor of our school books. How is he presented here? Do you think the author caricatures him? Makes him real?

Contrast with Columbus the character of Don Narciso Rich. What elements in the Spain of this century does each represent?

Show how, although Columbus was really Italian, he was in many ways typical of fifteenth century Spain. Remember that Spain was, as always, an intensely religious country.

Which dominates the novel, Columbus or Rich? Does the main interest here depend upon character or adventure?

Discuss the weaknesses of Spanish colonization as shown here.

Additional Reading:

Conquistador, by Archibald MacLeish. (A vivid account in poetry of Spanish conquest)

Fruit Out of Rock, by Frances Gillmor.

Tumbleweeds, by Martha Roberts. (Both of these recent novels depict the Spanish Southwest as it is today)

Christopher Columbus, by Salvador de Madariaga. (An excellent biography)

2. TEXAS REMEMBERS SPAIN

On the Long Tide, by Laura Krey

Describe first the three localities and persons who determine the historical background of this book: Virginia in the time of Thomas Jefferson, New Orleans in the time of Lafitte, and San Antonio in the time of Sam Houston.

Show how the adventures of Jeffrey Fentress connect and illuminate these places.

What were the differences between the Virginia culture, from which Fentress comes, and that of the Spaniards whom he meets in San Antonio? Does the author present both of these cultures sympathetically, with due regard for the enduring qualities of each?

How does the author handle her historical material? Is it sufficiently blended with the story to sustain interest? This can best be answered by comparison with some other historical novels with which you are familiar.

Compare the methods of Forester and Krey in handling their material material.

Stress the qualities which give *On the Long Tide* beauty; among them may be suggested a good style, appreciation of nature, sense of human dignity. Does the author excel in creation of character? in narrative ability?

Does this novel leave you with the feeling that the Spanish influence in Texas is ineradicable? Do you think this influence extends only to the existence of old buildings and Spanish place names, or is it more deeply bound up with the life of the people?

These two books taken together point the way to a fascinating field of study which might be extended at the wish of the group.

Additional Reading:

See those listed above, and

Hilton Head, by Josephine Pinckney. (The section about St. Augustine)

Spanish Missions of Georgia, by John Tate Lanning.

And Tell of Time, by Laura Krey.

UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Since the first weary hopeful voyagers stumbled on the sands of Roanoke Island or Plymouth, seeing ahead of them not winters of famine and war but summers of fruitfulness and freedom, a dream of Utopia has been interwoven with the complex strands of American life. It is very deeply in our blood, that belief in human betterment, in the possibility of an ideal society which would provide a good way of life for every one. Again and again this belief has crystallized in an attempt by a small group of idealists to put into practise some Utopian scheme of life designed to defeat at once poverty and greed and man's inherent idleness. So consistently recurrent are these Utopias in our history that we are bound to accept them as an intrinsic part of our national pattern. One remembers the Brook Farm experiment of the New England Transcendentalists; the Oneida community, which ironically enough has survived most lastingly in a trade name, and the courageous, scandal-stained, but vital Mormon experiment, among many others whose names are lost or but little known. The Brook Farm community has been frequently described, since it was thoroughly respectable in a literary sort of way; but many of these other attempts to break from the conventions and find a better way of living have been regarded as slightly disreputable, and hence to be glozed over. Brigham Young used to be a name to frighten little children with; we are just beginning to understand him as the zealous founder of a state who could "lead twenty thousand exiles on a march of thirteen hundred miles through a wilderness, and in thirty years plant colonies from Idaho to Arizona."

Last year Vardis Fisher gave us one of the first really good novels of Mormon pioneering in *Children of God*. He was mainly concerned with the man's side of colonizing. In *The Giant Joshua*, an equally well documented historical novel, Maurine Whipple tells very vividly, and with many authentic details, the woman's side of Mormon life in the seventies and eighties.

Rosscommon attests the fact that we still dream dreams of Utopia in the present day United States. The ideal community for which a blue print is given here has certain interesting points in common with the earlier Utopias. It springs naturally from

Charles Allen Smart's first book *R.F.D.*, which was a sort of prose poem in praise of farm life; in *Roscommon* he attempts to show how such an existence might be within the reach of everyone.

1. WOMAN'S RÔLE IN A MAN-MADE UTOPIA

The Giant Joshua, by Maurine Whipple

Describe the historical period in which this novel is laid: the administrations of Grant and Hayes; not a very pretty period of our history, and one not too frequently written about.

What records were studied in preparation for this novel? Note the careful bibliography at the back of the book. Mormon records have been preserved with more fidelity than those of most states.

Show how Brigham Young dominates the book. What was the power of his personality? How is he presented here? In what sense is he a fanatic? Comment on his admonition: "Love God and each other. Love laughter."

How does the personal story of Clory parallel and in a way symbolize the story of the colony? What had she gained in the end? Does she appeal to you as a heroine?

Comment on the other women in the novel; are their personalities made real to you? Do they suffer too much?

What was the importance of polygamy in colonizing? How was it regarded by the Mormon leaders? By the women?

Why did Brigham Young oppose the opening up of the mines? What effect did they have on the Dixie settlement?

What were the Mormon ideals as set forth here? How did they enable the colonists to endure extraordinary hardships? To what extent do you consider them impractical?

Comment on the present day survival of these colonists; what sort of heritage did they leave? What contribution did Brigham Young make to American life?

Additional Reading:

The Turning Wheels, by Stuart Cloete. (A very similar story of colonizing)

Children of God, by Vardis Fisher.

Suzanna and the Elders, by Lawrence Langner. (A play which treats the theme of plural marriages somewhat humorously)

Look up Mormonism and present-day Utah in whatever encyclopedia you have available.

2. A PLAN FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

Rosscomon, by Charles Allen Smart

Describe the framework in which the author has placed the core of his book. Why do you think he chose to give it this slight air of distance, of unreality?

Is this book to be classed as a novel? In what other forms might the author have presented the ideas set forth here? What advantage does he gain from the novel form?

Several years ago in his excellent book on Mexico Stuart Chase contrasted the handicraft civilization of a Mexican village with the machine civilization of a United States town, somewhat to the disadvantage of the latter. Do you think Mr. Smart has in mind in *Rosscomon* a return to a similar handicraft civilization? Would such a return be possible, even granted it were desirable?

What was the *Rosscomon* plan? How did it develop? Was it a theoretical or a practical development? Note the Rules for Community Living, on pages 515-7.

What did they mean by the Turkish Bath? the Retreat?

How did they meet the race question?

What were the purposes of the *Rosscomon* school?

Would you like to live in such a community? Does it have any significance or importance for our present-day world?

Additional Reading:

My Father's House, by Pierrepont B. Noyes. (The actual story of the Oneida community)

Mexico, by Stuart Chase.

R. F. D., by Charles Allen Smart.

BEYOND THE BLUE RIDGE

Since the days of Governor Spotswood and the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe those high blue ramparts which wall the Shenandoah Valley have suggested romance and adventure, but surprisingly few writers of fiction have attempted to scale them. Mary Johnston turned her attention that way once in a now almost forgotten novel, *The Great Valley*, and more recently Elizabeth Page told some of the story of the region beyond the Blue Ridge in *The Tree of Liberty*, but most writers of historical novels about Virginia have preferred the Tidewater, or the older cities. It is interesting to find Willa Cather, in her latest book, returning to that western section of the state in which she lived as a little girl, and remembering the Virginia not of her childhood, but of her mother's and grandmother's legends. *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* is a book of memory rather than a historical novel, but since that remembering is as pungent and significant as if it were directed by a skilled psychoanalyst, the book reveals much more of essential history than most lengthily documented novels. Miss Cather has gone down deep into her past, and what she gives, with her own inimitable clarity, is a penetrating study of certain attitudes, motives, and loyalties which have persisted to the present day, and which are clearly to be recognized in the lives of such modern Virginians as Ellen Glasgow describes in *In This Our Life*.

Emerson Waldman's *Beckoning Ridge*, while it deals more with surfaces than *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, shows what happened to the people of this mountain section when war came. The author has chosen to deal with only a very small group, but he is able through them to suggest a question which is important for the present: is it possible to escape the destiny of one's own generation? Many of us must wish to run away from the disasters and anxieties of our own day, to hide on some remote island or in the coves of some faraway mountain range, and let the world shoot itself to pieces. Why should the individual accept the mad tragedy of the world? It is a persistent question. Mr. Waldman describes such an attempted escape, and intimates its results.

1. THROUGH THE LENS OF MEMORY

Sapphira and the Slave Girl, by Willa Cather

In this novel emotions and hidden tensions are more important than events. The setting is, however, important; note the date, and show its significance.

What is the geographical setting? Show how Miss Cather's sensitivity to the suggestions of a place pervades the book, so that we really spend a short time among the Virginia mountains.

What groups of Virginia life are represented by Sapphira and her husband? Are they the stereotyped classes of fiction, or do they have an individual authenticity?

The publishers refer to the Negroes as the most interesting characters in the book. Do you agree? Describe how they live. What is their relationship with their owners?

The complex character of Sapphira will bear close study. How does she appear in the end? Was she capable of greatness?

Does the author succeed in making Nancy a sympathetic character?

The minor characters are significant, and reveal a great deal about the time and the section in which they lived; comment on Jezebel, Mr. Cartmell and Mrs. Bywaters, Sampson.

Does it seem to you that through Jezebel the author suggests the past of the Negro race, and through Nancy its future?

What are the loyalties and motives which create the always hidden conflict of the novel?

Some of the special quality of this novel derives from the enchantment of memory; we are looking backward through a long lens. Does this quality also give it too much remoteness? Does it hold your interest?

Discuss Miss Cather's ability to compress a great deal into the rather short space of her novel. She has never written a long novel. Are her novels as rich in suggestiveness as some of the longer ones? What other present day writers are skilful in the short novel form?

Additional Reading:

Death Comes for the Archbishop, by Willa Cather.

Shadows on the Rock, by Willa Cather.

Vein of Iron, by Ellen Glasgow. (A novel set in the same section of Virginia)

In This Our Life, by Ellen Glasgow.

2. ESCAPE FROM WAR

Beckoning Ridge, by Emerson Waldman

Here is another historical novel with a difference; note the definite place and period in which it is set, but that the author is also more concerned with people than with events.

Has he historical authority for this story of people hiding in the

mountains to escape the war? Were the mountain people of any of the southern states deeply concerned in the Civil War? Remember the "hidlers" in Stephen Vincent Benét's Poem *John Brown's Body*.

Even though they are out of it, do the hidlers in Glory Hollow really escape war? Show the effects on Lindsey and Martin, on Champe, on Surry.

Has the author a strong sense of character? Do his people become real for you?

Comment on his style, on the slight archaisms which he employs in conversation.

Do you think that the book gains charm because it is a story of hiding, with something of a child's pleasure in a secret place? There was something of the same element in part of Hervey Allen's *Action at Aquila*.

Do the characters in this novel reveal any essential motives or attitudes of their time and place, as do those in *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*? Is it a strongly local novel?

What are its implications for our own time? What would be Mr. Waldman's answer to the question: can an individual escape the responsibilities of his generation?

Additional Reading:

Action at Aquila, by Hervey Allen.

John Brown's Body, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

CHAPTER VI

DAUGHTERS AND FATHERS

There is an ever fresh fascination about personal recollections, whether they relate the lives of the famous or the obscure. Probably as youngsters we squirmed at the personal recollections of some long-winded grandparent, only in later life to wish that we had squirmed less and listened more, in order to gain some fugitive insight into that rapidly receding past with which for a moment we were in contact. In reading books of personal reminiscence we always hope to find a clue to the mystery of another personality, that mystery which is so rarely lifted even for a moment between friends. The apparently candid writer of reminiscence may beguile us into thinking "Now I really know and understand this person," forgetful that the unseen censor of the subconscious has edited the material before it is set down. But whatever the reason, the well-told record of anyone's life often has an interest far surpassing fiction.

Neither of the two writers to be studied here has any claim to historical significance. I. A. R. Wylie's life covered a wide geographic span, from Melbourne, via London and Germany to New York, and her career as a successful novelist led to an acquaintance with many people active in the world of her time, but the emphasis of her book and its chief interest is in her personal life, the experiences that are in some measure common to us all. Rebecca Yancey Williams' book demonstrates the fact that a life spent in a very small and quite unimportant corner of the globe, if it be warmly remembered and humorously set down, may have all the delight of the most far-flung adventuring. Two daughters here remember their fathers, with anger and with affection, with exasperation and humor. The miniatures they have painted may readily be expanded by the imagination into evocative portraits of their time and place.

1. EDUCATION BY ALEC

My Life with George, by I. A. R. Wylie

This book, which in spite of its casual tone has considerable richness, may be subdivided into several topics, any or all of which may be reported on:

Alec Wylie and his daughter; the author's strange youth; its effects. School in Germany; the author's attitude toward Germans and the

War. Does it remind you of Nora Waln's *Reaching for the Stars*? The winning of votes for women in England; notice the same story as told in *Fame is the Spur*, by Howard Spring.

The making of a writer; what influences and personal determinations shaped her? See especially the last chapter.

Episode in Hollywood.

New York as seen by Miss Wylie; her present attitude toward the United States; discuss especially her statement that United States citizenship is too easily granted.

Does the book live up to its subtitle, "an unconventional biography"?

What factors give it especial interest for women? Are the author's views overly feminist?

Additional Reading:

Towards Morning, by I. A. R. Wylie. (A novel of the first World War)

Reaching for the Stars, by Nora Waln.

Fame Is the Spur, by Howard Spring.

Three Guineas, by Virginia Woolf. (Essays on the education of women, covering the same period in British life)

2. THE KING OF LYNCHBURG

The Vanishing Virginian, by Rebecca Yancey Williams

Comment on the Introduction, by Douglas Southall Freeman; do you think he attaches too much importance to the book?

Captain Bob Yancey was a very different type of parent from Alec Wylie. Compare the two, bringing out the stability of the Yancey household as compared with the instability of the Wylies.

Discuss the essentially local quality of this book; not Virginia, but Southwest Virginia, not all Southwest Virginia, but Lynchburg, at a definite time, before the first World War. Do you find that this intensely local quality adds to or detracts from its interest?

Virginians often have a tendency to romanticize their family backgrounds. Do you think the author does that here?

What do you consider the elements which make this an enjoyable book?

A comparison with Clarence Day's books about his parents is inevitable. The author assures us that her manuscript was finished before the publication of *Life with Father*, and this statement seems guaranteed by the spontaneity of her book.

Comment on the similarities and differences between them, bring out the fact that both are excellent pictures of an era in American life.

Additional Reading:

Life with Father, by Clarence Day.

Life with Mother, by Clarence Day.

Historic and Heroic Lynchburg, by Don Peters Halsey.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN THE CAROLINAS WERE YOUNG

Those of us who first learned the story of pioneering in the United States from such comparatively sober and cautious historians as John Fiske have been led down some very strange trails by the recent vogue for historical fiction, trails that at times have been shiny with false fires. We have learned within the past year, for instance, that the banks of Albemarle Sound were lined with incredible palaces, and, more unpleasantly, that we fought on the wrong side in the American Revolution. Perhaps *Gone With the Wind* started this fashion for that exotic blend of history and romance which sweeps a bow to Hollywood in a well-authenticated period costume. We owe to this fashion, however, several honest and well-wrought pictures of our pioneer background, particularly welcome when they translate into readable form the dusty records of some obscure but interesting segment of history, helping thus to complete the great mosaic of our heritage.

Such a novel is Josephine Pinckney's *Hilton Head*, which tells a new and extremely interesting story of pioneering in the Southeast, from South Carolina to Florida, with its connecting links in the Caribbean. The point of view of a young doctor, with a scientific interest in the herbs and the ways of the New World, gives freshness and reality to a story that has not been so well told before, and that is in many points completely left out of popular histories. The Charleston we see here is not the romantic city of gardens and grilled balconies, but a frontier village struggling with weather and disease; and St. Augustine in the days of the Spaniards is made amazingly real. The novel has the added grace and distinction of having been written by a poet, of whose talents we are aware not in lush rhetoric, but in the sparkling precision of word and phrase.

The author of *Like a River Flowing*, Ira L. Moore, contributes a much smaller portion of our pioneering story, but her characters have the reality and her story the fundamental honesty that are found in *Hilton Head*. Through her sensitive record we live the experiences of a young woman in establishing a home and a family long ago in the North Carolina mountains. The story of John and Caroline is told with simplicity as well as with dignity,

and in it there is implicit the courage of the humble men and women who dared to open up new country and make it their own.

1. A YOUNG DOCTOR IN THE NEW WORLD

Hilton Head, by Josephine Pinckney

The author's note, page vii, gives an excellent idea of how this book was written. Notice the two places from which the main facts about the real Henry Woodward were drawn, sources which are extremely rich in undiscovered details of early American exploration.

What does Miss Pinckney mean by "the melodrama that fills the pigeonhole, the tin box, the hair trunk that have preserved for us the color of early America"?

Why did Henry Woodward come to the New World? What were his experiences in the Caribbean?

Describe his year with the Indians. Does the author share the romantic point of view which considered them "noble savages"? A good point of comparison here would be that excellent novel of Indian life, Iola Fuller's *The Loon Feather*.

Part III, which describes Woodward's years with the Spaniards in Florida, is one of the most interesting in the novel. What ideas of early St. Augustine and its inhabitants do you gain here? Connect this with the chapter in this program called "Our Heritage from Spain."

Tell the story of the founding of Charleston. What sort of folk were its founders? Does the author upset a legend here?

Do you find interesting the personality with which the author has endowed young Dr. Woodward? What is his major motive? What is the symbolism of the Diamond Mountain?

Compare this with some other recent popular historical novel; *Raleigh's Eden*, by Inglis Fletcher, for instance. Which has greater reality, distinction, vividness? A comparison with Laura Krey's *On the Long Tide* would also be interesting.

Additional Reading:

Red Carolinians, by Chapman J. Milling. (An excellent study of Indian life, especially in South Carolina)

The Loon Feather, by Iola Fuller.

The Tides of Malvern, by Francis Griswold.

Home by the River, by Archibald Rutledge. (A true story of a river plantation near Charleston)

Raleigh's Eden, by Inglis Fletcher.

2. FOUNDING A HOME IN BARLOW COVE

Like a River Flowing, by Ida L. Moore

The story of the covered wagon journey from Virginia into the states

to the west has often been told before. What qualities give this freshness and distinction?

By what means does the author convey a sense of the woods and mountains, without indulging in long passages of description?

Is the belief in witches authentic to this period, the early nineteenth century? Has it completely died out now?

Do you think that too many troubles are visited on the Grist family in the course of the novel? Do their catastrophes spring naturally and inevitably from their environment?

The emigration of Okies in a jalopy, as in *The Grapes of Wrath*, has been called the modern counterpart of the covered wagon. What sustained the Grists? What advantages did they have, as compared with the Joads?

Compare the Civil War, as seen from Barlow Cove, with the similar sections in Emerson Waldman's *Beyond the Beckoning Ridge*, also studied in this program.

Does the latter part of the book seem too short in comparison with the first? Does the author telescope too many events toward the end?

Additional Reading:

The Great Meadow, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

Beckoning Ridge, by Emerson Waldman.

Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck.

Cabins in the Laurel, by Muriel Earley Sheppard.

THE NOVEL OF MANNERS: NORTH AND SOUTH

While our writers of historical fiction are diligently reminding us of the days of our national virility, when our forebears strode through the rhododendron thickets and carved the primeval forests into homes in which stalwart women bore sons without benefit of asepsis or anesthesia, our more sophisticated novelists remind us of the present-day decadence of our over-populated backwaters. And thus the constant novel reader is left in a state of considerable bewilderment as to whether these United States are virile pioneers or stultified decadents.

It is a pleasant escape from the present to read, in such novels as those studied in the preceding program, of those days when we measured our strength against the wilderness. But our more realistic novelists call us back to the present and say: "Look now—such and such are the descendants of your noble pioneers. . . ."

The novel of manners has an honorable tradition as a humorous, understanding, and at times barbed critic of contemporary behavior. Our two most notable novelists of manners have each staked out for themselves a special province, in both cases backwaters of our older regions which turn out to be, in spite of their geographic disparity, surprisingly alike in essential *mores*. One critic has remarked that J. P. Marquand really likes his Boston neighbors far too much to permit himself the caustic irony of which he is capable; his studies of them, from *The Late George Apley* to *H. M. Pulham, Esq.*, remain gentle and amiable, but pungent. The same statement is not so applicable to his southern forerunner in the field. Ellen Glasgow is as truly Richmond as the right side of Broad Street, as the stained glass in St. Paul's, as the old houses on Franklin Street, but she becomes at times a severe castigator, an austere critic of these people whom she delineates so tenderly and so humorously. In her most recent novel of life in Richmond, Ellen Glasgow is more the severe critic than the kindly commentator. Underneath the suave subtleties of her style, as warm and pleasant as Richmond hospitality, is latent perhaps the severest condemnation of the Virginia way of life yet to be put into a novel. Experience and maturity have sharpened Miss Glasgow's insight and heightened the austerity of her vision.

1. THROUGH THE PURPLE WINDOWS OF BACK BAY

H. M. Pulham, Esq., by J. P. Marquand

Some sketch of the author's previous work should precede this: its twofold nature, the Mr. Moto stories, and the New England novels, *The Late George Apley* and *Wickford Point*.

What sort of people does he write about? Are they important? Significant? How do they compare, for instance, with the New Englanders of Rachel Fields (*Time out of Mind*), or Gladys Hasty Carroll (*As the Earth Turns*)?

What university dominates the thinking of these people? If possible, compare the Harvard of J. P. Marquand with that of George Santayana, in *The Last Puritan*.

Describe the frame work of the novel, the preparations for a twenty-fifth reunion. Compare it with the similar framework of *The Late George Apley*.

Define the essential contradiction in H. M. Pulham's life; he has everything; what is lacking?

Compare Marvin Myles, the white collar girl, with Kitty Foyle, as a heroine.

In what consist the major frustrations of H. M. Pulham's life? Could he have ever become an important and vital person? Was he more admirable for accepting his traditional responsibilities and the limitations that went with them?

Does H. M. Pulham seem to you real? Interesting? Can you analyze what makes this pleasant reading?

Do you think that Marquand has an ability to create character? Does he feel sorry for his George Apleys and H. M. Pulhams, or is he laughing at them?

Additional Reading:

The Last Puritan, by George Santayana.

The Late George Apley, by J. P. Marquand.

Wickford Point, by J. P. Marquand.

Life, March 24, 1941. (Article on Marquand and Boston)

2. THE FAMILY TRADITION IN RICHMOND

In This Our Life, by Ellen Glasgow

Since Ellen Glasgow is one of our older as well as one of our more important novelists, some sketch of her previous work would seem appropriate here. What have been her major fields of interest, her method? her approach? Has she shown a steady development during her long years of writing?

In what sense is the world of which she writes comparable to that of J. P. Marquand? Comment on the similarities of tradition and *mores* in Boston and Richmond.

Describe the opening scene of *In This Our Time*, and show how it sets the stage for the story which follows.

What qualities does Asa Timberlake represent? Are they contradictory?

Does Miss Glasgow look too much toward the past? What qualities in the Richmond tradition does she admire?

Does she understand the younger generation as well as she does the older?

Discuss her attitude toward the Negroes in the story. What is the significance of Parry?

Notice that there are two stories of frustration here side by side, Asa's and Parry's; which has greater poignance?

In what sense is the tragedy of Parry a condemnation of the Timberlakes and their entire way of thinking? Is it in any sense comparable to the tragedy of Bigger in *Native Son*? Who will in the long run pay most heavily for the wrong done to Parry?

Would you rank this latest novel with Miss Glasgow's best work? Why do you think she has never won the Pulitzer Prize?

Additional Reading:

Sapphira and the Slave Girl, by Willa Cather. (Here are the roots of some of the attitudes which Miss Glasgow describes)

The Romantic Comedians, by Ellen Glasgow.

The Sheltered Life, by Ellen Glasgow.

Native Son, by Richard Wright.

Time, March 31, 1941. (For an account of Ellen Glasgow's life and previous work)

Saturday Review of Literature, March 31, 1941. (Review of *In This Our Life* by Howard Mumford Jones)

CHAPTER IX

THE NARROW WAY

The social historian of the future, when he wishes to find out what people of these battered and tragic decades were thinking and feeling, will, if he is astute, turn to the popular novels of the period. And when he has sorted out into the neat precision of a card index all the commotion and cross currents of annual publishing, he will find among other trends of the times an increasing interest in religious topics. There is a long story, packed with significance, between the *Elmer Gantry* of the twenties and the *Nazarene* of the late thirties, both of them best sellers.

It is perhaps always true that in war time, when not only physical security but all our most cherished values are threatened, people are more apt to seek the security and stability of religion's answer to the riddle of life. Such a need is certain to be reflected, not only in books obviously classified as religious, but in popular poetry, novels, and plays. How may a man make peace within his own soul, come to terms with those inner drives and questionings which will not let him rest? How may he find the entrance to that gate which he has been told is narrow, and hard to find, but which leads to peace beyond the reach of the futile paraphernalia of organization or institution?

Both the novels here to be studied deal in different ways with such questions. Nina Fedorova's gentle picture of a family of Russian exiles makes no claim to be profound or philosophical, but it is full of genuine piety, and some of the balm that we feel in knowing a truly devout soul. Franz Werfel's *Embezzled Heaven* is on the other hand much too rich in profound philosophical implications to be dealt with in a brief review. Probably one of the most important novels of the year, it stands out because of its masterly telling, and its unusual power to arouse a long series of reflections.

1. GENTLE EXILES

The Family, by Nina Fedorova

Sketch the author's own background; a White Russian of the professional class who has fled from Siberia to Harbin, to Tientsin, and now lives in Oregon. Though this is her first novel, she is a woman of maturity and experience.

Describe the background of the book: Tientsin in 1937. Is it important as a picture of China? as a reminder of the existence of Russian gentlefolk?

Characterize the different members of the family, and tell how they lived.

Show how Granny had learned the meaning of Stevenson's prayer "to renounce when that be necessary and not to be embittered." What were the books which she constantly read? Discuss the influence of these, and show how it was reflected in her life.

Contrast Mother's lack of reconciliation with Granny's complete acceptance of life.

How does Peter represent the lost generation? Note that he is the only character presented completely without humor.

Contrast Professor Chernov's attempt to solve the ills of life by intellectual effort with Granny's way of faith. You will find some points of comparison here with *Embezzled Heaven*.

Note the author's real sense of story, as shown in the episodes of Mr. Wang, and of the mother Abbess.

Discuss the characterization of the radio: "these reverberations of the world's life laid a stress on the tragic certainty that there was no unity of purpose in the life of mankind, that humanity was disintegrating into parts . . ." How did the family guard itself against such disintegration?

This book was recommended for Lenten reading by the rector of a large Mid-Western church. Can you understand why he chose it?

Additional Reading:

Quiet Street, by Michael Ossorgin.

2. "FEW THERE BE WHO FIND IT"

Embezzled Heaven, by Franz Werfel

What have been the recent experiences of this author? Does his book in any way reflect them?

You are probably familiar with his earlier novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. Is the theme similar?

Embezzled Heaven falls into two parts, which are given unity by the powerful character of Teta. Describe first the Argans, the type of Austrian life they represent, their charm.

How does Teta first appear to the narrator? What is her plan? De-

scribe the fundamental contrast between her ambition and the Argan way of life.

What did the Argans lack? Is this lack peculiar to them, or typical of their epoch? Do you find any meaning in Philip's tragic accident? Does it remind you of Aldous Huxley's similar sense of the rôle of accident in human life—e.g. the death of the dog, in *Eyeless in Gaza*?

Is Teta's ambition noble in motive? In execution? What is her main consideration? Is the author recommending her way of life as better than the Argans? Is he suggesting rather a human need and different ways of approaching it?

Chapter Six takes us deeply into Teta's subconscious life and explains her motives. Notice its key position in the book.

Why did Teta lose the capacity to confess? Would the psychiatrist explain this in the same way as the priest? How is this capacity restored to her?

What does the author mean by "religious nihilism"? By saying "The Heaven of which we have been defrauded is the great deficit of our age"? Discuss the final chapter, in which these statements are made, in relation to the whole book.

In what sense is this a philosophical novel? What other novel in this program or that you have read recently merits this title?

Additional Reading:

The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, by Franz Werfel.

The Nazarene, by Sholem Asch.

As a Driven Leaf, by Milton Steinberg. (A novel based on the conflict between the Greek and the Hebrew philosophies)

CHAPTER X

THE INTELLECTUAL IN A WORLD AT WAR

In the Russian episodes of *Personal History* Vincent Sheean expressed memorably the dilemma of the intellectual confronted by violence; the hesitations of the man of good will forced to realize that some of the objects of his aspirations may be attained only by the use of violence which destroys good will. Since the publication of *Personal History* that problem has become more acute and much more widespread; all over the world men and women who have worked for the aims of peace find themselves forced into war. The scientist's long look into the future is called back to the urgencies of the present; the neutrality of the laboratory is violated by the immediate needs of the battlefield. Such a problem furnishes the theme of both the novel and the play to be studied here. In both the protagonist is a man of science, working with great absorption on research of the utmost importance to humanity, interrupted and frustrated by war. In both there is maintained, in spite of tragedy, a sense of confidence in the infinite possibilities of advancing knowledge.

It is always interesting to observe how writers deal with the resistant and non-malleable material of current events. Past events have acquired perspective and some of the enchantment of distance; but things that happen now in this frenziedly changing era are more difficult to shape into artistic form. Our publishers' lists are crowded with books which clamor to reveal all about China, Poland, Norway, Germany, and so on. Many of them are the raw stuff of personal experience, valuable, undoubtedly, as record, but lacking the sense of proportion and the underlying philosophy which we associate with great literature. In the welter of such books the two chosen here stand out as having both proportion and philosophy; they present dramatically and intensely the common dilemma of our age, but succeed in doing it with dignity and loftiness of thought.

1. AN EXPERIMENT INTERRUPTED

The Fire and the Wood, by R. C. Hutchinson.

Describe Josef Zeppichman, his background, his ambitions, his abilities; is he more doctor or scientist?

What is Josef's attitude toward world affairs? Compare it with that of Dr. Valkonen in *There Shall Be No Night*.

Show how both Minna and Josef develop and change through the stress of their lives. Many novelists show no organic character development; people remain static. Is the character development here authentic?

Is the author more interested in the persecution of the Jews or in the threat to science of a world occupied by war?

Does the personal disaster of Josef bear any resemblance to actual stories which you have heard? In what sense is he a symbol of his times?

Is Josef defeated in the end? Does the book end in triumph or despair? "You can't be useless, Minna, you fit into the timeless purpose. No one who struggles can be a waste."

What qualities make this book different from other novels of life in Nazi Germany? Note among others its intellectualism, lack of both sentimentality and bitterness, strain of idealism.

Show how the quotation from St. Paul, used in *There Shall Be No Night*, "We glory in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience," etc., applies also to the story of Josef and Minna.

Additional Reading:

Personal History, by Vincent Sheean.

Shining Scabbard, by R. C. Hutchinson.

Testament, by R. C. Hutchinson.

2. UNCONQUERABLE ASPIRATION

There Shall Be No Night, by Robert E. Sherwood

Summarize the preface, showing how the author has changed from the pacifism of *Idiot's Delight*, and why.

Has this play already become out of date, as the author feared? Do you agree that "the story of the Finns' three months of resistance continued to be the story of all decent civilized people . . .?"

Comment on the use of a radio broadcast as a dramatic device to introduce the characters of the play. Is this radio speech too long? Does it slow up the start of the play?

At the beginning of the radio speech Valkonen refers to Alexis Carrel. Trace the influence of *Man the Unknown* in both the speech and the whole play.

The speech of Dr. Valkonen on page 100, ". . . and then a band of pyromaniacs enters . . ." states the essential problem of the intellectuals of our time. The characters throughout the play argue out this

problem. Comment on this with especial reference to Act III, Scene 6.

Discuss the quotation from the Book of Revelations, used in the title, and show how it sums up the purpose of Dr. Valkonen's life.

Do you find this play optimistic in tone? Is it an argument against pacifism? Against appeasement?

Dr. Valkonen speaks of "man's unconquerable aspiration toward dignity and freedom and purity in the sight of God." Show how this applies also to *The Fire and the Wood*.

Does this play constitute an answer to Anne Lindbergh's widely read *The Wave of the Future*? What is Robert Sherwood's answer?

Additional Reading:

Man the Unknown, by Alexis Carrel.

The Wave of the Future, by Anne Lindbergh. (See also E. B. White's reply to this in "One Man's Meat," *Harper's*, February, 1941)

The Wave of the Past, by R. H. Markham.

MAN'S INNER WORLDS

Elsewhere in this program we have commented on the Protean and extensible character of the modern novel; within its loose definition we are no longer surprised to find biography and history, essay and poetry. It was to poetry that we used to look for an expression of those inner worlds of consciousness which lie adjacent to but just beyond the reach of ordinary day to day experience, for an awareness of colors beyond the obvious spectrum and of emotions too intangible for prose to catch. But contemporary poetry has often betrayed us, becoming more and more inverted in an occult and allusive form of self-communication, so that for many readers it fails to furnish the old satisfactions. Occasionally we find a novel written in the poet's mood, with the poet's imaginative perception of the overtones of life.

In *Random Harvest* Charles Ranier's inner world, to which he stumblingly finds his way through the preoccupations of a successful business and political career, is symbolized by a quiet lake lying between the two mountains of the past and the present. A greater contrast could scarcely be found to the well-bred denizens of James Hilton's England, with their restrained and somewhat Tennysonian idealism, than the crew of the destroyer *Delilah*, yet both novels share to some degree the perceptiveness and the intimations of poetry.

Delilah invites almost inevitably comparison with one of the greatest of American novels—also written with the exalted rhetoric and the mysticism of poetry—Melville's *Moby Dick*. Time and distance alone can say if the more recent novel is worthy of such a comparison, but the similarity of mood is obvious, the loneliness of men against the sea, of man against the infinite. The device of isolating a small group of human beings held together by some chance association is a fairly familiar one in literature. Goodrich uses it again with sufficient power and suggestiveness to make us feel this destroyer's crew, alone in the vast wash of ocean space, as symbols of humanity itself in a bewildering universe.

1. THE LAKE BETWEEN THE HILLS

Random Harvest, by James Hilton

What sort of England is described here? How does it differ from the England presented in *Mrs. Miniver* and *Landfall*? What is the time?

In the story of Ranier's return to his family Hilton writes as the novelist of manners, delicately satirical. Comment on the family as described here. In Barrie's play *Mary Rose* the same idea was dramatized: that the dead, could they return, would be unwelcome.

Note the skill with which the different periods of time are presented: Ranier's childhood, his war experience, his lost years, his business and political careers, are not given in chronological order, yet at the end they all fall into place.

What is the parable in Mr. Blampied's crusade to restore the old footways? What is Mr. Hilton's remedy for some of the ills of modern England?

The most sympathetically told part of the novel is the section describing Ranier's first tentative gropings back to normal after he left the hospital, and his gradual recovery. Compare this if possible with the similar story in *The Outward Room*.

What rôle did Paula play in his recovery? Does the ending of the novel seem to you implausible in the extreme? For what reasons?

Try to analyze the sources of Hilton's charm as a novelist, stressing especially his rare gift as a story teller, and his pleasant clear way of writing.

Is his world too attenuated, too lacking in robustness and vigor? Do his characters seem slightly unreal, without human passions? Do you consider Hilton a novelist of major importance?

This novel may be compared with *Lost Horizon*; the idea of a lost world of peace is not unlike the story of Ranier's lost years. Are the characters similar?

Additional Reading:

Lost Horizon, by James Hilton.

The Outward Room, by Millen Brand.

2. "WHO GO DOWN TO THE SEA"

Delilah, by Marcus Goodrich

The two stanzas from A. E. Housman quoted on the fly leaf give the mood and suggest the motive of this novel. How do these stanzas apply to *Delilah*? Is this story of men bound together in the shell of a destroyer applicable to all the men who perform the hard and lonely tasks of the world, such as coal mining?

Is this an autobiographical novel? Notice that the author, who comes from Texas, served on destroyers and submarines during the first World War. Which of the crew of *Delilah* suggests the author?

What books did young Warrington bring on board? What do they reveal of his personality? Do you think they are a list of the author's favorite books, or a typical list of what an ambitious young man would choose?

Describe Warrington's struggle to keep himself uncontaminated to keep his inner world of idealism inviolate. Does this seem to you a universal experience? It is subjected here to the most violent and difficult conditions, but something of the same may occur in school or college.

What rôle do women play in this book? How is this managed?

Since plot is not important here, present rather some selected characters or episodes as typical of the whole.

Note that the author has spent ten years writing this; do you think this careful writing is evident?

This is a book in which style is preëminent. Note that it is very different from the clipped terse style of the Hemingway school; much more ornamented. Do you like it?

In an interview published in the *New York Times* the author expressed his scorn for the familiar injunction to writers to use simple words. What sort of words does he enjoy using? Illustrate. Do you think he does this well? Does it increase the richness and suggestiveness of his style?

Do you think it correct to say that this book is written in the mood and with some of the imaginative power of poetry?

Additional Reading:

Moby Dick, by Herman Melville.

MASTERS OF THE ART

Reading may be an anodyne or a stimulant; the reader may be an earnest soul in search of information, a weary soul in search of a laugh, or an adventurous one who wants to be taken away from home. Those who seek adventures in reading need to bring with them some of the hardihood of the adventurer: openness of mind, freedom from prejudice, willingness to accept the new and strange as well as the tried and familiar.

For all readers, adventurous or not, there is one magic which never fails, the magic of the story-teller's art. Frequently in the course of this program we have had occasion to evaluate novels, to discuss what makes a novel go, to comment on the various types of modern fiction—the autobiographical novel, the historical novel, the novel of manners, the philosophical novel. But all of them need to be sustained by the story, the narrative power that makes us want to keep on reading. To conclude our program we have chosen two novels which brilliantly illustrate this power.

Fame Is the Spur, by Howard Spring, is a long, complex, many-charactered and much-incidented novel, in which the narrative is handled with great skill. In essence it is the old story of Dick Whittington, the poor boy's rise to fame and power, told here with ironic overtones and implications, and with a very rich background.

In *Up at the Villa* Somerset Maugham has returned from his recent excursions in political writing, and the old maestro is himself again. Accomplished magician that he is, he pulls a tiny pellet from his cuff and shakes it out into a many-colored series of opalescent scarves whose tints fade and grow bright again. In this very short novel he has compressed an astonishing number of continuously expanding and overlapping suggestions. A story of horror, or rather of the impact of horror upon complacency, as was *Christmas Holiday*, it leaves us somewhat breathless, but ready to cry "bravo" for the virtuosity of the performance.

1. A MODERN DICK WHITTINGTON

Fame Is the Spur, by Howard Spring

This novel of many threads is held together by the strong central character of Hamer Shawcross. Describe the period in which he lived, and his boyhood.

Note that the help was given Hamer from his earliest years. Discuss the different people who helped him, and show how he made stepping stones of each.

Comment on the finely balanced contrast between Arnold Ryerson, who is completely sincere, and Hamer. In what way is Hamer insincere? How is the completely sincere man handicapped?

This is not only the story of Hamer Shawcross's rise, but of the rise of the Labor Party in England during the years before the first World War; its days of power and its dissolution. What ironic comments are implicit in the story of the Labor Party, as in the personal story of Hamer?

Here is also the story of the suffrage movement in England. Describe the part played in it by Ann and Pen.

Observe the effect gained by using throughout excerpts from Hamer's speeches, his full-blown rhetoric about the lives of the poor set over against the reality of his early days.

Discuss the skilful use of the time element; reminiscence, flashbacks, glimpses forward, all are used, but the continuity of narrative is never lost. Compare with the somewhat similar juggling of time in *Random Harvest*.

What is the symbolism of the breaking up in the rain of the Coronation crowds? If possible, compare this with Victoria Sackville-West's description of the coronation of Edward VII in *The Edwardians*.

Does Hamer Shawcross remind you of any actual leader of the British Labor Party? How does his career compare with that of Charles Ranier, in *Random Harvest*?

Additional Reading:

The Edwardians, by Victoria Sackville-West.

The Day Before, by H. M. Tomlinson.

2. THE VIRTUOSO PRESENTS . . .

Up at the Villa, by Somerset Maugham

Observe the beguiling simplicity of the beginning: the lovely lady who must choose between two eligible suitors.

Show how this is expanded into ring within ring of overlapping stories; the past lives of Mary, of Rowley, and of Edgar; the bitterly contemporary story of Karl; the crime and its consequences.

Karl is perhaps the only one of the four who really belongs to the present-day world. Why is this true?

The story has the pace of the best detective fiction. How does the author manage also to suggest so much? Notice the extreme precision of his style.

Mary romanticized her night with Karl into something generous and beautiful; show how completely she had overlooked its possible effect on him. What sort of person was she?

What of Edgar? Does his attitude after the crime seem to you noble? Is the author making fun of "empire builders"? Does he rather withhold admiration and condemnation from all his characters, contenting himself with setting down their stories?

What do you think of Mary's decision to marry Rowley? What effect, beyond the immediate one, did the death of Karl have upon her?

Is there a sort of sadism, of ultimate cruelty, in the author's use of Karl's death simply for its effect on a group of comparatively trivial people? Or do you think he uses it this way?

Why does the author delight in this juxtaposition of the untouched and the horrible, the sheltered and the violent? Is the theme of *Up at the Villa* essentially the same as that of *Christmas Holiday*? Notice that the stories are entirely different.

Comment on Maugham's mastery of the short novel, as compared with Willa Cather. Which seems to you more subtle, more suggestive? Which is more compressed?

Additional Reading:

Christmas Holiday, by Somerset Maugham.

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