7-1-1948

The critical and popular reception of the Pulitzer Prize novels, 1930-1939

India Rawlings Foster

THE CRITICAL AND POPULAR RECEPTION OF THE PULITZER PRIZE NOVELS, 1930 - 1939

BY

INDIA RAWLINGS FOSTER

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

AUGUST, 1948

Preface

I am grateful to the many people who aided me while this manuscript was in preparation. I want to thank Dr. Samuel W. Stevenson for his never-failing suggestions, his invaluable guidance, and his amazing sympathy. I am indebted to Dr. Edward C. Peple for encouragement, inspiration, and generous answers to innumerable questions.

Librarians at the University of Richmond, Richmond Public Library, and Virginia State Library, aided me in securing details from books and periodicals. To them also goes my gratitude.

Table of Contents

THE CRITICAL AND POPULAR RECEPTION OF THE PULITZER PRIZE NOVELS, 1930 - 1939

This study will deal with the ten novels that were winners of the Pulitzer Prize during the years 1930-1939 inclusive. It will attempt in each instance to indicate the character and quality of the prize-winning novel, the theme it treats, any literary or artistic tendency it may seem to indicate, the critical reception it received, and the popular favor with which it met. A brief review of each novel will be presented. This will be followed by representative excerpts from the comments of reviewers and critics, and by data to indicate the nature and extent of its popular appeal. These novels, in their chronological order are:

1930 Laughing Boy, by Oliver Perry La Farge (Houghton Mifflin and Co.)
1931 Years of Grace, by Margaret Ayer Barnes (Houghton Mifflin and Co.)
1932 Good Earth, by Pearl S. Buck (The John Day Co.)
1933 The Store, by Thomas Sigismund Stribling (Literary Guild)
1934 Lamb In His Bosom, by Caroline Miller (Harper and Brothers.)
1935 Now In November, by Josephine Winslow Johnson (Simon and Schuster)
1936 Honey In The Horn, by Harold L. Davis (Harper and Brothers)
1937 Gone With The Wind, by Margaret Mitchell (The Macmillan Co.)

1938 The Late George Apley, by John P. Marquand (Little Brown and Co.)
1939 The Yearling, by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (Charles Scribner's)

The prize for the year of 1930 went to Oliver Perry La Farge for his Laughing Boy, a story of modern Indian life as it is lived by Laughing Boy, a young Navaho, and his mate, Slim Girl. The Navaho ceremonial dances, Laughing Boy's work in fashioning silver and turquoise bracelets, and his wife's rug weaving form the background of this novel. Contact with other Indian tribes and a more evil contact with the white man's civilization are also part of the story. The highest standard of American manhood is attained by the handsome Navaho Indian who longed to follow the trail of beauty. This trail ends in the adobe desert when Laughing Boy is able to say over Slim Girl's grave, "In beauty it is finished. Thanks." It is written in language that is straightforward and at the same time so lyrical and colorful as to be almost hypnotic. Oliver La Farge describes Slim Girl thus:

She was too slender, seeming frail to dance in all that rich, heavy ornamentation....She was well dressed to show off what she wore; silver and stones with soft highlights and deep shadows glowed against the nightblue velveteen of her blouse; oval plaques of silver were at her

waist, and ceremonial jewels in the fringe of her sash. Her blue skirt swung with her short calculated steps, ankle-length, above the dull red leggins and moccasins with silver buttons. The dark clothing, matching the night, was in contrast to the other dancers, even her blanket was mainly blue....[1]

A lyrical description of desert and forest reads:

The sun was low, the shadow sides of cliffs became deep pools of violet seeping out across the sand....The place was full of shadows. Looking up, one saw magnificent, dark firs growing along the ledges and hanging valleys. Up there, the ruddy rock, touched by sunlight, became dull orange and buff, with flecks of gold, and a golden line where it met a flawless sky.[2]

A tribute is paid to the beautiful passages of this novel by F. L. Robins:

Familiarity with the Navajo character, country and customs is the necessary foundation for such a story, but it is only the loom upon which a poet, imaginative, tender and skilful, has woven a lovely spot among drab novels of conventional setting, and theme.[3]

The finely drawn characters develop as the plot requires. The critic of the New York World comments as follows:

....His conception of the Navaho, exprest in the book, resembles neither the symbolic figure created by Fenimore Cooper nor the cigar-store wooden Indian. He has little use for symbolism....The story is like the story of a foreign land.[4]

A controversial remark is found in an article in the Literary Digest of 1930.

---

1. Oliver La Farge, Laughing Boy, pp. 8 f.
2. Ibid., pp. 148 f.
3. "The Leisure Arts," The Outlook and Independent, CLIII (November 6, 1929), 387.
4. The New York World, as quoted in The Literary Digest, CV (May 31, 1930), 20.

> When were prizes ever satisfactory all around? Especially in the field of esthetics....William Soskin of the New York Post would prefer Ernest Hemingway to Oliver La Farge.[5]

The glow found in this story is the love of nature and the unconventional expression of sentiment. A romantic note is sounded in the lyrical description of the sensuous beauty of nature. Interwoven with this story is the expression of sentiment, which according to Joseph Shipley, "is not sentimental so long as it is thought to be proper, normal or just." The tender susceptibility of Laughing Boy's love for Slim Girl is supported by a study of gentle manners which lends charm to the story. The mention of drab novels lends significance to George Jean Nathan's report that "the hardboiled school of drama and literature ....is all too evidently on the wane."[6] The judges' choice of Oliver La Farge's Laughing Boy over Ernest Hemingway's Farewell To Arms seems to indicate their preference for tender romance over the bitterness of a convalescing soldier.

Laughing Boy appears in "The Bookman's Monthly Score" for the first time in August, 1930. At the head of this

---

5. "The Pulitzer Blues," The Literary Digest, CV (May 31, 1930), 19.

6. Frederick Lewis Allen, Since Yesterday, p. 26.

particular compilation, the reporter remarks:

For the severalth time your reporter is impelled to remark, after surveying the result of the current compilation of librarians' reports, that the taste of the great reading public for a good story is unerring....And what is great literature, after all, but just that kind of story![7]

The prize-winning novel of 1931 is Years of Grace by Margaret Ayer Barnes. The theme and setting are conventional, for this is a chronicle of plain Jane Ward of Chicago, who lived a prosaic life in the corn belt. Jane is a charming and well-balanced woman, who moves calmly through all the great experiences of her life. From her girlhood engagement to the lovable sculptor, Andre, to the years of her marriage to Stephen Carver of Boston, and her love for the husband of a friend, Jane maintains the even tenor of her way and emerges gracefully into middle age.

I believe this novel is outstanding in two respects, namely, richness of character and background, and the texture of its writing. In portraying characters, Mrs. Barnes shows that she is a clever student of human nature. In describing Jane as a young girl she writes:

---

7. Frank Parker Stockbridge, "The Bookman's Monthly Score," The Bookman, LXXI (August, 1930) 572.

Jane woke next morning in a state of great excitement. For a minute she couldn't quite recollect, as she lay in her big walnut bed with the early sunshine streaming in her east window, just what was going to happen that was so very nice. She felt strangely entangled by dreams that she couldn't remember. Happy dreams, though and vivid, but lost even as she tried to clutch after them. Then she knew: Andre was back.[8]

In describing Andre she writes:

Chicago would have stifled him....His abrupt departure from her life had been much in the romantic tradition established by Romeo in the balcony window. His alternatives had been the same. 'I must be gone and live, or stay and die!'[9]

In the second part of the story Jane is the wife of Stephen Carver, typical son of typical Bostonians. With one sentence Mrs. Barnes gives us a clear picture of him:

Yes--Stephen looked just like what he was--the forty-four-year-old first vice-president of the Midland Loan and Trust Company, badly in need of his summer vacation.[10]

Jane, now thirty-six, finds herself in a buffer state between the older generation and the younger. The mother of three children, she realizes in her secret heart that life is and always will be worth living. Perhaps the finest characterization of Jane is given in the third part of the story when she asks herself:

To what end, then, did you struggle to live with dignity

---

8. Margaret Ayer Barnes, Years of Grace, p. 46.
9. Ibid., p. 251.
10. Ibid., p. 245.

and decency and decorum?....Was it only to cultivate in your own character that intangible quality that Jane, for want of a better word had defined as grace?....'I have lived and accomplished the task that Destiny gave me, and now I shall pass beneath the earth no common shade.'..Across the years Dido had said that to Jane.[11]

I think the chief survival value of a novel lies in our ability to identify ourselves with the characters therein. The above descriptions of characters fit into our everyday lives and make us richer for the reading.

As for the background of this novel, it is full of the very stuff of life itself. It paints a picture of the American social scene in the last four decades. The pages of time are turned back understandingly and present those by-gone 'years of grace' as a human document of years that are around the corner.

In addition to being a distinguished novel, according to the terms of the Pulitzer award, the winner must deal preferably with American life. From the beginning to the end Years of Grace meets this test successfully. On page one we find Jane's father buried behind the pages of the Chicago Tribune, a practice which is accepted almost as an American custom. A little further along, on page ninety-one,

---

11. Ibid., p. 577.

we find Jane entering Bryn Mawr College in the rolling hills of Pennsylvania. On page two hundred twenty-three we note that the war of 1898 is over; the Philippine Islands are owned by the United States. On page two hundred twenty-eight Jane's visit to New York will be recognized as typical of a short visit to that metropolis. Suburban life in Chicago is commented on as being narrow and confining, on page three hundred seven. Nowhere in the book is there a scene outside America.

The final question to be raised is whether this book can be called a romantic or a realistic novel. Guy Holt asks the following question concerning Years of Grace:

> It is odd, at first glance, that so placid, so unexciting a book, should enjoy a wide circulation. Why the success of a story so unadventurous, so lacking in movement? Have we come to a time, I wonder, when the urge toward vicarious experience has worn itself out, when people are turning from the paths of escape--from sentiment, or sophistication, or red-blooded romance--to the reassuring haven of the book to supply the answer, but Years of Grace may be sounding the keynote of the more popular fiction of the next decade.[12]

This "haven of the familiar and the average" lies in the various social scenes of American family life, in suburban Chicago and in the metallic clang of New York

---

12. Guy Holt, Bookman, XVI (September, 1930), 72.

City. This story contains no romance of the far away and the long ago. The element of beauty found here is that of Industrial America's skyscraper and subway. It is the same kind of beauty one finds in the poems of Carl Sandburg. "Episodes often based on love, adventure, and combat"[13] are not found in Years of Grace. No "paths of escape" are offered to those who prefer full flowering of the older traditions of romantic literature. This story contains no balcony scenes or ivy-covered towers. It is a seemingly realistic novel of quiet Jane who lives in modern America.

Basil Davenport sums up his review thus:

> This long story of a lady has everywhere a fineness suited to its subject, but it has also the weakness that must belong to anything that is drawn too fine.[14]

Frances Lamont Robbins, in reviewing this novel, concludes thus:

> ....A detached and clear picture of great changes of the past fifty years and a faithful, mature rendition of an ordinary life and its setting of people and things, give this novel solidity. Vivid descriptions and excellent dialogue give it sparkle.[15]

Louis Kronenberger writes:

> ....Mrs. Barnes has wrought with urbanity and skill upon a generous canvas. If it is not striking in its originality,

---

13. W. F. Thrall, and A. Hibbard, A Handbook To Literature, p. 379.
14. Basil Davenport, "The Story of a Lady," The Saturday Review of Literature, CLV (July 19, 1930), 1203.
15. Frances Lamont Robbins, "This Week's Reading," Outlook and Independent, CLV (July 2, 1930), 348.

this story of the death of an old order and the birth of a new one, of the perpetually renewed conflict between succeeding generations, is perhaps more than usually satisfying. It holds the reader's attention to the end and carries with it an inescapable sense of authenticity.[16]

Dorothy Van Doren writes:

This is a woman's novel about a woman's loves. And its limitations lie in the fact that it is so unmistakably, so exclusively feminine....This, of course, is an old theme and an always interesting one--the conflict between desire and duty--only Miss Barnes would not call it duty. She calls it "grace." To Jane Ward, the heroine of this book, love and individual desire did not matter so much as not making her parents unhappy, not doing foolish things, not hurting her husband's feelings although she no longer loved him, not endangering her children's status in the world by a divorce ....[17]

This novel ranks fourth on the Fiction "best seller" list for 1930 and fifth on the 1931 list.

Years of Grace was the first novel by a new writer from Chicago; it won the Pulitzer Prize and made its author one of the established favorites in the fiction scene.[18]

The prize for the year of 1932 went to Pearl S. Buck for her Good Earth, a story of Chinese peasant life. Wang Lung, the peasant who experiences crop failure, dire poverty, and famine, never gives up his land. With his wife, O-lan, he eventually builds up a landed manor, hoards silver, and owns slaves. Wang Lung's sons are a disappointment to him; they do not inherit his love for the soil. Over the dying

---

16. Louis Kronenberger, " 'Years of Grace' and Other Recent Works of Fiction," The New York Times Review, XXXV (July 6, 1930), 6.
17. Dorothy Van Doren, "Female Decorum," The Nation, CXXXI (Aug. 6, 1930), 158.
18. Alice Payne Hackett, Fifty Years of Best Sellers-1895-1945, pp. 61 f.

body of the old one they plan to sell this land and move as rich men to the city.

This novel is distinguished by its simple dignity of style, the firmness of its character drawing, and its wealth of detail. It is an excellent story told with power, coherence, and a sense of dramatic reality. The plot is direct and simple. Wang Lung, a hard-working young farmer, finds in the land an enduring foundation for the security of his family and a satisfaction passing the love of money. The flow of narrative found here is almost biblical in its dignity and simplicity. The story develops and grows as quietly as do the rice beds from seedtime to harvest. Life of the peasants in the Far East is interpreted without the mystery and exoticism usually associated with Orientals. Dignity and importance are given to their lives by the clarity and honesty of Mrs. Buck's portrayal. Artistic sincerity is found in this quiet presentation of an alien civilization. The essential truth of the story makes it seem complete and whole. There are no forced situations; the manner of presentation is clear and delightful. This poignant picture of present-day China is a saga of prose

comparable to Rolvaag's Giants in the Earth or Hamsun's Growth of the Soil.

In drawing the characters, Mrs. Buck has presented the essential qualities of the Chinese to us. Wang Lung, with his sense of responsibility toward the past and the future, is fundamentally an Oriental. Following his father's advice, he marries a slave girl from the House of Hwang. O-lan, his wife, is ugly, but good-tempered, and strong enough to help him in the fields. Her quiet acceptance of Wang Lung and his earth cottage is typical of the stolid, patient, Chinese peasant. Through rich harvests, famine, poverty, and child-rearing, she remains faithful. The culmination of Wang Lung's prosperity comes with his removal to the tenantless House of Hwang. He is recognized as the rich man of the district and founder of a great family. His sons are portrayed as gentlemen, a little uneasy lest they be thought of ignoble origin. His grandsons are easy and confident as lords of the manor. Wang Lung, as a further sign of his prosperity, takes a second wife to sit beside the unlovely O-lan. He can afford a pretty wife this time; so he chooses Lotus Flower, slender as a bamboo, with eyes like apricots.

As Wang Lung grows older he becomes disillusioned. He is proud of his sons, but he is deeply wounded because they do not share his attachment for the land. His last days are shadowed by a premonition of a decline like the one he had seen overtake the House of Hwang. The life of Wang Lung unfolds naturally and marches sedately on as the seasons of seedtime and harvests. He is a Chinese peasant, who during times of famine and plenty, flood and drouth, loved the land above everything else.

The minor characters, while not so minutely drawn, have their lives firmly embedded in the fabric of the story. Wang Lung's father, the old one, speaks of the scarcity of rice and water, and of his hope of grandsons to warm his old bones. The gateman at the House of Hwang emphasizes the ignorance of Wang Lung as a farmer bridegroom new to the city, by cheating him out of his silver. The power of the House of Hwang is revealed by the old lady at its head, known as Ancient Mistress, who dressed in pearly satin, smoked opium, and casually gave away the slave O-lan to be wife to Wang Lung. Wang Lung's uncle, slouchy and a man of

evil destiny, makes demands on his nephew, pointing out the respect a Chinese youth should have for his father's generation as laid down in the Sacred Edicts. The starving neighbor Ching begs a handful of small, mouldy, red beans, during a famine. The fall of the House of Hwang is glimpsed in a picture of the Old Lord, dirty and coughing, in a stained old grey robe, with a yellow hand trembling at his loose lips. Cuckoo, the slave of Lotus, whose hawk's eyes often glittered with malice, shows how a servant can direct a great household by her cleverness. Pear Blossom, the companion of Wang Lung's old age, enhances the picture of his last peaceful days as she sits in the middle court with him by a table lit with red candles.

The wealth of detail in The Good Earth builds up a solid and secure scene in which the characters move. Descriptions of characters, events, and scenes are woven integrally into the narrative.

The ordinary Chinese are freed from the mystic veils and scenes of artistic convention. They emerge as ordinary men and women; this is new to the Western reader.

Together this man and this woman stood before the gods of their fields. The woman watched the ends of the incense redden and turn grey....It was as though she felt that the incense belonged to them both; it was a moment of marriage.[19]

Swift mention of little incidents enriches the long tale as it unfolds. Tea leaves, considered precious, are counted before being used. Crows flying into the darkening sky are considered an evil omen. Rich men in town ride in hired jinrikshas, while sedan chairs of bamboo are used by the wealthy people in the country. Locusts falling upon the land, eat it as bare as winter. Delicate soups are made of white fish and the hearts of young cabbage. Fragrant almond oil and red satin garments are used in preparation for weddings. Varying moods are deftly created by a thousand little touches which become intrinsic parts of the story.

The scenes are vividly portrayed by the use of detailed descriptions. To read these descriptive lines is to see the jade green rice fields and the golden grains of wheat and barley. The land is in turn brilliant with sunshine, green with springtime, and bare in winter. The beauty of the stars is described as cruel, the moonlight as silver mist. The clouds gather unwillingly above the parched land;

---

19. Pearl S. Buck, The Good Earth, p. 25.

blossoming trees of plum and cherry scent the earth. Green willows overhang the dark fertility of the soil. These scenes, which are adequately portrayed, furnish the environment needed by the characters. A city of the far away Orient is described thus:

> With the food spilling out of the markets, with the streets of silk shops flying brilliant banners of black and red and orange silk to announce their wares, with rich men clothed in satin and in velvet, soft-fleshed rich men with their skin covered with garments of silk and their hands like flowers for softness and perfume and the beauty of idleness, with all of these for the regal beauty of the city, in that part where Wang Lung lived there was not food enough to feed savage hunger and not clothes enough to cover bones.[20]

A comment from The New York Times Book Review reads:

> In its deeper implications it is less a comment upon life in China than upon the meaning and tragedy of life as it is lived in any age in any quarter of the globe. Notwithstanding the essential differences in manners and traditions, one tends to forget, after the first few pages, that the persons of the story are Chinese and hence foreign.[21]

Nancy Evans writes in the Bookman:

> The strange power of a western woman to make an alien civilization seem as casual, as close, as the happenings of the morning is surprising; but it is less amazing than her power to illuminate the destiny of man as it is in all countries and at all times by quietly telling the story of poor Wang Lung. It is true that religion, clothing, tradition, food and even the skies themselves are different from the things we know; and yet these differences are of no consequence.[22]

---

20. Pearl S. Buck, The Good Earth, p. 117.
21. " 'The Good Earth' and Other Recent Works of Fiction," The New York Times Book Review, (March 15, 1931) p. 6.
22. Nancy Evans, "Fiction," the Bookman, LXXIII (May, 1931), p. 324.

Miss Buck's story makes it easy to think of China as being very near and Chinese people as being very real. The locale of the story is forgotten; its universality is remembered. Romance of the far away and long ago becomes a story of here and now. Romance abounds in scenic descriptions and biblical language. Realism is prevalent in the happenings of famine and plenty. The Oriental characters are not wrapped in mystery; they are real people whose problems could easily be ours. The romance found here seems to be that of background. Out of this background emerges the sterner stuff of life. In the hands of a skillful author like Mrs. Buck, this blending of romance and realism is very effective.

This novel headed the Fiction list of "best sellers" for 1931 and 1932. According to Miss Hackett's book from which it is taken, estimated sales were over 500,000.. This remark is found in Miss Hackett's book:

The Good Earth, by Pearl S. Buck, topped all novels of the year, making a permanent place in our literature for itself and her other novels of China.[23]

A reviewer writes:

Another of to-day's best-sellers, The Good Earth, deals with the life story of a poor Chinese peasant whose passionate yet practical attachment to his native soil moves him to

---

23. Alice Payne Hackett, Fifty Years of Best Sellers-1895-1945, pp. 63 f.

save every penny and buy ever more and more land....With a reservation made necessary on account of many over realistic pages, one may name the book an intimate and accurate picture of Chinese peasant life and customs.[24]

Younghill Kang, an Oriental, familiar with underlying standards of China, writes:

....It ought to be very moving to a Western reader. There is only one difficulty. Romantic love is a false center of psychology to ascribe to the typical Oriental man or woman, reared in the traditional bondage of quite different ideals. Although romantic love is second nature to the Western woman, trained to it by the traditions of a thousand years, it would not even be understood by an old-fashioned Chinese wife. By placing the emphasis on romantic love, all Confucian society is reduced to a laughable pandemonium. ...."The Good Earth" though it has no humor or profound lyric passion, shows good technique and much artistic sincerity. Thus, it is discouraging to find that the novel works toward confusion, not clarification. Its implied comparison between Western and Eastern ways is unjust to the latter....[25]

Frances Lamont Robbins, writes:

....But remote as the scene is, there is no sense of remoteness in the characters. The reader forgets that he is following with eager interest the life of a man on the other side of the world, that he is watching scenes exotic and strange. Wang Lung is every man....The Good Earth is a novel which can be re-read--not such a common thing.... Pearl Buck in her oriental setting works much as Dorothy Canfield does in her western one....[26]

The award for 1933 went to Thomas Sigismund Stribling, for The Store, whose central figure is Colonel Miltiades Vaiden, a Southern gentleman of the old school. Colonel

---

24. Lucy Collison-Morley, "Shorter Notices," The Catholic World, CXXXIII (September, 1931), p. 763.
25. Younghill Kang, "China is Different," The New Republic, LXVII, (July 1, 1931), p. 185.
26. Frances Lamont Robbins, "The Week's Reading," Outlook and Independent, CLVII, (March 18, 1931).

Vaiden, a fighter at Shiloh and leader of the Klan during reconstruction, has settled down into shiftless middle age. The scene is Florence, Alabama, in 1884. The story, which closes with the lynching of Vaiden's quadroon son, depicts the end of the old and the beginning of the new South.

In spite of excellent material, the novel is vague, seeming more of an outline than a developed subject. The story does not grow from the characters; they impress us as puppets who play. Portraits are drawn, but characters are not developed. Stribling's people are not wooden, but we never really know them. Their experience of life leaves them unchanged. There is no profound creation. For example, Miltiades belonged to the emerging middle class which dominated the nineteenth century. He planned to consolidate his position by a marriage with a daughter of the local aristocracy, the Lacefields. When the Civil War ruined the Lacefields, Miltiades prudently betrayed and abandoned Drusilla Lacefield and married the daughter of the local storekeeper. As an individual he might have brooded upon this breach of convention, but since it was not in keeping with the author's purpose, he promptly forgot it. He also forgot his quadroon

half-sister, Gracie; and resolutely thrust away the memory of the lynching of Gracie's son, who was also his son. Drusilla Lacefield speaks as the mouthpiece of her generation, never as an individual. Sydna, her daughter, who becomes the second wife of Miltiades, is an example of the new aristocracy absorbing the old.

The theme of this novel is white injustice and black resignation. Cause and consequences are traced in a dozen lives. A whole community is involved by an intricate series of events, in which the fate of whites and blacks is inextricably interwoven. As a social historian, Mr. Stribling has not told us the whole story of the South. There are gaps in the picture as he presents it. A person unacquainted with the South must bear in mind the differences in attitude toward the Negro, both as a person and as a problem, which distinguish the Southern aristocrat from the middle-class and poor white. Mr. Stribling has imaginative vigor, and uses distinct dialogue. He falls readily into melodrama. His technique is unequal to his magnificent theme. This work is interesting, but it lacks brilliant interpretation.

Tenderness and humor are found in the telling of this story, but deep emotion is lacking. Tenderness is found in Gracie's love for Toussaint, her quadroon son; she saves her meager earnings to educate him in a Northern city. Later, when she cuts the rope which lynchers used to hang her son, sadness is felt, by the reader, but there is no great emotion. Sydna Crowninshield, as a child, thinks of Colonel Vaiden as a chivalrous knight who comforted her dying father on the battleground of Shiloh. Her acceptence of him as a husband is due to his sweetness and tenderness as contrasted with the lovemaking of boys of her own age. The words used are inept; the scenes are not very convincing.

There are many instances of dry humor. Ponny, the Colonel's first wife, has the gregarious impulse of fleshy people to propel her large body among smaller people. Colonel Miltiades, reared as a country gentleman, was repelled at the idea of taking a "position." The fact that the stores made a specialty of unattractiveness is a humorous comment on stores in small Southern towns. There is humor in Drusilla's analysis of Colonel Miltiades to his face as a man who pretends

to be conventional, but who really sticks at nothing and regrets little.

It is not stipulated in the terms of the awards that a novel must be great. That it deal preferably with American life is a term that is met, as the scene is laid in the town of Florence, Alabama. As for being distinguished, it has only to be the most distinguished novel of the preceding year. This novel is the second in a trilogy. In these three novels, Stribling has attempted to present on a broad and detailed canvas a picture of life in the deep South streching from the days just before Fort Sumter down to the present. There are no political, social, or moral meanings here. In short, The Forge, The Store, and Unfinished Cathedral are not extraordinary.

Elements of beauty, characteristic of the romantic novel, are found in this story. Gracie, with her cream-colored skin, is described as a picturesque figure in a black lace dress and a red lace shawl. Brilliants gleam in her hair while drama is expressed in her eyes. Sydna is described as exquisite and slender, fair and soulptured; a princess in her wedding gown. The soft radiance of moonlight shines on granite

columns. The charm of old manors, half hidden by trees is redolent of poetry. Silver poplars and gnarled mulberries make pictures of beauty.

Sassafras bushes, sumac, and elder stalks unfolded their greens to the flattery of the sun. Plums were in bloom, a white perfumed lace wound about crinkled black bushes. The whole thin, neglected plantation was touched here and there with accidental beauty.[27]

In the New Republic we read:

It is the old-fashioned novel with naturalistic events made to seem symbolic....Out of the clumsy sentences emerge sharp portraits like Gracie the quadroon and Alex Gang the white farmer, but the real novel behind the events is never there. A superb thought has been lost in a welter of detail.[28]

Kenneth White writes thus:

Neither "The Forge" nor "The Store" meets any of the expectations reasonably aroused by an author who has chosen to show the South at three of its most important moments. They are old-fashioned novels, melodramatic and "plotty," whose decor is Southern. Their settings are minutely done as elaborate stage sets, and as far as the novel's content is concerned, fundamentally as unreal.[29]

Isabel Paterson concludes her review thus:

The abundance of Mr. Stribling's invention, the scope of his intelligence, the edge of his irony and his play of humor would make this a great novel if it possessed a trifle more distinction of style and depth of emotion.[30]

A romantic background, highlighted with lyrical passages, sets an old-fashioned stage for "naturalistic events" of

---

27. Thomas Sigismund Stribling, The Store, p. 450.
28. "Fiction," the New Republic, LXXII (August 17, 1932), 27.
29. Kenneth White, "Second Act," The Nation, CXXV (August 24, 1932), 176.
30. Isabel Paterson, "The Nemesis of Slavery," New York Herald Tribune Books, VIII (July 3, 1932), 4.

unimportant people. Miltiades' brother and his wife run a boarding house. The Colonel accepts a job in a store as a step in his plan to own the Lacefield plantation. Gregarious drummers tell impossible anecdotes in the lobby of the Florence Hotel as they sell their wares. Toussaint blacks shoes and dreams of an education up North. Negroes sell their cotton and are cheated by the store keepers. Whatever novel is found in these events is, according to the critics, very realistic.

The Store is sixth in the list of "The Six Best Sellers" in New York Herald Tribune Books for Sunday, August 14, 1932.

In 1934 the winner was Caroline Miller for Lamb In His Bosom, a story of pioneer life in the back country of Georgia in pre-Civil War days. Especially it is the story of Cean Carver from the day Lonzo Smith brought her as a bride to their cabin in the wilderness, until as a white-haired woman she welcomed her second husband back from the war.

The setting of this novel is the Georgia wilderness in the years before the Civil War. It is a wonderfully large and vital picture, containing the freshness of a new world.

So vivid are the fields, farms, wild flowers, and animals--one wonders whether these things are background or the real life of the story. The author's task is the difficult one of weaving a rich pattern in which real men and women live out their days in the backwoods of Georgia. These people are sturdy men and women of a small, isolated backwoods community who are bred to pioneer hardship. The main characters are Cean Carver and Lonzo Smith. The story opens on their wedding day as they drive away in an ox-cart to their new little farmhouse. The family that Cean leaves behind, consisting of her parents and three brothers, is the most comfortable and the most highly respected in the small community. Carefully drawn sketches of these characters are presented to us as the story unfolds. The father is hard-working and tyrannical; the mother is a homebody. Jasper, the oldest brother, is solid and plodding; Lias, the second brother, is hot-headed, quick-minded, and rebellious. Jake is the sensitive youngest brother. Separated from us both in time and space, these characters are permanently made present to us in these pages. As a group of people they take on life by their attitude, their actions, and above all,

by their speech. It is a homely speech, spare and clean-grained. Miss Miller's prose, old-fashioned and slow-moving, consorts with their speech perfectly, making it fully alive.

Cean is the true heroine of the story. She has the strength and vitality of a pioneer, the warmth of a simple person. Between her and Lonzo, all their married life is a perfect but unspoken love. It is a feeling too subtle to exist among civilized people. There is something elemental and earthy in the descriptions of Cean and Lonzo.

> Her face was brown and full and bright; her mouth was wide and closed firmly over her teeth. Her hair blowsed over her temples from where it was parted in the middle. Her bright brown eyes went shyly about, seeking gentle satisfaction in the soft air, the sunshine, the thick plodding of the hooves of the ox on the slick brown pine-needles and soft sand....Her happy glance slipped shyly to Lonzo's bearded face. His neck, browned by sunlight, was moist in fine beads of sweat....She saw the set of his large head, the set of his strong shoulders, then her eyes hurried away, a little frightened by that nearness, by the coarse black hair, the strong male shoulders, the sturdy silence of the man beside her who was her husband.[31]

Cean's character develops fully as the story moves leisurely through her two marriages. Dramatic incidents occur in which she comes desperately near losing her life.

---

31. Caroline Miller, Lamb In His Bosom, p. 4.

She kills a panther in her cabin, is bitten by a rattlesnake, and is dangerously ill many times. When Lonzo dies of blood-poisoning before he is forty, Cean marries a wandering preacher who settles in her community. The next ten years are comparatively matter- of-fact ones. Cean's second husband goes to the Civil War, and with his return home the story ends. After Lonzo's death the book becomes dry and prosaic. Poetry gives way to a daily round of happenings in which births, deaths, and marriages become mere items in a parish register. The whole story could have easily ended with the death of Lonzo.

This story is more than an excellent piece of sectional history. Understanding of life goes hand in hand with beauty of expression. Pre-Civil War life in the pinelands is permeated with shrewd comment and quiet humor. The author's sincerity shows through her work, lifting it from mere competence into real importance. The craftsmanship of this novel is skillful; the prose is sensitive and full of beauty. On page four of this novel we find these lines:

> But now, on Cean's marriage day, yellow jessamine smothered the tops of the pine trees, maples burned aloft in the cool gloom, and all the little saplings and all the

the giant pines lifted the candles of their wax-colored leaf-buds, white candles on the tip of every tree, on the end of every limb, burning with slow fire into growth.[32]

Adventure is found in trips to the Coast by the men each fall. They gather up cotton, potatoes, brown sugar, wool, cowhides, and comb honey. These things are traded for gold and store-bought goods. It is eighty miles to the coast through pines, palmettos, and occasional swamplands. At night the men camp by oakwood fires. Jake sprawls on the white sand, watches the blue-green water, and yearns for the romance of the far away.

> Names stirred his senses as sounds might do, strange, unbelievable names; Africky and the Negroes, Angland with her ships like seabirds; other ships that they called galleons, with red Spanish gold clinking in their dark holds as the tall waves washed them across the deep seas, black men, white men, men colored brown like mahogany wood....Oh, the Coast was a strange place, a place past believing, whence you could lie on the sand past which the waves would come, after a while, and wash out your tracks.[33]

The inherent dignity of these backwoods people lifts their lives out of drabness into quiet beauty. The joy of living is found in the hope of seedtime and the triumph of harvest. Making a patch-work quilt, buying a mirror, or owning a clock is an exciting event. The real combat

---

32. Ibid., p. 4.
33. Ibid., p. 52.

lies close at hand in rattlers, panthers, and the ever encroaching swamp. The Georgia pinelands contain the peace of Shakespeare's forest of Arden, and we say with him, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

Louis Kronenberger comments:

It is not as a novel that Lamb In His Bosom is notable, but as a picture....As a group the characters have an amazing physical lifelikeness, the strength and vitality of pioneers, the warmth of simple folk.[34]

Mary M. Colum observes:

This novel is distinguished for the powerful way in which it is told. There is honest beauty, and more, in its unusual turns of simple word and phrase.[35]

A review in The Saturday Review of Literature reads:

This is the story of a family in a backwash Georgia community in the 1840's. Both in place and time it seems to be a product of that atavistic nostalgia which has inspired so many novels of the soil; for the Carvers are isolated from the current of history and might with a few changes represent similar isolated families to-day....Its real value lies in many passages of lyrical descriptive prose which have a considerable, if disembodied, beauty....[36]

The beauty of the prose suggests a romantic pattern in literature. The comparison of this beautiful writing to a picture may be called the romance of the picturesque. The demand for a "wider sense of human experience" could call for the romance of the far away and the long ago. This

---

34. Louis Kronenberger, "A First Novel of Distinguished Quality," The New York Times Book Review, (September 17, 1933), p. 7.

35. Mary M. Colum, "The American Mind In Literature," The Forum, XC (December, 1933), 330.

36. "The New Books," The Saturday Review of Literature, X, (September 2, 1933), 84.

experience, however, is found in the 1840's in an isolated Georgia community. The people and their problems of this community are realistic enough. The critics quoted here do not classify this novel as romantic or realistic. It may be that the quiet beauty of this novel defies classification.

Lamb In His Bosom appeared on the Fiction list of "best sellers" for 1934 in Miss Hackett's book.

The prize-winning novel for 1935 was Josephine Winslow Johnson's Now In November, a realistic story of farm life in the Middle West. Marget, second of the three daughters of the Holdmarnes, tells the story "in November" looking back over ten years of the family's life on the farm, and particularly the last year, when drought, debt, and the knowledge of coming madness, all fed the growing fear of imminent disaster. This novel is written with surety and an awareness of hidden currents of feeling. It is a story of people who live close together, experiencing unalterable loneliness on a mortgaged farm.

The charm of this book lies greatly in the vast use of background, which determines incident and moulds character. This background never seems forced because it is of the

essence of the story. It reminds one of the masterpieces of Rembran, with its massing of light and shade, in its occasional high lights and its dim shadows. In this story we make the round of the seasons and witness farm life in all its limited variety. The opening paragraph sets at once a melancholy tone.

> Now in November I can see our years as a whole. This autumn is like both an end and a beginning to our lives, and those days which seemed confused with the blur of all things too near and too familiar are clear and strange now. It has been a long year, longer and more full of meaning than all those ten years that went before it. There were nights when I felt that we were moving toward some awful and hopeless hour, but when that hour came it was broken up and confused because we were too near, and I did not even quite realize that it had come.[37]

In this natural background, so seldom bright, the scenes are gray and windless, as though to harmonize with the sombre human drama enacted amid them. Nature seems hushed and expectant of tragedy. An occasional lyrical description furnishes a high light of delicate beauty. The house of the Haldmarnes on the mortgaged farm in Missouri was a place beautiful in itself.

> The house was old even then, not log, but boards up and down as barns are made. It was overgrown with trumpet and wild red ivy-vines, twisted and heavy on the porch. Wild grapes were black across the well in autumn and there was an

---

37. Josephine Johnson, Now In November, p. 13.

arbor of tame ones over the pump.[38]

The relation of the characters to the background is striking. The turbulent inner life of the Haldmarne family fits perfectly in its gloomy setting. The story is told by the chief participant, Marget Haldmarne, plainest and most introspective of the three daughters, and is written, supposedly, at the end of a cruel summer of drought and personal disaster which rounded out ten years of their life on the farm. Fear for the future so oppressed the father that his sharpened and unaccountable temper often leapt out, increasing the almost unbearable strain caused by their intimacy and isolation. Kerrin, the second daughter, was highstrung and wild, wasting her strength in unreasoning hate "and in searching for something she did not even name to herself." Merle, like Marget, was a normal, commonplace person, whose love of small beauties about them sustained them through much trouble until even those consolations were removed at the hopeless end. For Merle there was

> a sort of glory in all things, a haloed way of seeing them ....not only in the peacock-blue and brown skins of the lizards, or in the obvious and almost blinding whiteness of the daisy fields, but in everything she saw or did.--In the stoning of

---

38. Ibid., p. 7.

cherries and the acid stain in her skin, and the heat and confusion of their preserving...the stove raging and too hot to come near, and the steam from the boiling glasses.. ..the cherries dissolving in a rich syrup-redness....And then again she'd be quiet, shaken down to dumbness at the sight of wheat fields, red-orange and clean like blown fur over hundreds of acres.[39]

The mother, with her "inner well of peace" which they could not share, held them together. In the fierce, burning months of the drought, her small never-failing stream of faith, sustained them. She carried them through clashes of temperament, through love frustrated and awry, through the destruction of the land in the year of the drought, up to the time when fire drove them all to the blackened edge of destruction.

Grant Koven, a traveled and well educated young man, was hired as a helper on the Haldmarne farm. He is presented as a true type of American farmer, dry and gritty in his humor. Merle sometimes comes alive as a robust farm girl; and Kerrin, who goes insane, is sometimes a quiet, thoughtful girl. But as a whole the characters are less real than the background against which they move.

This distinguished novel of American family life is firmly wrought in poetic prose. It is complete and self

---

39. Ibid., pp. 114 f.

sustaining. It shows deep concentration on the turbulent inner life of the Haldmarne family. The tenor of this book is quiet, almost dreamlike.

This novel is poetic, as well as realistic. Lyric expression is found in many of its lines.

> There was a fierce sweet smell from the crab-trees, and I peered up at the stars through their twisted branches. Everything drops away, comes to be unimportant in the dark. It's like sleep almost. A thought of Kerrin and debt tomorrow. Dark's like the presence of a father confessor.[40]

Miss Johnson's love of beauty seems to be her creed. In an autobiographical sketch she says:

> I have lived on a farm in St. Louis County (Missouri) since 1922....The country is beautiful but its people are wretched....I hate standardization, ugliness, narrowness of life--its unrest and quicksand quality....I wish that everyone could see the significance and beauty of ordinary things, and wish that the destruction of nature could be stopped before it is too late.[41]

Miss Johnson is essentially a poet. In her poem, Year's End she writes:

> --O God in barren clearness of the year I know
> Never for us nor earth will there be final freezing,
> No land forever locked, nor self-sufficient heart,
> No barrier of word or voice against the sun's returning,
> No stone or iron impregnable to wind,
> No quiet, utterly unbroken, dark.[42]

This story contains no heroics of suffering in body, which are so often exploited.

---

40. Josephine Johnson, Now In November, pp. 225 f.
41. Josephine W. Johnson, "The 1935 Pulitzer Winners," The Wilson Bulletin, IX, (June, 1935), 544.
42. Josephine W. Johnson, "Year's End," Poetry, XLV (October-March, 1934-35), 199.

Freud, William James, Bergson, our modern prophets point to the fact that we are interested now only in the heroics of the mind, in the analysis of mental processes as brought into play upon the modern scene. Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, at two extremes, have indicated how consciousness or subconscious associational streams may become literature.[43]

Edith H. Walton writes:

On two planes "Now In November" has clear cut claims to distinction. In the first place it is a farm novel of more than ordinary power and truth....In addition, however, Miss Johnson's book is something more, and something better, than just a farm novel. It is a story of delicate and devious human emotions, of rather extraordinary people whose lives are so confined, so interwoven that the special qualities of their spirits necessarily ripen and turn inward....Miss Johnson belongs in the tradition of Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson, and one suspects that it lies within her power to go, like them, very far.[44]

Romance of beauty and of spirit are found in this novel. It is the romance of Baudelaire, Shelley and Keats, in which beauty and death are synonymous. It is a beauty that is not discussed wittily, as it is by writers of the seventeenth century. It is rather a beauty that is sensed and entered into completely. The characters are figures who move quietly against gloomy backgrounds. An example of this kind of beauty reads:

It is November and the year dying fast in the storms. The sycamores wrenched of leaves and the ground gold. The ploughed fields scarred around us on the hills....We have no reason to hope, believe, but we do because, we must, receiving peace

---

43. Edna Lou Walton, "Romantic Patterns in Literature," The New York Times Book Review, (September 17, 1933), 12.

44. Edith H. Walton, "A First Novel of Fine Distinction," The New York Times Book Review, (September 16, 1934)

in its sparse moments of surrender, and beauty in all of its twisted forms.[45]

The romance found within the mind of Marget, who tells the story, is romance of the mind. No heroine is bound in a tower; no hero makes spectacular escapes. Marget's prison is an old stony farm. Love for her people holds her there.

Realism abounds in some of the painful details of farm life. Destruction wrought by famine and fire are among these happenings. Insanity, frustration, and death are very real. The romance of background and of spirit in this novel is heightened by the realistic happenings which appear here.

Mary M. Colum writes:

> Her novel deals with miserably poor, harassed people on a farm where some minor or major tragedy meets them at every turn. Yet every character in the story lives on a high plane of spiritual life, for, as in the work of the young poets, it is the spirit that is significant to her....To translate any kind of life into a book it is always the wisest plan to remain an artist.[46]

Herschel Brickell concludes his review thus:

> ....There are other tragedies, one on top of another, but the philosophy of the book is not gloomy or pessimistic, rather it is the simple truth that life somehow goes on and that a sense of the beauty of small things is a secure defense against anything that may happen to pathetic human beings.[47]

---

45. Josephine Johnson, Now In November, p. 103
46. Mary M. Colum, "Among The Younger Writers," Forum and Century, XCII (November, 1934), 279.
47. Herschel Brickell, "The Literary Landscape," North American Review, CCXXXVIII (November, 1934), 279.

Jon Cheever writes:

> ....But no catastrophe finds the narrator wanting for an apt and beautiful comment on the profit and loss, no violence distracts her from her chosen love of the little things.... This is surely the most composed book that has ever come out of Missouri....In order to achieve such composure, Miss Johnson has necessarily sacrificed a degree of reality....[48]

Now In November appears on the New York Herald Tribune's list of "What America Is Reading" in the year of 1935. Since only titles reported three or more times are charated, this novel attained some popularity.

Harold L. Davis's Honey In The Horn won the award for 1936. This is a narrative of the open spaces of Oregon during the homesteading period, 1906 to 1908. The central character is the boy, Clay Calvert, who is mixed up in a jail delivery and whose subsequent long string of adventures brings him into contact with herders, horse traders, sawmill workers, hop pickers, sheriffs, storekeepers, real estate men, wheat threshers, cowmen, desperadoes, Indians, half-breeds, and settlers of every variety. The early pioneers, who are presented as types, are uncouth, colorful, and sincere. The plot is inadequate, as the two principal characters remain unrevealed in action. This novel lacks

---

48. Jon Cheever, "While the Fields Burn," The New Republic, XXC (September 26, 1934), 191.

the balance and restraint of Willa Cather in her Western novels. It does not have the social implications of O. E. Rolvaag's somber people of the Dakotas. It makes up for this lack in its honesty and robustness.

No real story is told in this novel. A couple of men are killed, another is lynched, families die out, but fundamentally nothing happens. The wanderers end pretty much as they began. They encounter hostile deserts, plow up the plains, and turn mountains inside out, only to have a little line of breakers stop them on the western shore. Still believing milk and honey to be just over the skyline, they continue until they sink down exhausted. Clay Calvert, who appears on page eleven and then dodges in and out of the story to the end, is not essential to the story. Nor is Luce, the daughter of a wandering horse trader, who lives casually with Calvert. The real hero is the enduring pioneer, half knave and half child, and its heroine is the uncomely female who travels with him. Mr. Davis exhibits these people until they serve his purpose and then abruptly and humanely ends his story.

This story is not an amusing recitation about a herd of

stupid people, nor is it an exercise in ribaldry. Many of the characters are comic, but Mr. Davis's fine irony remembers both their humors and the tragedies which are implicit in their lives.

"This was the land we took first," she said. "A donation land claim this was. Twelve hundred-odd acres of it, all in sagebrush when we came here. We grubbed it and worked it over with a drag. The two children was born while we was clearn' this land. We fixed a seat between the plow-handles for the biggest one, and I packed the little one on my back. Once the Indians burnt us out, and I laid here in the green wheat with the two of them and watched"....

"Here across the fence was a piece that a young couple starved out on back in--back in--" She couldn't get the year. "I remember lookin' up here and wonderin' how much longer they'd stand it before they give in and sold to us. If we'd give 'em anything to eat, they wouldn't have sold. She left first, and he sold to us and struck out to try to find her. And that strip across the top of the hill was--that was land we got from a man in the Land Office. A lot of 'em went to jail for sellin' land that belonged to the gover'ment and he went to jail finally. I don't remember what we paid him, but I remember sendin' the children up here to plow summer fallow when they was nine and eleven years old. Little towhead tykes workin' at their cultivatin' and cussin their teams as big as men. But it was too hard work for 'em, and they run away from home and never come back. We don't know what become of 'em"....[49]

Basil Davenport writes:

Mr. Davis describes with a slow, unsmiling mournful-voiced humor, which seems to have come from our back-woods and our ranches. That is the spirit of this book, and for that, above all the other reasons, it deserves all the praise it is certain to receive as 'Authentic Americana.'[50]

---

49. H. L. Davis, Honey In The Horn, pp. 326 ff.

50. Basil Davenport, "The Pulitzer Winners," The Saturday Review of Literature, XC (January 2, 1937), 7.

Mary Mc Carthy writes:

At the time when the American Mercury, with Mencken at the helm, was going in for local color, for roughhewn, native American pieces, H. L. Davis and James Stevens were the lone, literary ambassadors from the tall timber of the Pacific Northwest...."Honey in the Horn" is not a fantasy; its boy-girl plot is unrolled in straight, realistic fashion; yet in its use of hyperbole, its full-blown, homely metaphors, its poker-faced humor, it bears a plain family resemblance to the tall tales Mr. Stevens used to tell. As a novel it is a flat failure; its virtues are those of a folk tale; its value is anthropological.[51]

H. L. Mencken writes:

The noble old quality of gusto, which dribbled out of the American novel when its practitioners began to remember their duty to humanity, here returns at high voltage....Above all it is beautifully written in sound American, and yields nothing at all to the stylistic quackeries now prevailing....[52]

The only romance found here is that of adventure. The style of this novel is breezy and unconventional, resembling somewhat the style of Bret Harte and a great deal like that of Mark Twain. There is also a suggestion of Paul Bunyanism in the episodes, anecdotes, and exaggerations. The language is colorful and rhythmic. The story is told with gusto and humor. It is a man's book, filled with the racy, pungent conversation of men.

An advertisement of Honey In The Horn as the Harper Prize

---

51. Mary Mc Carthy, "Tall Timber," CXLI (August 28, 1948), 248.

52. H. L. Mencken, "History and Fable and Very Good Stuff," New York Herald Tribune, XI (August 25, 1935), 2.

Novel appears on page twelve of the New York Herald Tribune book section for Sunday, August 25, 1935. This novel, according to the advertisement, was chosen from eight hundred manuscripts. The judges were Dorothy Canfield, Sinclair Lewis, and Louis Bromfield. This novel appears in "What America is Reading" in the New York Herald Tribune book section for Sunday, September 15, 1935. It is fifth on the list, a total of twenty-three leading stores reporting it.

The prize went to Margaret Mitchell for Gone With The Wind in 1937. This is a long novel about the Civil War and its aftermath in Georgia. The heroine is Scarlett O'Hara, a selfish, wilful girl at the opening of the story, a woman of twenty-eight at the close. Although she had been reared in luxury, the war brought poverty very close to her, and she determined to regain wealth and security. For that end she ruthlessly used her power over men, succeeding in her struggle for wealth, but losing in the end the one man she could really love. This is a fine epic of the Civil War, explicit in its philosophy and authentic in its history. It is rich in texture and narrative vigor. It is told with sincerity, passion, and understanding. The Southern point

of view is presented. The first section of the book reflects the slave-culture, while the second half depicts the tragic era of the South. The story opens on a plantation in Northern Georgia just before the war. Most of the action, however, takes place in and about Atlanta, a crossroads city of the South. Much of the industrial activity of the war is carried on here. Miss Mitchell sketches this background skillfully for us; scenes of the harassed city leap vividly before us.

This novel of more than a thousand pages tells such a good story that it keeps our interest at high pitch throughout. A novel of the South, it begins with a scene of plantation life. It also ends with a return of Scarlett to the plantation, although it is a plantation that has been ravaged by war. With its ruin goes the romance of the old South.

This Civil War epic is as remarkable a performance as an exciting stage-show. It is rich in incident and illuminated with understanding. It is endlessly interesting, possessed of the elemental literary quality of having things happening all the time. Miss Mitchell's zest in writing runs suc-

cessfully through fury, pathos, and humor, still retaining its astonishing vitality.

This novel is distinguished for its characters and its picture of a by-gone era. Miss Mitchell shows great ability in creating characters. They become personalities as they move through the story with animation and reality. They are convincing, whether they glide graciously or storm lustily through the pages. Miss Mitchell's greatest character creation is Scarlett O'Hara. She is a vital creature, selfish, greedy, and dominating. She is a compound of Thackeray's Becky Sharp and of a better woman, Dorinda in Miss Glasgow's Barren Ground. She is completely selfish, but capable of heroism in her efforts to preserve the old estate and in her determination to make money in any possible way. Almost equally vital is Rhett Butler, a cynical and hard-bitten realist, a scapegrace son of a Charleston family. Melanie and Ashley Wilkes are foils for these two characters. Ashley is a typical gentleman of the old South, while Melanie is outwardly Amelia of Vanity Fair. Underneath her shyness and sweetness is found a core of courage and determination. A blending of romanticism and realism is found in Miss

Mitchell's portrait of Rhett Butler. She takes a stock figure of melodrama and romance, with piercing eyes and black mustache and his irrestible way with women, and makes him into a daring blockade runner, who lines his pockets during the war. Ashley Wilkes is a romantic idealist who can not adjust himself to the made-over world of Reconstruction days. Scarlett's colored mammy uses her patriarchal influence over her charge in the finest traditional way. In addition to these central figures, there are a host of others, excellently if sketchily done. She interests us in the field hand, the Georgia Cracker, and the Yankee carpetbagger. The dialogue is interesting; the characters are vivid.

Drama and color add sheer story value as they point up the historical authenticity of a by-gone era. Restraint strengthens the fiber of this story of the old South. Relation between the whites and their slaves is depicted with great narrative skill. Romantic Southern life, instead of being trite and sentimental, becomes the stuff of which history is woven. An extraordinary sense of detail makes this story complete and full. For example, the wealth which made this

way of life possible came from cotton:

> Cotton was the heartbeat of the section, the planting and the picking were the diastole and systole of the red earth. Wealth came out of the curving furrows, and arrogance came too--arrogance built on green bushes and acres of fleecy white.[53]

The gaiety and leisure of the romantic long ago is described on page 94 of Gone With The Wind.

> The wide curving driveway was full of saddle horses and carriages and guests alighting and calling greetings to friends. Grinning negroes, excited as always at a party, were leading the animals to the barnyard to be unharnessed and unsaddled for the day....Scarlett saw girls in crinolines, bright as butterflies, going up and down the stairs from the second floor, arms about each other's waists, stopping to lean over the delicate handrail of the banisters, laughing and calling to young men in the hall below them.[54]

Reconstruction turns these idle gallant people into provincials full of middle-class genteelness. In a society falling apart, upon what terms can the individual afford to survive? Scarlett wants only to live and takes any terms life offers.

> The mills had been her darlings, her pride, the fruit of her small grasping hands. She had started with one small mill in those black days when Atlanta was barely struggling up from ruin and ashes and want was staring her in the face. And now....she had two fine mills, two lumber yards, a dozen mule teams and convict labor to operate the business at low cost.[55]

J. Donald Adams writes in the New York Times:

---

53. Margaret Mitchell, Gone With The Wind, p. 56.
54. Ibid., p. 94.
55. Ibid., pp. 976 f.

But Miss Mitchell can do more than tell a story. She can people it with characters who are not merely described, but who live, grow older and change under our eyes, as do our friends. At least four of the people in this book achieve a quality of life as vivid as may be caught on the printed page....Gone With The Wind seems to me the best Civil War novel that has yet been written. It is an extraordinary blending of romantic and realistic treatment, as any worthwhile recreation in fiction of those years should be.[56]

Malcolm Cowley reviews this novel by saying:

....Gone With The Wind is an encyclopedia of the plantation legend. Other novelists by the hundreds have helped to shape this legend, but each of them has presented only part of it. Miss Mitchell repeats it as a whole, with all its episodes and all its characters and all its stage settings--....But even though the legend is false in part and silly in part and vicious in its general effect on Southern life today, still it retains its appeal to fundamental emotions. Miss Mitchell lends new strength to the legend by telling it as if it had never been told before, and also by mixing a good share of realism with the romance.[57]

Eleanor L. Van Alen says:

Santayana has said in a critical essay:"Imagination needs a soil in history, tradition, or human institutions, else its random growths are not significant enough, and like trivial melodies go immediately out of fashion." In her first novel, Miss Mitchell, a newspaper woman reared obviously in the Georgian tradition, roots her characters and plot in the soil of the Civil War and Reconstruction days of the South.... While ably reflecting in her first section the gracious slave culture that Ashley remembered as having "a glamor to it--a perfection, a symmetry like Greek art," Miss Mitchell rises to more imposing heights in the second half, depicting what Claude Bowers called "The Tragic Era."[58]

---

56. J. Donald Adams, "A Fine Novel of the Civil War," The New York Times Book Review, (July 5, 1936), 1.
57. Malcolm Cowley, "Going with the Wind," The New Republic, LXXXVIII (Sept. 16, 1936), 161 f.
58. Eleanor L. Van Alen, "Book Reviews," The North American Review, CCXLII (Autumn, 1936), 201 f.

Stephen Vincent Benet writes:

....Miss Mitchell knows her friends, her people, and the red hill country of North Georgia--she knows the clothes and the codes and the little distinctions that make for authenticity. Tara is a working plantation, not a white porched movie-set--and Atlanta is itself an individual city, not a fabulous combination of all the first-family features of Richmond, Charleston, and New Orleans. The civilization of the ante-bellum South was something a little more than a picturesque gesture in gentility--and to a public a little surfeited with wistful reminiscence of the cape-jessamine side of it, Miss Mitchell's rather more realistic treatment should come as a decided relief....Miss Mitchell has written a solid and vividly interesting story of war and reconstruction, realistic in detail and told from an original point of view ....[59]

Herschel Brickell writes:

Margaret Mitchell's magnificent story of the Civil War and the Reconstruction period in and around Atlanta, her native town, seems to me by far the best novel of the most dramatic period in our history....Her book is written with the clear realism that belongs to women writers of intelligence.... "Gone With the Wind" is filled with drama and excitement, and peopled with all sorts of characters, white and colored, every one vividly done. It is also quite definitely a contribution to the literature of the American past, with permanent value, although it is Miss Mitchell's first novel.[60]

This novel is a blending of romance and realism. Love and heroism, tense action, thrilling romance, and exciting adventure appear in this story. This novel also contains details of a grim war and a grimmer regime of Reconstruction.

The historical background of this novel adds a fine flavor

---

59. Stephen Vincent Benet, "Georgia Marches Through," The Saturday Review of Literature, XIV (July 4, 1936), 5.

60. Herschel Brickell, "The Literary Landscape," Review of Reviews, XCIV (August 1936), 8.

to the story for those who enjoy the older traditions in literature. This background, according to Malcolm Cowley, is remarkable for its completeness. Scarlett is born into the planter class, daughter of a gently bred Creole and a hardy renegade aristocrat. This background is peopled with duelists and belles who move in one of the most glamorous periods of the nation's history. Among the memorable scenes associated with these people are the county barbecue at Twelve Oaks plantation, a gay Confederate war bazaar, and young men riding gallantly to war on fine horses.

Out of this background emerge people who seem to bear little real resemblance to the aristocracy of the ante-bellum South. Scarlett possesses the outward signs and symbols, but never the heart of a true gentlewoman. She is like the immigrant Irishman, Gerald O'Hara. Rhett Butler is a realist who cares little for tradition. Stephen Vincent Benet welcomes the realistic treatment which we find in the burning of Atlanta, ragged Confederates returning to ruined plantations, and the fearful reign of the carpetbaggers.

In Alice Hackett's book we read:

Published in June, Gone With the Wind was to dominate all

fiction sales for two years, creating publishing history with sales never before reached by fiction in so short a time. One million copies were sold in its first six months, and the book and its author, whose first novel it was and who has published nothing since, established themselves firmly in American literary legend.61

The winner for 1938 was John Phillips Marquand's The Late George Apley. The supposed author of this "novel in the form of a memoir" is one Horatio Willing, who has been requested by the son of George Apley to write his father's biography. George Apley was a member of an old Boston family, resident upon Beacon Hill for many years. The span of his life ended in 1933 at the age of sixty-six. From family notes and letters, supplemented by his own memoirs, Horatio Willing builds up the picture of an age, a class, a locality in his story of the life of George Apley.

George Apley's grandfather came of British yeoman stock. His fortune was made in the slave trade. This capital was transferred to textiles by George's father. George devoted himself to saving the accumulations of his ancestors. He attended Harvard with boys of these families, belonging to the same clubs and attending the same parties. He was warned against friendships with people other than his own

---

61. Alice Payne Hackett, Fifty Years of Best Sellers - 1895-1945, p. 74.

kind. His one lapse into another world occurred when he fell in love with an Irish girl. This was considered a very bad slip by his parents. They rushed him abroad to get over it. He returned, heavy-hearted and married a plain, rich Bostonian. In later life he took platonic "bird walks" with the wife of one of his friends. Possessing no head for business, George Apley devoted much of his time to charitable institutions.

This is a distinguished novel of American life set in restricted Boston, known only to a small circle of its inhabitants. The essential characteristics of this aristocracy, of the present and in retrospect, are portrayed in this chronicle. It is a splendid background of earlier New England. Arrogant sea captains are pictured as merchant princes of the China trade. A hint of "blackbirding" at one point in the accretion of the Apley fortune is furtively offered and quickly suppressed. Out of this background emerge Boston's Back Bay Brahmins, a breed apart. Wealth and Mayflower descent coupled with an essential background of discipline make this group an established social phenomenon. Integrity of belief in

themselves and their antecedents was their pride. As a group they keep free of outsiders. Their belief that family is more important than the individual is a heritage handed down to their children. This memoir furnishes a splendid vehicle for the family papers and letters, containing accounts of their habits and customs.

George Apley is pictured as the last of this group. As America changes both intellectually and socially he remains adamant against all change. He retains the conventions upon which it is based. Hence we find pathos in his life rather than tragedy. It may be compared with George Santayana's novel, The Last Puritan. What Mr. Santayana did in philosophic vein Mr. Marquand has done in an infinitely more amusing style. A gorgeous array of details is used to present the people of Beacon Street. Papers written for various clubs, the clubs themselves, and the games and costumes of Pequod Island--there are many hundreds of such Boston items.

This novel is distinguished for the tone in which it is written and sustained. It is an achievement of great skill done in an extremely difficult form. It is presented as a

series of fictional documents containing the drama of a silent battle rather than that of sudden encounter. In this novel is found a sharp satire on the New England section of American life. The novel is quietly and unpretentiously done; the mirth is that which is provoked in the mind. Another claim of distinction which this novel has is the artistic portrait drawn of George Apley. He is the head of a Boston family whose wealth originated a generation before the Cabots'. A member of the Berkeley and Province clubs, product of Groton and Harvard, George Apley, instead of being important, is frustrated. Tender at times and snobbish at times, he is continually engaged in saving face. Sensitive to changing thoughts, he nevertheless fights against the Charles River Basin, against a Beacon Street esplanade, against electric signs, and against the breaking of previous rules of decorum by the younger generation. Apley's genuine dignity, his charities, his Spartan acceptance of his obligations, and his pride are related in a way which gives charm and depth to this novel. Learning, sobriety, responsibility, and the absence of vulgar ostentation were his watchwords. The first article in his family

credo was that Boston was the intellectual and moral center of the universe; the second was that nothing must ever be done to discredit the Apleys.

George Apley exists in this novel as a type. He resides in a restricted Boston, a member of the Boston elect. He exemplifies the Puritan ideals of formidable Beacon Street. He emerges from the background as a personality of the old school who filled a large place in his day and generation. Speaking of this restricted world, George Apley said:

> The accusation of snobbery has been leveled at a certain section of our society so frequently that one is reminded of the proverb that where there is smoke there must be fire.... It is the intense congeniality of our own society which has its inception in a unique community of ideas resulting in a common attitude toward life. When the individuals of one group find a complete happiness and fulfillment in the association with one another, why should they look farther? ....It also explains our many marriages between our childhood friends and cousins. It explains why so many residents of Boston flock together when abroad, instinctively seeking the relaxation gained from each when confronted with an alien environment--why Boston has her own hotel in New York City and in London and on the right bank of the Seine.[62]

Bernard De Voto writes:

> As a novel it is, except for the sentimental episodes associated with Mary Monahan, beautifully sustained--an achievement of great skill in an extremely difficult form. As for Boston, it leaves much still to be said. Apley is true to his caste: he is not all caste. It has more courage than

---

62. John P. Marquand, The Late George Apley, p. 50.

Mr. Marquand gives Apley. It also has more intellectual arrogance and more cold brutality....His story is that he could have no story. He is imprisoned not so much by caste as by habits, disciplined not so much by a code as by a phobia, sacrificed not so much to a tradition or an aristocratic way of life as to an etiquette....Apley's life was a process of being bewildered by, rebelling momentarily against, accepting, being grateful for, and finally taking refuge behind the organized family discipline and caste amenity of Beacon Street.[63]

Quincy Howe writes:

Mr. Marquand's story depicts that section of Boston--that section of State Street, even--which is devoted to the preservation rather than the acquisition of property. George Apley comes into no contact with any Boston dissenters, he does not even move in those higher State Street circles which encourage the Irish Catholics to assume political leadership while they retain a stranglehold on the banks. Property determines his behavior as rigidly as Karl Marx says it should. To safeguard their property, the Apleys keep a solid family front toward the rest of State Street, just as all the State Street families keep a solid social front toward the rest of Boston and the world at large....Yet, as Mr. Marquand presents him, George Apley is a human being, poignant in his frustration, and the little world that he and his kind have made is reproduced here in such accurate detail that its bitterness can be more easily endured between covers than in real life.[64]

Percy Hutchison writes:

Though concerned chiefly with the intellectual and social changes which took place in America as late Victorianism gave way to a more comfortable Edwardian ease, which was itself to be followed by the ruthless overturning of the war and its disquieting aftermaths, Mr. Marquand, for the better basing of his story, goes back to the generations which precede George Apley's and of which he was fruit. Better, per-

---

63. Bernard De Voto, "The Brahmin Way of Life," The Saturday Review, XV (Jan. 2, 1957), 5.

64. Quincy Howe, "The Latest Puritan," The New Republic, XC (February 10, 1957), 25.

haps, the last leaf on the tree. Mr. Marquand has read his earlier New England well...."The Late George Apley" is a very searching novel of America. The Social Brahmins were not confined to Boston, although they may have been more conspicuous there than elsewhere. Mrs. Wharton found the sect in New York. Every lesser city and town harbored the cult in its smaller way. And, whether for good or for ill, they contributed mightily to the sociological foundation of the country....[65]

In The Nation we read:

And the day of the Apleys and of those families fit to associate with them is passing. America's Athens has suffered the fate of all empires--it has been captured by the barbarians. Inbreeding, provincialism, the security of knowing the right thing to do and doing it have been challenged and defeated by lusty tribes from Ireland and the Middle West.... Mr. Marquand is no Marcel Proust: but he is a telling caricaturist of a set of manners that lend themselves happily to his pencil.[66]

The "sentimental episode" is young George Apley's love affair with an Irish girl. Young George in his Harvard days, had one high moment of rebellion against the Apley mores. He had the temerity to fall in love with the beautiful, sensible, intelligent daughter of an Irish immigrant; he promised marriage, sure that his parents would recognize the worth of his beloved. But he did not quite know the Apleys. A European tour, taken in company with other respectable Bostonians, led to marriage to a suitable young

---

65. Percy Hutchison, "Mr. Marquand's Novel of the Boston Brahmin Tradition," The New York Times Book Review, (January 3, 1937), 3.
66. Dorothy Van Doren, "The Making of a Boston Braman," The Nation, CXLIV (January 16, 1937), 78.

Boston lady. This single romantic episode is more poignant when we learn that it was the real passion of George's life.

Another kind of romance found here is the romance of long ago Back Bay in Boston, which according to Quincy Howe, is devoted to property preservation. It is a picture of a declining Boston culture, the romance of an aristocracy that is unique. Family discipline and etiquette known as Apley mores, bind these Victorian people. It is true that the Barbarians enter. But this is not their story. This is the story of the Apleys of Beacon Street in Boston.

This book has not become a "best seller." We read in Alice Payne Hackett's book:

> John P. Marquand had written a penetrating novel of Boston, The Late George Apley, in 1937. Known popularly as the writer of the "Mr. Moto" spy stories, he attained critical and commerical success with his first serious novel, though it did not make the list in the year in which it was published.[67]

In 1939 the prize went to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings for The Yearling, the story of one year in the life of sensitive, nature-loving Jody Baxter, who lived with his father and mother in the hammock country district of Florida. During that year which brought conflict and tragedy to the Baxter

---

67. Alice Payne Hackett, Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945, p. 80.

family, Jody and his tame fawn, Flag, roamed the forest, hunted, and grew. When Flag could no longer be restrained from ruining the Baxters' precious crops, Jody faced tragedy, but it made a man of him.

This is a simple chronicle. Character and background are woven into a narrative of moving beauty. Jody grows fast from April to April into a sturdiness and sweetness of character, learning from his father, Penny Baxter, how to live in the wilderness.

This novel is distinguished because it transports us into the wilderness. It contains excellent descriptions of Florida scrub landscapes. The Baxters live a secure life on a pine island high above the arid scrub. The forests, filled with bears, panthers, wild hogs, wolves, and rattlesnakes surround them. This Florida hammock country, with its wild, unusual beauty, is more than local color. We live in the wilderness as we read, and become imbued with Jody's passionate love of every living thing. We exult in the wildness of the storm; we rest in the afterglow of the sunset. As Mrs. Rawlings writes, we are there in the scrub, safe in the sanctuary of boyhood.

Jody Baxter will take his place with Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn in American literature. He may lack the sense of mischief which Mark Twain's young boys possessed, but he has a quiet charm as refreshing as a deep spring or a cool breeze. His adventures in the woods compare with those of William Cullen Bryant; his joy is that of a young, laughing St. Francis in his own small world. The quaintness of his dialect is a significant contribution to the literature of adolescent Americans.

The characters in this novel are well drawn. Jody and his father, Penny, have an instinctive feeling for beauty and a passionate love for the strange, wild scrub. Penny, undersized as he is, has a sturdiness and sweetness of character, which even the Forresters admire. He will injure no living creature, unless need for food or protection makes it necessary. Jody inherits this fine sensitiveness along with a feeling for the beauty of the wilderness. Penny and Jody, for all their lack of schooling, are people of worth and dignity. They are characters so close and real that with them we see and smell the lonely, lovely shrub. The Forresters, with their six huge blackbearded sons, are remarkably dramatic; one moment they are kindly neighbors;

the next they are lawless brutes. An element of strange beauty is found in the character of the little crippled Forrester, Fodder Wing. His strange way of attracting little, wild, wood creatures is a marvelous gift. His death and funeral furnish an almost unbearable scene. Ma Baxter, grim, and unimaginative, soured by the death of her other children, is a hard realist, whose dampening influence serves to point up the romance of the other characters. Grandma Hutto, with a white frilled apron and a scent of lavender, expresses a welcome sentiment in this quiet novel.. The tame fawn, Flag, is at first a merry, impudent companion, who gambols through the forest, a happy companion of childhood.

Picturesque beauty is found on many pages of this story. Mrs. Rawlings writes with a sincere and unusual beauty. In the first chapter we see 'fragile clusters of lavender bloom,' 'white tufted sky,' 'pale green earth,' and 'golden sunlight.' These descriptions are woven into the plot quietly and skillfully. They become a part of the fascination of the leisurely unfolded plot.

Edith H. Walton writes:

The thing about <u>The Yearling</u>--its great claim to distinction--

is it is able to make so much of simple, homely events. The zest of a hunting expedition, the coming of Spring in the forest, a suddenly glimpsed dance of grave, stately cranes--it is out of material as humble as this that the texture of the book is woven.[68]

Frances Woodward comments thus:

The Yearling is a distinguished book....The sort of Americans with whom the book deals would be as easy in the presence of Boone, Lincoln, or Mark Twain, as they would be abashed by William Faulkner's tortured characters....It is as American as the Mississippi.[69]

In the New York Times we read:

With its excellent descriptions of Florida scrub landscapes, its skilfull use of native vernacular, its tender relation between Jody and his pet fawn, The Yearling is a simply written, picturesque story of boyhood that stands a good chance, when adults have finished with it, of finding a permanent place in adolescent libraries.[70]

A Forum review reads:

This book has something of the quality of Synge's Playboy of the Western World--the same poetry of observation, the same love of strong life, of untamed folk, of picturesque language. The list of goods Ma Baxter made out to be got in Jacksonville is remarkably like the list that Peggeen Mike makes out in the opening of The Playboy....After all the novels of industrial life and of the physiological reactions of men, The Yearling, seems like a new kind of writing. The swift, beautiful style of the book, the beauty and strangeness of so many of its scenes--the boy running home through the scrub in the pouring rain and the luminous air after he has been to seek help for his father, bitten by a rattlesnake; the boy capturing the little fawn after his father has shot its mother--the humanness, the tenderness of the whole make this novel unique in contemporary American writing.[71]

---

68. Edith H. Walton, "A Novel of Backwoods Living," The New York Times Review, (April 3, 1938), 27.

69. Frances Woodward, "A Guide To Good Books," The Atlantic Monthly, CLXI (June, 1938), 878.

70. "Scrub Idyl," Times, XXXI (April 4, 1938), 69.

71. Edith H. Walton, "A Welcome Change in Novels," The Forum, XCIX, (May, 1938), 280 f.

To be "as American as the Mississippi" a book must contain adventure. This novel, for all its quietness, is filled with episodes of adventure. Old Slewfoot, a vicious, thieving bear is pursued in a wilderness hunt. The great storm, elemental in its fierceness, leaves devastation and waste. Exciting trips are made to Volusia, the river town. A visit to the wild Forresters leads to shooting, story--telling, or dog trading. It is a book filled to overflowing with strong, invigorating life. The people, the animals, and the forest country are all wild. The language is beautiful and vital. The coming of spring in the forest is described lyrically. Mary M. Colum finds the picturesque language refreshing. The Times review lists qualities which have romantic trends.

The finest example of romance found in this book is the romance found in Jody's mind. Mrs. Rawlings has captured a child's sense of time and shared it with us in a miraculous way. She manages to stay within Jody's perceptions, without stopping to explain or interpret. In his world everything lasts forever; change of season comes to him unawares.

> He was addled with April. He was dizzy with Spring.... His head was swimming with the strong brew made up of the

sun and the air and the thin gray rain. The flutter-mill had made him drunk, and the doe's coming, and his father's hiding his absence, and his mother's making him a pone and laughing at him. He was stabbed with the candlelight inside the safe comfort of the cabin, with the moonlight around it.[72]

Outside the cabin there is beauty, too. We read with delight that

The wild bees had found the chinaberry tree by the front gate. They burrowed into the fragile clusters of lavender bloom as greedily as though there were no other flowers in the scrub, as though they had forgotten the yellow jessamine of March; the magnolias ahead of them in May.[73]

The Yearling headed the "best sellers" Fiction list for 1938 and dropped to seventh place on this list for 1939.

SUMMARY

These ten novels, according to the critics, are distinguished by unusual lyrical descriptions, worthwhile sectional histories, biographical portraits, and interesting plots. With one exception, these novels deal with American life. The desert of Arizona, the state of Oregon, and the city of Chicago represent the Western sections. The city of Atlanta, the state of Alabama, the swampland of Georgia, and the backwoods of Florida are the Southern lands portrayed. In the East and North,

---

72. Ibid., p. 14.
73. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Yearling, p. 1 f.

Boston represents the New England section. The exception which is not wholly American is the Chinese novel which was written by Pearl S. Buck.

Socially speaking, the ten novels represent every phase of American life. Gerald O'Hara was the immigrant and Laughing Boy was the American Indian. Clay Calvert was the wanderer who encountered sheep herders, homesteaders, horsetraders, hop pickers, fishermen, and gunmen. Jody and Jean belonged to the backwoods. Scarlett was the Southern aristocrat and George Apley the intellectual Bostonian. Jean lived the life of a suburban housewife while Miltiades was the Southern overseer who later became rich. The Chinese story is peopled with Orientals whose problems are similar to American ones.

Romantic trends are found in all of those novels. In Laughing Boy the romance is found in love of nature, lyrical descriptions, expressions of sentiment, and a study of gentle manners. The element of beauty found in Years of Grace strikes a romantic note, if an industrial one. Scenic descriptions and biblical language furnish the romance found in The Good Earth. A romantic background is found in

Gone With The Wind, The Store, Now In November, and The Late George Apley. Episodes of adventure abound in Honey In The Horn, Lamb In His Bosom, and The Yearling.

Realism also has a definite place in these novels. Famine, floods, drought, and fire are the realistic happenings in The Good Earth, Gone With The Wind, Now In November, and Lamb In His Bosom. Frustration, death, and insanity are very real in Laughing Boy, The Late George Apley, and The Yearling. Pioneer hardships prove to be grim in Honey In The Horn. The daily routine of prosaic living is found in the realistic Years Of Grace. The problems of a small Southern town are realistically set forth in The Store. These novels are peopled with characters who are very real, with the possible exception of those in The Store and Now In November.

A review of the critical receptions of these Pulitizer Prize winners of the 1930's indicates that there is a blend of realism and romance. Backgrounds and language contain beauty and traditions. But characters and events are composed of the sterner stuff of life. Realism and romance seem to go hand and hand in these novels.

This blending of romance and realism apparently appeals to

the general reading public since nine of these novels made the "best-sellers" list. If it is true that people in general prefer novels which contain characters and experiences familiar to their daily living, then nine of these novels are evidently acceptable from that standpoint. The Late George Apley, quite understandably, does not make the "best seller" list. This need not lessen the strong appeal it has for the few to whom it appeals. The critic Frank Parker Stockbridge says the reading public can be depended upon to select a good story. These novels, then, seem to reflect credit upon the Pulitzer judges who chose them from the many performances submitted to them. To be acceptable to the public and at the same time to meet the high standards set by the trustees of Columbia University is an outstanding achievement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Books

Allen, Frederick Lewis, Since Yesterday. New York: Harper and Brothers Co., 1940.

Barnes, Margaret Ayer, Years of Grace. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930.

Buck, Pearl S., The Good Earth. New York: The John Day Company, 1931.

Davis, H. L., Honey In The Horn. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935.

Hackett, Alice Payne, Fifty Years of Best Sellers-1895-1945. New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1945.

Johnson, Josephine, Now In November. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935.

La Farge, Oliver, Laughing Boy. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1929.

Marquand, John P., The Late George Apley. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1937.

Miller, Caroline, Lamb In His Bosom. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933.

Mitchell, Margaret, Gone With The Wind. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938.

Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, The Yearling. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939.

Stribling, Thomas, The Store. New York: Literary Guild, 1932.

Thrall, W. F., and A. Hibbard, A Handbook To Literature. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1936.

II. Articles

Adams, J. Donald, "A Fine Novel Of The Civil War," The New York Times Book Review, July 5, 1936. p. 1.

Benet, Stephen Vincent, "Georgia Marches Through," The Saturday Review of Literature. XIV: 5, July 4, 1936.

Brickell, Herschel, "The Literary Landscape," North American Review, CCXXXVIII: 477. November, 1934.

---------, "The Literary Landscape," Review Of Reviews, XCIV:8, August, 1936.

Cheever, Jon, "While The Fields Burn," The New Republic, LXXX: 191, September 26, 1934.

Collison, Lucy-Morley, "Shorter Notices," The Catholic World, CXXXIII: 763, September, 1931.

Colum, Mary M., "The American Mind In Literature," The Forum, XC: 330, December, 1933.

-----, "A Welcome Change In Novels," The Forum, XCIX: 380-381, May, 1938.

-----, "Among The Younger Writers," Forum and Century, XCII: 279, November, 1934.

Cowley, Malcolm, "Going With The Wind," The New Republic, LXXXVIII: 161-2, September 16, 1936.

Davenport, Basil, "The Story of A Lady," The Saturday Review of Literature, VI: 1203, July 19, 1930.

---------, "The Pulitzer Winners," The Saturday Review of Literature, XV: 7, January 2, 1937.

DeVoto, Bernard, "The Brahmin Way of Life," The Saturday Review of Literature, XV: 5, January 2, 1937.

Evans, Nancy, "Fiction," The Bookman, LXXIII: 324, May, 1931.

"Fiction,".The New Republic, LXII: 27, August 17, 1932.

" 'The Good Earth' and Other Recent Works of Fiction," The New York Times Book Review, 6, March 15, 1931.

Holt, Guy, Bookman, XVI: 72, September, 1930.

Howe, Quincy, "The Latest Puritan," The New Republic, XC: 25, February 10, 1937.

Hutchison, Percy, "Mr. Marquand's Novel Of The Boston Brahmin Tradition," New York Times, 3, January 3, 1937.

Johnson, Josephine W., "The 1935 Pulitzer Winners," The Wilson Bulletin, IX: 544, June, 1935.

-------, "Year's End," Poetry, XLC: 199, October-March, 1934-1935.

Kronenberger, Louis, "A First Novel Of Distinguished Quality," The New York Times Book Review, 7, September 17, 1933

----------, "Years of Grace' and Other Recent Works of Fiction," The New York Times Book Review, XXXV: 6, July 6, 1930.

"The Leisure Arts," The Outlook and Independent, CLIII: 387, November 6, 1929.

McCarthy, Mary, "Tall Timber," The Nation, CXLI: 248, August 28, 1938.

Mencken, H. L., "History and Fable and Very Good Stuff," New York Herald Tribune Books, XI: 2, August 25, 1935.

"The New Books," The Saturday Review Of Literature, X: 84, September 2, 1933.

The New York World, as quoted in The Literary Digest, CV: 19, May 31, 1930.

Paterson, Isabel, "The Nemesis Of Slavery," The New York Herald Tribune Books, VIII: 4, July 3, 1932.

"The Pulitzer Blues," The Literary Digest, CV: 19, 1930.

Robbins, Frances Lamont, "This Week's Reading," Outlook and Independent, CLV: 348, July 2, 1930.

------, "This Week's Reading," Outlook and Independent, CLVII: 407, March 18, 1931.

"Scrub Idyle," Times, XXXI: 69, April 4, 1938.

Stockbridge, Frank Parker, "The Bookman's Monthly Score," LXXI: 572, August, 1930.

Van Alen, Eleanor L., "Book Reviews," The North American Review, CCXLII: 201-204, Autumn 1939.

Van Doren, Dorothy, "Female Decorum," The Nation, CXXXI: 158, August 6, 1930.

---------, "The Making Of A Boston Brahmin," The Nation, CXLIV: 78, January 16, 1937.

Walton, Edith H., "A First Novel of Fine Distinction," The New York Times Book Review, September 16, 1923, p.6.

*****, "A Novel Of Backwoods Living," New York Times Book Review, 27, April 3, 1938.

Walton, Edna Lou, "Romantic Patterns in Literature," The New York Times Book Review, September 17, 1933: p. 12

White, Kenneth, "Second Act," The Nation, CXXXV: 176, August 24, 1932.

Woodward, Frances, " A Guide To Good Books," The Atlantic Monthly, CLXI: June, 1938.

Younghill, Kang, "China Is Different," The New Republic, LXVII: 185, July 1, 1931.

VITA

India Rawlings Foster (nde India Elizabeth Rawlings) was born July 21, 1906, in Fitzhugh, Virginia. She attended Jarratt High School, graduating from there in May, 1923. Two years later she received a diploma from State Teachers College at Farmville, Virginia. At present she teaches in the Bainbridge Junior High School in Richmond.

Courses in the summer school of the University of Richmond (1942) were followed by extension courses at Richmond Professional Institute (1942). The B. S. degree was conferred by Farmville State Teachers College in 1943. Graduate work has been done at the University of Richmond during summer sessions of 1945, 1946, and 1947.