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ELLEN GLASGOW'S VIRGINIA: THE BACKGROUND OF HER NOVELS

BY

RUTH JONES WILKINS

A THESIS
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PREFACE

Some of the scenes in Ellen Glasgow's novels can be recognized by anyone familiar with Virginia. Other scenes are difficult to place in their proper settings.

Rebe Gordon Glasgow, Anne Virginia Bennett, and Carrie Coleman Duke are able to say absolutely that certain books and scenes are laid in specific places. Mrs. Tutwiler says that the frame store at Buckner is "where Dorinda worked." Miss Bennett says that most of the houses that she thinks of as settings for parts of the novels are based on mere supposition. She does say, however, that she can positively identify the house at 217 South Third Street as the home of Ada Fincastle in VEIN OF IRON; the house at 706 North Sixth Street as Minerva's home in the novel, IN THIS OUR LIFE; and the house at Franklin and Foushee streets as Judge Honeywell's home in THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS. Mrs. Duke is able to identify all of the Louisa County scenes in BARREN GROUND. The interest shown in this research by them has enlivened the work.

The letters of Ellen Glasgow's were lent by Beverley Cooke, young Richmond pianist. On his way to England in 1944, he was walking on the deck of the Queen Mary one day. He saw a book without a back, lying on the deck. Picking it up, he found BARREN GROUND, read

it and decided to write to Miss Glasgow, because as a little boy living on Gamble's Hill, he had often seen her old home and wondered what she was like. They exchanged several letters during 1944 and 1945, but they never met.

My father, the Reverend Roscoe Jones, who knows old Virginia, re-read many of the novels and helped with identification and my sons, William F. Elliott and Charles F. proved to be good observers on my field trips.

VIRGINIA

BECAUSE I AM A VIRGINIAN in every drop of my blood and pulse of my heart, I may speak the truth as I understand it . . . At least the faults I deplore are my own faults, just as I hope the peculiar virtues of Virginians are my own also.

* *

I am here to speak of the future, not of the past. I am here to speak of a future that must be glorious indeed if it is to prove worthy of the soil from which it springs. No Virginian can love and revere the past more than I do. No Virginian can find greater inspiration in the lesson that it teaches. To me Virginia's past is like a hall hung with rare and wonderful tapestries, or perhaps it would be truer to say that it is like a cathedral illumined by the gold and wine-colour of stained glass windows. It is a place to which we should go for inspiration and worship; it is a place from which we should come with renewed strength and courage; but it is not a place in which we should live and brood until we become like that ancient people whose 'strength was to sit still.'

* *

The past, however splendid, must be the fruitful soil in which the seeds of the future are planted; it must not be the grave in which the hope of the race lies buried. It is tomorrow, not yesterday, that needs us most. If we stop and look back a moment we shall see that the heroic figures in our own race are the figures of men who, one and all . . . recognized the law of progress as superior to the rules of precedent . . . And of each of the great Virginians it may be said that he was going onward, not backward.

* *

If Washington had placed tradition above freedom there would have been no Revolution . . . The two fundamental principles of Jefferson were first, freedom of conscience, and secondly freedom of speech. Yet there are those among us today who would suppress freedom of thought and speech in the name of the greatest progressive statesman of his age . . . The name of this very Jefferson has been used as an anchor to keep us moored for generations in the backwaters of history. . . . If Lee had clung to tradition, to crumbling theories of right, would he have left the old army and the old standards, and have passed on into the new army to fight under the new flag? . . . he spoke the language of the future—he marched onward, not backward.

* *

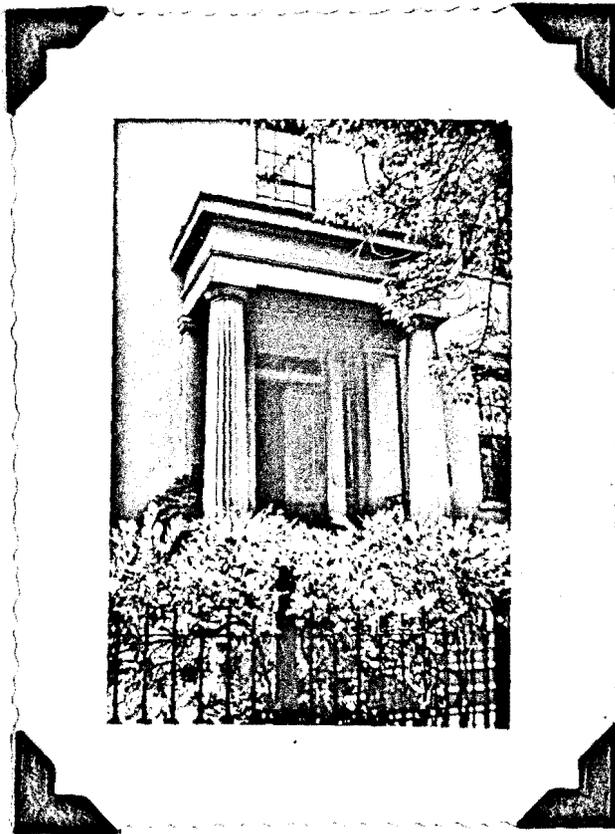
We can make a great future—a future worthy of Virginia's history, not by copying the past, but by lighting again and again our fresh torches by the flame of the old . . . When Virginia was noblest, she was freest. She was creating, not copying. The supreme acts of her history are not acts of surrender to tradition, but of defiance to tradition . . . We can take our right place in the present and future—a place worthy of our past—only by making some fresh, some evergreen contribution to the periods in which we live.

* *

We are most like Washington, not when we droop in the chains of tradition, but when we stride fearlessly toward the future. We are most like Jefferson, not when we repeat parrot-like the principles he enunciated, but when we apply these great principles to ever changing conditions. We are most like Lee, not when we hesitate and hold back, but when we leave the haven of the past, and go onward with that courage which

"Neither shape of danger can dismay
Nor thought of tender happiness betray."

Ellen Glasgow



"The Old Gray House"

Ellen Glasgow

ELLEN GLASGOW'S NOVELS: TIME AND PLACE

Date	Novels	Internal Date	Personal Data
1897	<u>The Descendant</u> Louisa New York	1893- 1894	Summer in London Book accepted by Harper while in London
1898	<u>Phases of an Inferior Planet</u> Louisa New York	1896- 1897	With Cary Glasgow McCormick at Art Students' League in New York for a winter
1900	<u>The Voice of the People</u> James City Williamsburg Richmond	1870- 1897	Weeks at a Williamsburg hotel Visits with Mary Johnston Convention in Roanoke With Rebe Glasgow Tutwiler and Cary Glasgow McCormick at Capon Springs near Winchester With Carrie Coleman Duke at Prince Edward Island
1902	<u>The Battle-ground</u> Frederick, Clarke, Fauquier, Fairfax, and Prince Edward Winchester Richmond	1850- 1865	With Cary Glasgow McCormick in hired carriage driving up and down valley and touring battle area of Northern Virginia
1904	<u>The Deliverance</u> Louisa Caroline Fredericksburg Richmond	1878- 1890	With Anna Furness at Chase City, 1901 or 1902 Observation of tobacco growing in Caroline and Louisa
1906	<u>The Wheel of Life</u> Clarke New York	1905- 1906	Summer at White Sulphur Springs In Italy, summer, 1907
1908	<u>The Ancient Law</u> Halifax South Boston Chase City Fredericksburg	1907- 1908	With Rebe Glasgow Tutwiler at Chase City With Elizabeth Patterson Crutchfield in England With Julia Sully at Colorado Springs
1909	<u>The Romance of a Plain Man</u> Richmond	1875- 1910	Visit with Carrie Coleman Duke at Beechwood, Louisa County In France and Italy with Cary Glasgow McCormick, summer, 1910 Visits to Julia Sully in Petersburg and side trips to Southside Virginia
1911	<u>The Miller of Old Church</u> Southside Richmond	1898- 1902	With Anne Virginia Bennett at Warm Springs in Alleghany County, Summer, 1910 In New York City, 1911-1915

ELLEN GLASGOW'S NOVELS: TIME AND PLACE

Date	Novels	Internal Date	Personal Data
1913	<u>Virginia</u> Petersburg	1884- 1912	New York Visits with Julia Sully in Petersburg With Louise Collier Willcox in Europe until outbreak of war, 1914
1916	<u>Life and Gabriella</u> New York Richmond	1894- 1912	New York with frequent trips home End of long stay in New York, 1915 With Carrie Coleman Duke in San Francisco With Carrie Coleman Duke at a Fredericksburg hotel Visits to Gunston Hall, Stratford, and Elmwood
1919	<u>The Builders</u> Dinwiddie Petersburg Richmond	1917- 1919	Spring in New York with Carrie Coleman Duke Summer in Richmond, 1919 Visit at Beechwood, 1919
1922	<u>One Man in His Time</u> Richmond	1920- 1922	With the Dukes at Tate Springs, Tennessee, summer, 1920 At Yarmouth Farms, New York
1925	<u>Barren Ground</u> Louisa New York	1894- 1924	Visits with Carrie Coleman Duke at Beechwood, Louisa County Summer at Barnstable, Cape Cod
1926	<u>The Romantic</u> <u>Comedians</u> Richmond	1923	Trip to Europe, 1927
1929	<u>They Stooped</u> <u>to Folly</u> Richmond	1924	At Poland Springs, Maine, 1929
1932	<u>The Sheltered Life</u> Richmond	1910- 1917	In England and France with Carrie Coleman Duke, 1930
1935	<u>Vein of Iron</u> Rockbridge Lexington Staunton Charlottesville Timber Ridge Richmond	1901- 1933	West Cornwall, Connecticut, 1936 Lecture at Breadloaf School of English, Vermont, 1936 Summers in Maine, 1935-1940
1941	<u>In This Our Life</u> Richmond	1938- 1939	Summers in Maine, 1941-1945

ELLEN GLASGOW'S VIRGINIA: THE BACKGROUND OF HER NOVELS

INTRODUCTION

Deep in the soil and the tradition of Virginia in years of glorious expansion and of overwhelming defeat were the ancestral roots of Ellen Glasgow, novelist of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Ellen Glasgow was descended in both maternal and paternal lines from distinguished Virginians. From her own family, "three hundred years in Virginia," she learned about her state, her people and their backgrounds, about the lost days of grandeur "before the War." As she looks back in *(A CERTAIN MEASURE)* on her writing life, Miss Glasgow says:

In my blood there were remote inheritances from the past three hundred years in Virginia; and when I recorded events that occurred before I was born, I seemed to be writing of things I had actually known. 1

I could write only of the scene I knew, and this scene had been furnished, however inadequately, for the past three hundred years.

1. Ellen Glasgow, *A Certain Measure*, p. 68

The figures in the landscape belonged to the stock that we call Anglo-Saxon. Our past was an English or Scottish past; in the beginning, the life I knew at first hand had been roughly hewn out of a wilderness by English or Scottish pioneers. 1

My mother's people had settled in the Tidewater in 1619 and 1634, and she was, also, one of a tribal multitude who looked back to the too virile progenitor, Col. William Randolph, of Turkey Island.

But my father's forbears were among the stalwart pioneers in the upper valley of the James River and the fertile wildernesses of the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies. Glasgow, 2 Graham, Anderson, they had first fled from Scotland to shelter in the north of Ireland, and then, when religious persecution still tracked them down, they had sailed from Ulster in search of a safer refuge among the savages of America. The original Glasgow homestead, built on a large tract of land, mostly wilderness, in Rockbridge County, is still standing, though it has been twice burned in part, and has suffered even greater indignity of modern improvements. 3

The adventures of my mother, as a young wife during the war, were as vivid to me as my own memories... 4

Born (1874), in the Era of Reconstruction, Ellen

Glasgow grew up in the lean years that bled the South and its people. Though her family had been affluent before the War, she recounts the following story of her childhood:

Although I was not born until the middle of the eighteen-seventies, I could well remember the hungry 'eighties'; and I could remember, too, that when I wanted a doll with 'real hair', I was told I could not have it because we had 'lost everything in the war'. 5

1. Ibid., p. 69.

2. Ellen Glasgow's full name was Ellen Anderson Gholson Glasgow.

3. Glasgow, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

4. Ibid., p. 20.

5. Ibid., p. 12.

All the stories heard by the serious little brown-eyed, beautiful child were stored away in her amazingly fertile brain and were later to emerge in her nineteen novels, of which fourteen were laid entirely on Virginia soil.

The little girl grew up, lived and died in the "old grey house" she loved so well at One West Main Street, Richmond. During those years she saw her beloved Virginia in blood and sweat drag itself by sheer force of will and an unbreakable spirit from the poverty and degradation of war to the new era in the South. The struggle to rebuild Virginia, the effort to make barren land fertile again, the political battles of Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction days she unfolded graphically (from 1897-1941) in polished, moving novels. She placed her characters and their stories of struggle in rural Virginia, in villages, and in Richmond and other cities against scenes and in houses that today are much the same in many instances as they were when Ellen Glasgow saw them. Of the child, Michael Akersham, in *THE DESCENDANT*, Miss Glasgow says:

I made my central figure an outcast escaping from rural Virginia, and with the opening sentence, 'The child sat by the roadside,' I felt him stir and breathe and become animate.... 'Why did you make him blink his eyes?' a reader once asked me; and I could only answer, 'He was blinking them when I first saw him, as a child, by the roadside.'¹

1. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

She loved those parts of the Old Dominion she knew best and which were home to her and her family: Richmond and the Tidewater; the Valley of Virginia between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies; Northern Virginia with its magnificent homes and sweeping fields; Louisa County, where she spent her summers from 1879-1887; Southside Virginia, with acres of tobacco land and warehouses for the storage of that commodity where she, her sister, and her nurse had spent several weeks at a hotel.

These regions of Virginia existed for Ellen Glasgow not as mere places on a map. They became an integral part of the Ellen Glasgow who speaks to her readers through her novels. As she traveled Virginia on foot, in a carriage, by train, and by automobile, she observed, listened, and stored away names of counties, towns, rivers, creeks, streets, homes, which she was later to use, both in and out of their locales; and the names are, without fail, so far as the writer has been able to determine, Virginia names, not fictitious ones. Botetourt County furnished the name for part of the setting in VIRGINIA and THE ANCIENT LAW; Tappahannock in Essex County became the name for a town in Southside; Whippernock Creek which crosses U.S. Route 460 in Dinwiddie County becomes in BARREN GROUND the North Anna River; Sycamore Street in Petersburg perhaps suggested Sycamore Creek in BARREN GROUND; Mulberry Street in Richmond's west end becomes the Third Street of VEIN OF IRON; Gamble's Hill becomes Juniper Hill

in the same book; and "Chericoke"¹ plantation on the Chickahominy furnishes the name for one of the plantations in northern Virginia in THE BATTLE-GROUND: Pedlar's Mill in BARREN GROUND may take the name from Pedlar River in Amherst County, which Miss Glasgow must often have crossed in going to Lexington.

To Ellen Glasgow a region was not merely a general whole, but an area made up of particulars. The Valley for Ellen Glasgow was a region of blue mountains, green valleys, villages all but hidden in the valleys. The battlefields came alive for her. Louisa County was not merely a region overworked and impoverished. To her its red clay fields were beautiful; its dusty roads furnished the setting for some of her novels. She loved even the broomsedge-covered fields. She loved the trees, especially the aspen. Rebe Glasgow² Tutwiler said, "Ellen always said that an aspen was the most beautiful tree in the world." She loved also the old city, Richmond. She knew and loved fine old houses and gracious living in old Richmond -- old houses that had resounded to the footsteps of the idolized Marse Robert, the beloved Stonewall Jackson of Valley stock, the dashing Jeb Stuart, the sad-faced and pensive Jefferson Davis. She loved

1. "Chericoke, the home of the Edward Wallaces," S. W. Massie and E. A. Christian, Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia. p. 83.

2. Mrs. Carrington Cabell Tutwiler, sister of Ellen Glasgow, now living at Brushwood, Lexington, Virginia

her own "old grey house," from which she loved to walk east to Gamble's Hill with its terraces and fine view of old Richmond and the river. The section around the Medical College of Virginia had in Ellen Glasgow's childhood been residential. Leigh Street, Marshall Street, Clay Street, the White House of the Confederacy, the Wickham-Valentine house were observed and remembered by Ellen Glasgow. East Richmond, called Church Hill, with its fine houses off Broad Street was also familiar to her.

Like an earlier American writer, Thoreau, Ellen Glasgow loved to walk; and as she walked, she observed and stored in her mind all things along the way. Mrs. Tutwiler said, "Ellen saw everything. She saw one blade of grass rub against another." Carrie Coleman Duke¹ said, "Ellen and I have walked all over the section in which she laid BARREN GROUND. I've walked with her many a time from Beechwood to the 'low place where Jason and Dorinda met' and on to Dr. Greylock's house." In Richmond it was with Anne Virginia Bennett² that Ellen Glasgow often walked when she was gathering material and absorbing 'atmosphere' for the settings of her novels. Miss Bennett said of Leigh Street, Gamble's Hill, West Franklin Street, Monroe Park, "I've walked all over these areas with Ellen many a time."

1. Mrs. Frank Williamson Duke of Louisa County and Richmond.
 2. Miss Anne Virginia Bennett of Richmond, friend and secretary to Ellen Glasgow.

When Ellen Glasgow and Mrs. Duke were driven out to Elmwood from Fredericksburg, they sat down to rest in the yard of that supposedly haunted house. Mrs. Duke said that neither of them spoke and she was aware that Ellen was taking in all details of the place. After a time Miss Glasgow turned to her and said, "I have a story." It was the short story, "Whispering Leaves."

From her permanent home, One West Main Street, Richmond, whence she observed her native city, Ellen Glasgow went summer after summer to some part of rural Virginia, which was to furnish the backdrop of several novels. Louisa, Botetourt, Rockbridge, Halifax, Mecklenburg, were the counties she knew best; Richmond, Lexington, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, the cities. In addition, she was thoroughly familiar with Northern Virginia and Williamsburg.

To read Ellen Glasgow is to see vividly these regions which she chose to use artistically, lovingly, and critically. Against a Virginia background, she sketched her plots, moved her characters, and depicted the changing manners and social order of her Virginia and Virginians against a changing world order. In several novels Ellen Glasgow was literally realistic, as in VIRGINIA and BARREN GROUND; in others she was more free, putting a church, a mill, a tavern, where none existed.

As an artist, she took part of her setting from the scenes she knew so well, when it suited the purpose; but,

then, she added or subtracted what was needed for the verisimilitude of the plot and characters before her.

Those who read Ellen Glasgow can see Virginia through the eyes of a true daughter of the Commonwealth. In her novels Virginia comes alive -- the Virginia for which the author saw both strengths and weaknesses; the Virginia that Virginians, like Ellen Glasgow, love, grieve for, and believe in. Readers who see in Ellen Glasgow only the recreation of the past and an interpretation of the present (i.e., the time of the novel), miss the real Ellen Glasgow. In an address to the Woman's Club on Lee's birthday, 1921, she said, "I am here to speak of the future."¹ Her novels were the vehicle she used to speak of the future of her native state.

With power, effectiveness, and pity Ellen Glasgow told of her Virginia. Her delineation of her native state brought her among other honors, degrees from Duke University and the University of Richmond; an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; a Phi Beta Kappa membership in Alpha Chapter at the College of William and Mary and, belatedly, the Pulitzer Prize for *IN THIS OUR LIFE* (1945).

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1. Copy made from one owned by Anne Virginia Bennett.
 2. Emily Clark, Innocence Abroad, "...Ellen Glasgow's most enduring emotion, stronger in her than either love or hate, is pity." p. 63.

In the March issue of BOOKS ABROAD there is the statement that Ellen Glasgow should have received the Nobel Prize.

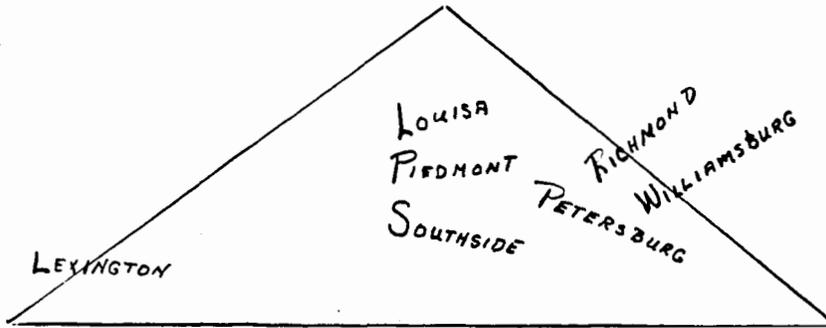
This Virginia that Ellen Glasgow portrayed is not the Virginia of moonlight and roses of earlier, sentimental novelists. On the contrary, it is the Virginia that suffered and faced defeat; the Virginia that rose from the ashes of departed grandeur; the Virginia that helped to rebuild the South after the devastating War between the States, and the more debilitating Era of Reconstruction.

In her Virginia, Ellen Glasgow saw defeated people with magnificent spirit and incredible courage. She saw people like the Blakes in *THE DELIVERANCE* stripped of ancestral acres; people with great names, living in the overseer's house, while the overseer occupied the manor house. She saw other people, like the Lightfoots in *THE BATTLE-GROUND*, with nothing left of a plantation home except chimneys standing like tombstones against the April sky. Many of these people were for Ellen Glasgow wresting from barren land a living.

Her people moved for her against a Virginia landscape. Even when she set a novel in New York or moved a character, such as Dorinda in *BARREN GROUND*, to New York, the South is ever in the background. If the novel is not set in Virginia, the State is in the story as it is in *THE WHEEL OF LIFE*.

Today from Tidewater to the Valley of Virginia the

traveler may find many of the scenes used in Ellen Glasgow's novels: her novels fall into a triangle in the heart of Virginia.



THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE is laid in Williamsburg in the right angle of the triangle; THE BATTLE-GROUND in Northern Virginia at the apex; VEIN OF IRON in Lexington, in the left angle; and the remaining eleven with Virginia backgrounds in Piedmont, Soutside, or Richmond, in the center of the triangle.

The reader with this guide can retrace the steps of the characters in the novels. The Valley pike follows the same road that Dan traveled in THE BATTLE-GROUND; House Mountain towers over Lexington; the College of William and Mary still stands at the end of Duke of Gloucester Street in Williamsburg. Scenes in Petersburg and Richmond have been so faithfully and authentically described that one fancies that Virginia Pendleton is buying chickens at Dance's market in Petersburg; or that Gabriella Carr is waiting on one in a Richmond store; or that if one stands long enough in front of the house "with the baptismal font in front" at Franklin and Foushee in Richmond, one will see Major Honeywell descent the steps to his waiting automobile and go toward the "plebian

park" and Hollywood Cemetery. At Buckner in Louisa County the "store in which Dorinda worked" still stands; the railroad bed is unchanged and the "last train of the day" roars by.

Today readers seeking a true picture of Virginia from 1850 to 1941 portrayed in fiction may turn to Ellen Glasgow and be grateful that the stories told her by her family found receptive ears and a productive mind. Further, they may be grateful that Ellen Glasgow had the courage to treat the South she knew and loved in realistic, penetrating, forthright fashion. To see Virginia through Ellen Glasgow's eyes is to see both rural and urban Virginia in prosperity and poverty, at war and at peace, and in victory over defeat.

To travel Virginia's highways and by-roads, to seek out scenes used by Ellen Glasgow in her novels, to visualize the characters in her books moving against the backgrounds she made vivid, to look on the mountains and the valleys so loved by her, to walk Richmond's streets with Ellen Glasgow, and even to get stuck in the red clay of Louisa County in the interest of research are indeed rich experiences.



" The Portico Behind The Doric Columns."

THE BATTLEGROUND



" Long And Low With A Square Porch."

THE BATTLEGROUND



" Lands On Which His Fathers Had Sown."

THE BATTLEGROUND



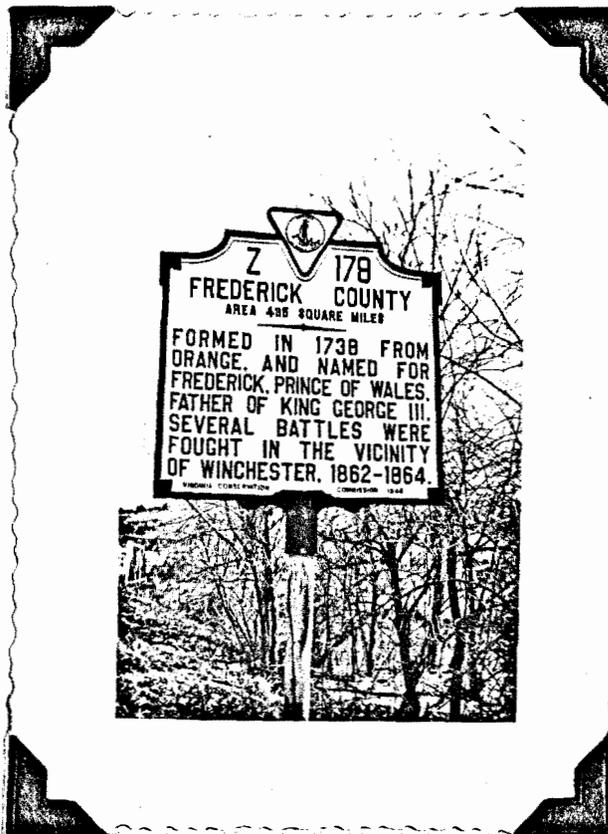
" Cephas In The Garden."

THE BATTLEGROUND



" Overlooking Cedar Creek Battlefield."

THE BATTLEGROUND



" Reminder Of The Battles."

THE BATTLEGROUND



" The Dusty Street And The Little Whitewashed
Building."

THE BATTLEGROUND

CHAPTER I

THE VALLEY AND BACK AGAIN

The Battle-Ground, The Wheel of Life, and Vein of Iron

1850-1935

All that I knew of the Civil War was what I had heard from my mother, supported by a chanting chorus of male and female voices. 1

Ellen Glasgow was born in the right place and at the right time to hear many tales of the war of 1861 to 1865. These tales she was later to give to her readers in THE BATTLE-GROUND, laid in Northern Virginia and the Valley area surrounding Winchester.

Clarke, Fauquier, and Frederick counties in the north of Virginia, appear in at least two novels. In Ellen Glasgow's THE BATTLE-GROUND we find the scenery of the land, the wheat fields, and apple orchards, the scented cedars and tall pines, while across the quiet of rural scenery the sweeping pageant of war passes. 2

THE BATTLE-GROUND is a chronicle of two Virginia families before and during the War. The two families of the novel are the

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1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 12.
 2. Louise Collier Willcox, "The South in Fiction, II, Virginia," The Bookman, March, 1911, pp. 56-57.

Amblers and the Lightfoots, who live on adjoining plantations, Uplands and Chericoke. Life on the plantations is reminiscent of feudal luxury:

The master of Uplands was standing upon the portico behind the Doric columns, looking complacently over the fat lands upon which his fathers had sown and harvested for generations. Beyond the lane of lilacs and the two silver poplars at the gate, his eyes wandered leisurely across the blue and green strip of grass-land to the tawny wheat field where the slaves were singing as they swung their cradles. The day was fine, and the out-lying meadows seemed to reflect his gaze with a smile as beneficent as his own. He had cast his bread upon the soil, and it had returned to him threefold. As he stood there...the light that touched the pleasant hills and valleys was aglow in his brown eyes and comely features. 1

In the green valley, set amid blue mountains, they (slaves) move quietly back and forth, raking the wind-drifts of fallen leaves, or ploughing the rich earth for the autumn sowing of grain. 2

Life at Uplands and Chericoke in those ante-bellum days is both gay and arduous. The description of Christmas at Chericoke is as charming as Washington Irving's sketch of Christmas in an English home. The house is gay with holly and mistletoe gathered by Betty Ambler and Dan Montjoy, "heroine and hero" of the novel. The door is open to the neighbors, and the Major calls, "Come in, ladies, come in." 3
The night is cold, but the welcome's warm." The Major

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1. Ellen Glasgow, The Battle-Ground, p. 45.
 2. Ibid., p. 253.
 3. Ibid., p. 94.

greet the young girls, Betty and Virginia Ambler of Uplands, with a kiss and the excuse that Christmas does not come every day. In the best English -- and Virginian -- tradition egg-nog is dispensed with a lavish hand and by a generous and gracious host. The kitchen is gay on the festive night. Aunt Rhody rules all but supreme and unquestioned, the one person who can overrule her being Miss Betty. Chericoke is indeed a setting for such a Christmas celebration as Miss Glasgow must^{have}/experienced through the many stories she had heard.

On Christmas Eve the great logs blazed at Chericoke. From the open door the red light of the fire streamed through the ribbons of ice. The naked boughs of the old elms on the lawn tapped the peaked roof with twigs as cold and bright as steel, and the two urns beside the steps had an iridescent fringe around their marble basins. In the hall, beneath swinging sprays of mistletoe and holly, the Major and his hearty cronies were dipping apple toddy from the silver punch bowl, half hidden in its wreath of evergreen. Behind them the panelled parlor was aglow with warmth. 1

Miss Glasgow does not let her readers think that life on a plantation is all romance and ease, however; she gives the realistic side of plantation life for the mistress, whose work is unending. Her reticule hanging from her belt, the mistress opens the store rooms in the mornings and goes

1. Ibid., p. 93.

about giving orders to the servants. Through the day she is busy with housekeeping, the education of her children, embroidery, and having attended to the wants of family and slaves, she has prayers for the latter at night:

As he looked after her (Mrs. Ambler), the Governor's face clouded, as he sighed beneath his breath. The cares she met with such serenity had been too heavy for her strength; they had driven the bloom from her cheeks and the luster from her eyes; and though she had not faltered at her task, she had drooped daily and had grown older than her years. The master might live with a lavish disregard for the morrow, not the master's wife. For him were the open house, the shining table, the well-stocked wine cellar and the morning rides over the dewy fields; for her the cares of her home and children, and of the souls and bodies of the black people that had been given into her hands. 1

When Governor Ambler returns to Uplands on the night he is frightened about the possibility of a slave uprising, he asks for Mrs. Ambler. He is told, "Miss July, she set out ter de quarters to look atter Mehaley." He sets out for the quarters and goes down the row of cabins to ask again and again, "Does Mehaley live here?" until suddenly he hears a low voice praying, and sees his wife kneeling with her open Bible near the bedside. For a decade life on the plantations continues to be busy, gay and tranquil on the exterior.

Over the peaceful valley storm clouds gather. In April, 1861, the storm breaks, and war begins to invade the valley, "...troops of blue and gray cavalrymen swept up and

1. Ibid., p. 48.

down the Valley." "Merry gentlemen" go to war and as they pass through Winchester, girls and women watch them from "fragrant streets." Having left their camp in Frederick County, Dan and his regiment march toward Manassas. At the end of the day's march they see the Shenandoah, which runs in a southeasterly direction through Clarke County. Dan's regiment sees action at Manassas, which Miss Glasgow graphically describes. After the battle is over, "a glorious victory for the Confederates," Dan is on the road to Centreville, which is seven miles northeast of Manassas. Uplands and Chericoke are not far from Manassas because Mrs. Ambler and her daughters go and stay at a "little whitewashed inn" in the village to be near the Governor and to cheer his regiment as it marches through the town.

When General Ambler is killed, Mrs. Ambler and Betty go from Uplands to the "cabin in the woods" and take his body back to Uplands within a day. They arrive at the cabin in which the General has died at noon,³ and return to Uplands "in the full beams of the sun."⁴ General Ambler is killed⁵ on the retreat from Sharpsburg, Maryland, which is about thirty miles northeast of Berryville, county seat of

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1. Ibid., p. 432.
 2. " p. 327
 3. " p. 418
 4. " p. 429
 5. " p. 381, f.f.

Clarke County.

The weary years of war pass and Dan marches back to the blue hills, the green valley, the plantations, and Betty. The valley, ravaged by Sheridan's raid, is untilled; Chericoke is burned; and Betty has become a mature and strong woman. Only the hills are unchanged.

Clarke, Fauquier, and Frederick counties are dotted with fine old houses, two of which Miss Glasgow presumably used as settings in the novel. A mansion that answers somewhat to the description of Uplands is Carter Hall in Clarke County: it has columns and detached wings. It commands a fine view of the surrounding country.¹ Chericoke is "much older than Uplands" and has a detached stairway" that crooks itself in the middle."² The traveler can find a number of old houses in Northern Virginia that can be imaginary settings in THE BATTLE-GROUND.

A tireless researcher and painstaking realist, Miss Glasgow visited the Valley area and the battlefields of the Valley and Northern Virginia before she wrote THE BATTLE-GROUND. In the summer of 1900 she and her sister, Cary Glasgow McCormick went to Winchester to do the research for the novel.

"I am sure their headquarters was Winchester. She must have seen the battlefields of Kernstown and those around Winchester where so many battles were fought, and she probably saw Manassas (or Bull Run). Impressions were carried indelibly in her mind and I am sure she saw the battles going on as she visited the vacant fields." ³

1. F. M. Dietz, Photographic Studies of Old Virginia Homes and Gardens, P. 39

2. Mrs. Duke said that the stairway at Shirley on the James is called "detached."

3. Rebe Glasgow Tutwiler

And in A CERTAIN MEASURE Miss Glasgow says, "Before writing this book, which was designed to begin a history of the social transition in Virginia by imaginatively restoring the old order, I visited every scene in my narrative, and studied every angle of vision."¹

Clarke County figures in another of Miss Glasgow's novels, THE WHEEL OF LIFE, laid chiefly in New York. Miss Glasgow did research in Northern Virginia in about 1900. She laid THE BATTLE-GROUND there and placed the roots of her main characters in the next novel, THE WHEEL OF LIFE in Clarke County. Mrs. Trent says that she is glad to meet Christina Coles, who lives in the same apartment, because she too is from Virginia, "Her name is Christina Coles and she came from Clarke County. I knew her grandfather in Clarke County."² Mrs. Trent does not expect to find "the manners of Virginia up here."³

Three decades, in which Miss Glasgow published eleven novels, pass before Miss Glasgow goes back to the Valley and the mountains. In 1933 she published VEIN OF IRON, which takes the reader to the lower Valley, the part that was the heritage of Ellen Glasgow. Mrs. Tutwiler said, "Ellen always said that Botetourt was the most beautiful county in Virginia."

VEIN OF IRON opens in a section where "The Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies toppled over and tumbled far down into the Valley of Virginia."⁴ And again "the child lay on the flat rock

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1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 13
 2. Ellen Glasgow, The Wheel of Life, p. 61
 3. Ellen Glasgow, The Wheel of Life, p. 59
 4. Ellen Glasgow, Vein of Iron, p. 1

and watched the road that climbed through the small valleys within the great valley." The town in the novel is Ironside, made up, Miss Glasgow says, of two mountain villages. Fincastle, county seat of Botetourt, may have furnished a part of Ironside, according to Mrs. Tutwiler. The setting of the novel is Rockbridge County, in the vicinity of Timber Ridge, seven miles north of Lexington and about ten miles southwest of Raphine. At Timber Ridge is Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, organized in 1764² and built, in 1756; at Raphine is New Providence Presbyterian Church, established in 1746. Grandmother Fincastle says, "Our is a little church, but we've loved it... Even if we've never been so well off as the congregations at New Providence and Timber Ridge and Falling Springs, still we're appointed to our humble work in the Lord's vineyard."³

The town of Ironside is near Lexington because Ralph goes to Washington and Lee in the nearby town. "Doctor Ogilvy, one of the professors at the university had engaged Ralph as his secretary for several hours every afternoon."⁴ Ironside is surrounded by mountains and the mountains become a part of the being of Ada Fincastle.

God's Mountain ranged far and free toward the west, beyond the heavenly twins, as Father called Rain and Cloud Mountains. But directly in front of her the dark brown of Thunder Mountain frowned through its summer foliage, with the colored hills flowing away from it fold on fold.

God's Mountain in VEIN OF IRON suggests House Mountain overlooking the town of Lexington. "God's Mountain, Father said,

1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 169.
 2. Ellinor Preston, whose father was pastor of Timber Ridge Church.
 3. Ellen Glasgow, Vein of Iron, p. 19.
 4. Ibid., p. 71.

was the oversoul of Appalachian Virginia. Whenever she gazed at it alone for a long time, the heavenly blue seemed to flood into her heart and rise there in a peak.¹

Vein of Iron opens and closes in the Valley, so much a part of the memories of Ellen Glasgow's childhood. John Fincastle, having stood loyally by his daughter, Ada, through lean, humiliating depression years in Richmond, and knowing that his life is ebbing away, cannot bear the thought of dying anywhere save in the peaceful valley guarded by the mountains.

For weeks he had saved, bit by bit, the price of his ticket to Charlottesville. There he could change for the Valley....He had waited for the first glimpse of the hills, but when the long rhythms of the Blue Ridge flowed out of the sky, they were as limpid as the April clouds on the horizon. Beyond Charlottesville he sat by the roadside until a friendly young man in a shiny new Ford car offered to take him to Staunton. Farther on they crossed the Blue Ridge above Rockfish Valley where beauty ravished the eyes.²

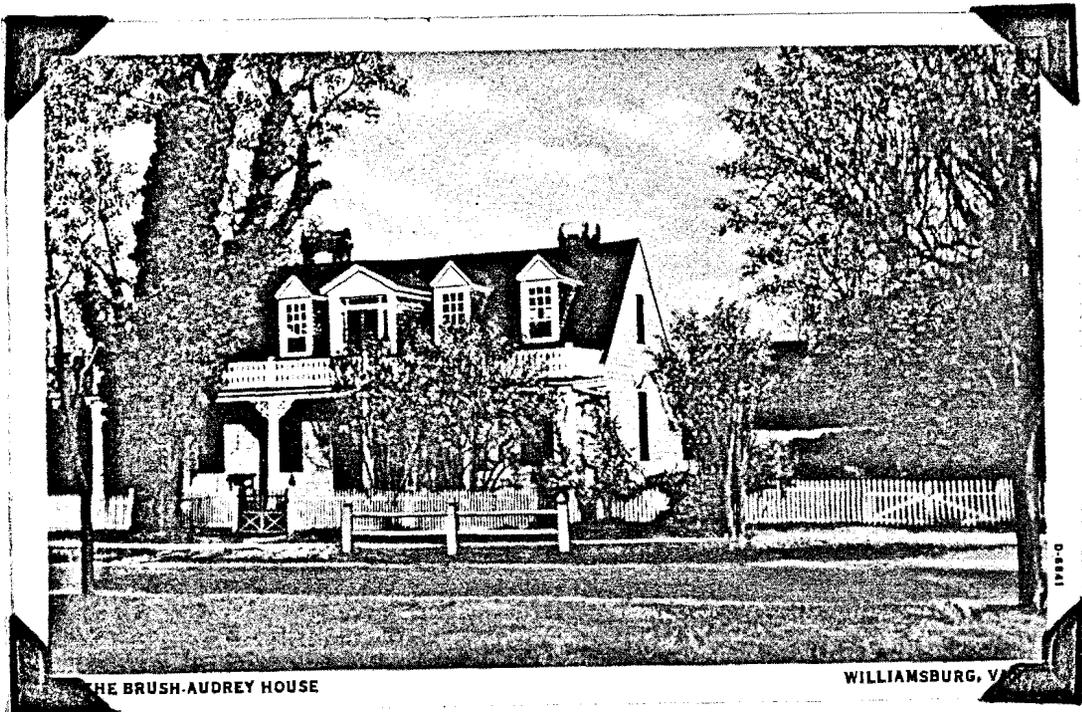
The young man chatters on about Staunton, Harrisonburg, Piedmont, Tidewater, and the Valley. Put out of the Ford at Staunton, John Fincastle faints from malnutrition and recovering consciousness says, "I must go to Ironside.... I have important business in Ironside." Driven by an intense desire to live to reach Ironside, John Fincastle welcomes the sight of God's Mountain and dies at the manse in sight of the mountain that is the "oversoul of Appalachian Virginia." To the Valley Ada and Ralph return after the death of her father.

1. 1. Ibid., p. 447-8
2. Ibid., p. 449

In A CERTAIN MEASURE Miss Glasgow says, "Tucked in some hidden recess of my memory, where it had lain unnoticed for many years, there was a novel with a setting in the Valley of Virginia...."

As a child and a young girl just growing up, I had spent many summers beyond the Blue Ridge; and it is probable that the seeds of this book were even then germinating in the soil of my mind.... The scene of VEIN OF IRON is restricted to the upper valley of the James, though I have been careful not to use the actual name of any place or person in that region.... The ramifications of my subject would lead me far back into the past, and, in order that I might saturate my mind with the atmosphere of the place and the time, I asked innumerable questions of old and young, and I devoured every record I could find of the earliest settlers in the Valley of Virginia.

The Valley, the home of her paternal ancestors, was second home to her; in the upper valley she laid an early novel and in the lower valley, back into ancestral roots, she laid a later one.



THE BRUSH-AUDREY HOUSE

WILLIAMSBURG, VA

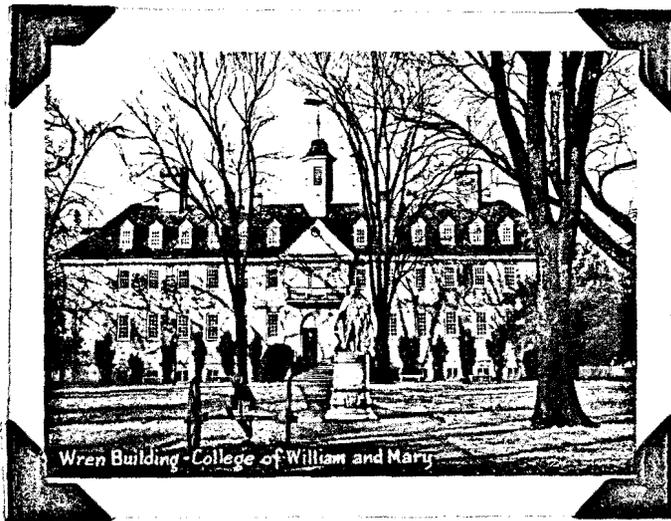
" Shingled Roof And Small Square
Windows."

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



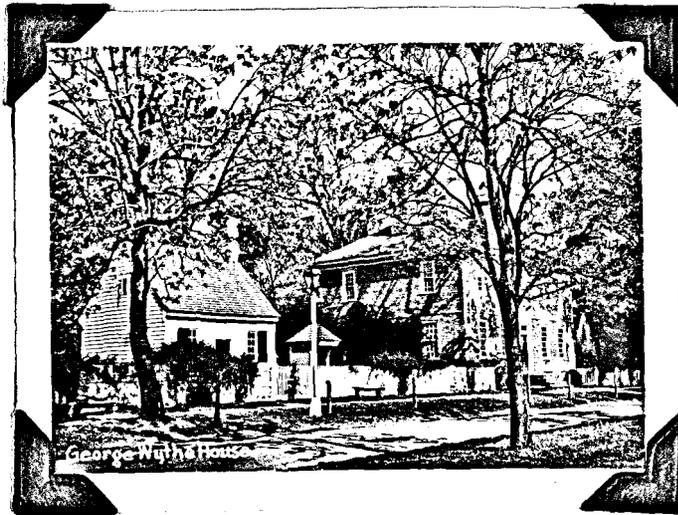
" Court House On The Green."

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

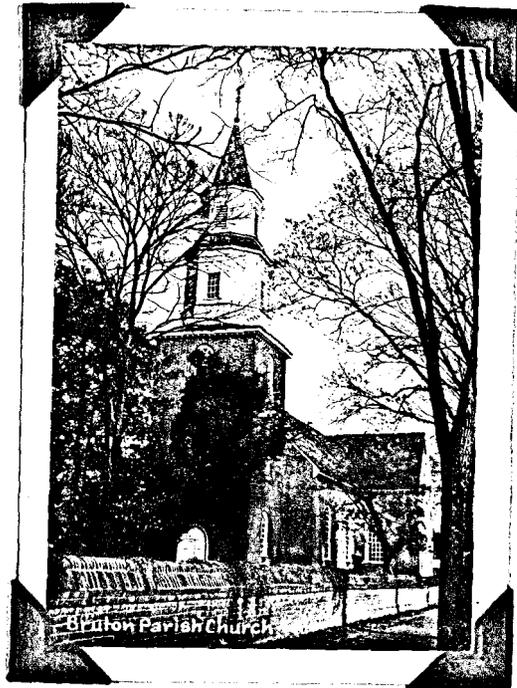


" At The End Of Duke Of Gloucester."

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

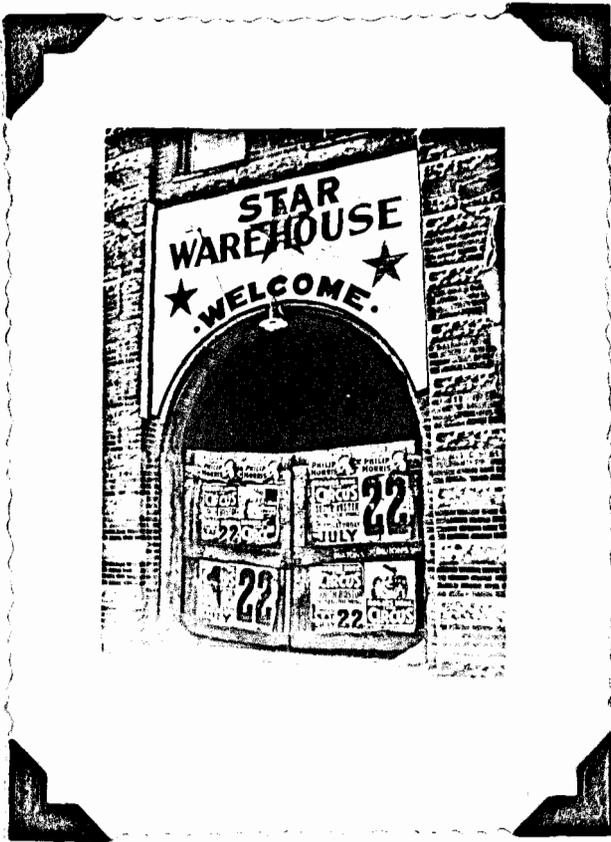


" The Judge's House ."
THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



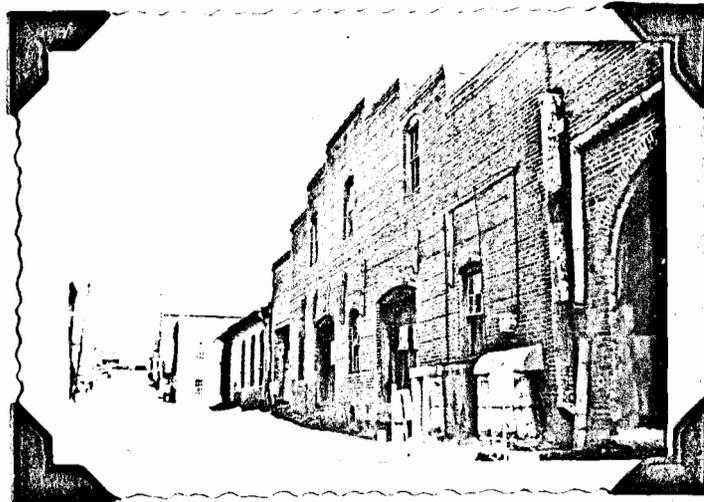
" The Old Church Tower Was Steeped
In The Shade ."

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



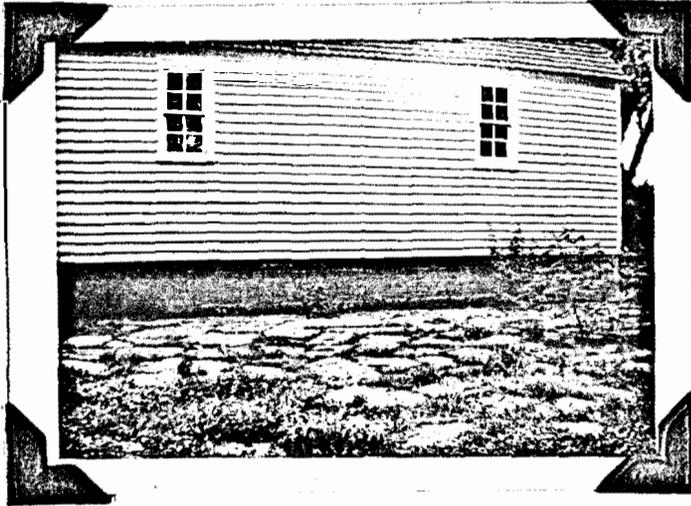
" A Faded Brick Archway."

THE ANCIENT LAW



" Warehouse Street As He Found Later
It Was Called."

THE ANCIENT LAW



"A Paved Square at the Back"

THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH

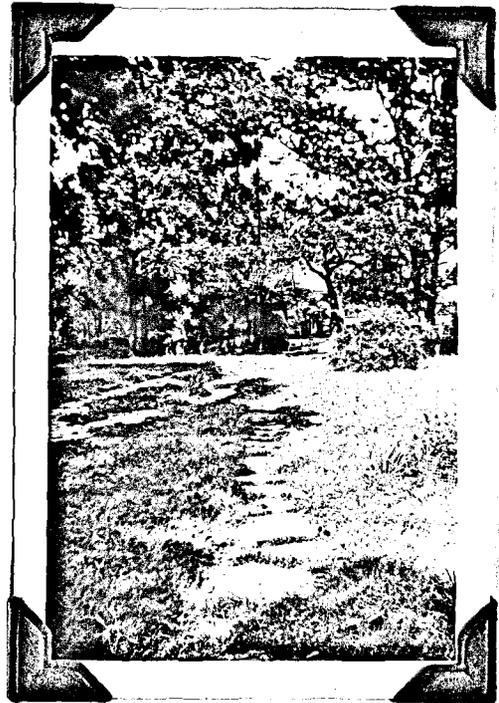


"The Sycamore Shed Its Broad
Yellow Leaves into the Brooks"

THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH



"The Door of the Cottage"
THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH



"Curved Flagged Walk Leading from the
Main House to the Cottage"
THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH



"Circular Box Wood Drive."
THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH



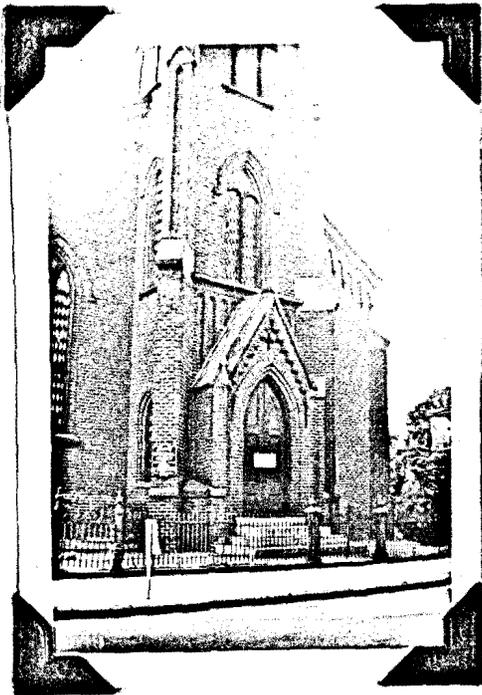
"The Rectory"

VIRGINIA



"Twelve Stone Steps Up
The Terraced Hillside"

VIRGINIA



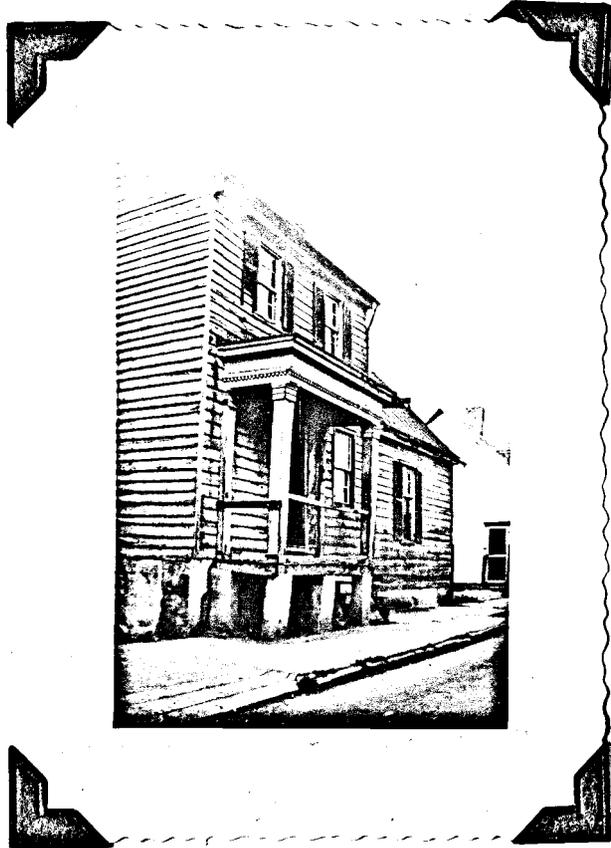
"St. James Church"

VIRGINIA



"Dying Paulownia Trees"

VIRGINIA



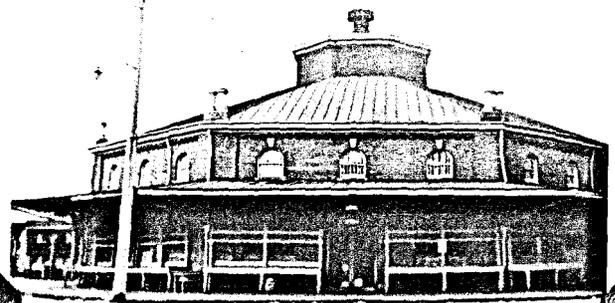
"A Frayed Seam of Gentility"

VIRGINIA



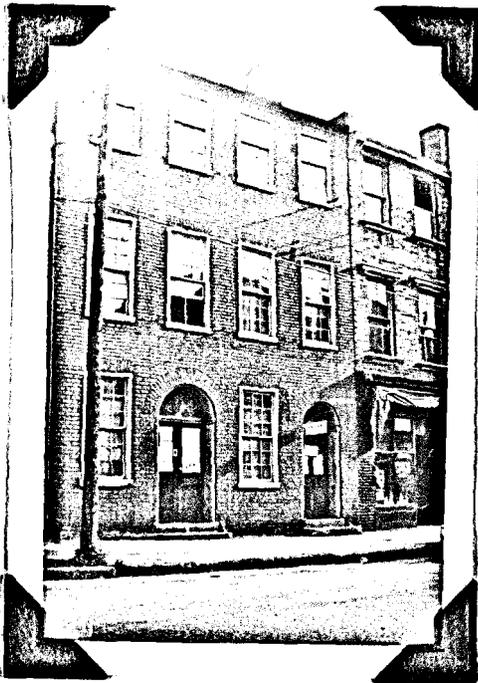
"As They Turned into Short Market Street"

VIRGINIA



"The Brick Building is Octagonal"

VIRGINIA



"Two Small Shops"

VIRGINIA



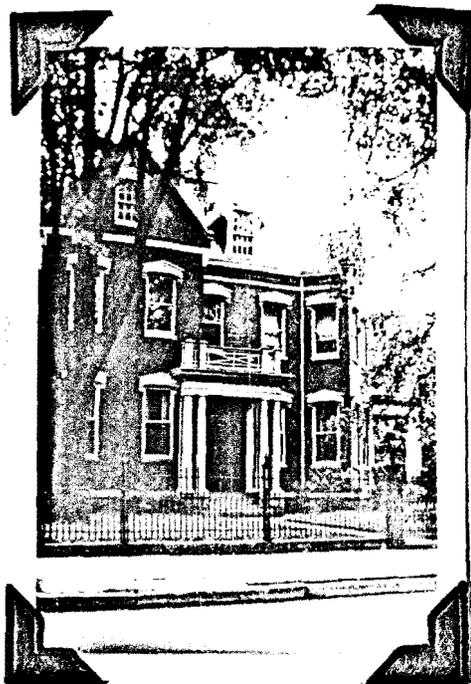
"The Little Porch Was Deserted"

VIRGINIA



"The Bay-window of Her
Bedroom"

VIRGINIA



"Impeccably Modern Building"

VIRGINIA



"Where Mrs. Meade and Mrs. Colfax
Went to School"

THE BUILDERS

CHAPTER II

TIDEWATER EPISODE AND THE SOUTHSIDE DECADE

The Voice of the People, The Ancient Law, The Miller of Old Church, Virginia, The Builders

1870-1918

While I was writing the VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, I spent many months in old Williamsburg, which was my Kingsborough. I knew the place; and I came to know every buttercup on the courthouse green.¹

To read THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE is to be carried back to the days of "old Williamsburg," the days before the Restoration, begun in the middle of the 1920's. By turns, muddy and dusty, Duke of Gloucester Street and the Palace Green are parts of the setting of the novel. The College of William and Mary stands at one end of "the street called Duke of Gloucester,"² and across the green "the houses were set in bouquets of mixed blossoms. They were of frame for the most part, with shingled roofs and small square windows hidden beneath climbing roses."³ A house which Ellen Glasgow knew and visited often answers this description, and until the recent restoration was begun the porch was almost covered by a huge climbing rose-bush. That house was known before

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1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 61
 2. Ellen Glasgow, Voice of the People, p. 13
 3. Ibid., p. 15

the Restoration as Audrey House whose name comes from Mary Johnston's having written AUDREY there.

In "Kingsborough" there is "the hospitable shelter of the asylum upon the hill," Eastern State Hospital for Mental Patients. Bruton Parish Church at the corner of Duke of Gloucester Street and the Palace Green had important parts in the background of the story. At the Courthouse, now a museum, on the Courthouse Green appears Nicholas Burr, a country lad of some nine or ten years, who is to become "the voice of the people." Later in the story, he goes to the churchyard, where Judge Basset finds him "lying at full length upon a marble slab." The judge hears the droning voice of the child when "he had gone but a short distance and was passing the iron gate of the church yard." Left in the churchyard by the judge, "Nicholas lay on the marble slab.... and gazed straight before him at the oriel window, where the ivy was tremulous with the shining bodies and clamorous voices of nesting sparrows."²

Leaving the churchyard Nicholas follows the main street to the college and turns into one of the roads known as the Old Stage Road.

Passing a straggling group of negro cabins, it stretched, naked, bleached and barren, for a good half-mile, dividing with its sandy length the low-lying fields, which were sown on one side in a sparse crop of grain and on the other side in the rich leaves and round pink heads of ripening clover. At the end of the half-mile the road ascended a slight elevation, and the character of the soil changed abruptly into clay of vivid red, which, extending a dozen yards up the rain-washed hillside,

1. Ibid., p. 21.
2. " p. 23.

appeared, in a general view of the landscape, like the scarlet tongue protruding from the silvery body of a serpent.¹

The Old Stage Road is the present Richmond Road.

Just beyond the stadium of the College of William and Mary is a large brick house, once the home of a William and Mary professor, Dr. Montgomery, and later the home of Kappa Alpha fraternity. It stands on a red clay hill, though the hill has been cut down on the present highway. Once the traveler is out of Williamsburg on his way to Richmond, he is soon in country as full of pines and sassafras as the "sandy road along which Nick Burr trudged."

Since Nick, as he lies on the slab in the churchyard, hears "from the judge's garden... the faint sound of a negro voice,"² the judge's home is almost certainly Wythe House which adjoins Bruton Churchyard and faces the Palace Green. When Nicholas leaves the judge's house, "still plunged in thought, he passed the church and followed the street to the Old Stage Road."³ And, "the grass-grown walk beside the low brick wall of the churchyard led on to the judge's own garden, a square enclosure."⁴

Traveling out of Williamsburg, Nicholas passes the college, where "from the dormitories a group of students sang out a greeting..."

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1. Ibid., p. 25.
 2. " p. 24.
 3. " p. 124
 4. " p. 7.

He soon comes to the poor land of Amos Burr which joins "the slightly richer ones of the Battles." Only a brief time is required for Nick to walk the distance from the college to his home. The site of the house suggests the home of Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell, president of William and Mary during the War between the States. It is only a few miles out of Williamsburg on the Richmond Road. "Battle Hall was a square white frame house with bright-green window shutters and a deep front porch, supported by heavy pillars, and reached from the gravelled walk below a flight of rugged stone steps." The description is also perfect for Jerdone's Castle, home of Ellen Glasgow for eight childhood summers. She loved the house and she, according to Rebe Glasgow Tutwiler, was with the other children, distressed when her father sold the farm.

While a Tidewater town furnished the name for a part of the setting of *THE ANCIENT LAW*, another section of Virginia furnished the setting. During the summers of 1901 and 1908 Ellen Glasgow spent weeks at the old resort hotel in Chase City, Mecklenburg County. It stood in what is now the center of the town; it was surrounded by a large yard, which contained a mineral spring. There and at nearby South Boston she saw tobacco warehouses, a cotton mill, wooden sidewalks, which existed in Chase City until about twenty-five years ago, and the Little Mecklenburg, a less stylish hotel, long, low, and whitewashed. At the opening of *THE ANCIENT LAW* Daniel

1. Ibid., p. 50.

Ordway is toilsomely approaching the "Tappahannock" of the novel. The town appears to be a blend of Chase City and South Boston; the former does not have a mill, but the latter does have one. Miss Glasgow says, "...the road he followed was visible as a faded scar in a stretch of impoverished, neutral-toned country -- the least distinctive and most isolated part of what is known in Virginia as 'the Southside'."¹

Tappahannock on the Rappahannock River in the Northern Neck, is without railroads, tobacco warehouses or mills. In fact, there is no railroad in all the Northern Neck. The Richmond Times-Dispatch observed when the book was published:

The scenes of the story are laid in and around two small Virginia towns, called by the author Tappahannock and Botetourt, though the localities are not of course identical with these points as Virginia people know them, and each reader must make an individual localization. 2

Tobacco is king in the part of Virginia which Ellen Glasgow chose for the first half of THE ANCIENT LAW. Furthermore, the town is near Danville; South Boston is thirty miles east and somewhat north of Danville. "The biggest shippin' of tobaccy this side o' Danville is goin' on thar (Tappahannock),"³ the man who gives Ordway a ride observes. The

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1. Ellen Glasgow, The Ancient Law, p. 4.
 2. Review of The Ancient Law in Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sunday, February 2, 1908.
 3. Ellen Glasgow, The Ancient Law, p. 6.

Tappahannock of the novel is small:

The main street -- Warehouse Street, as he found later that it was called -- appeared in the distance as a broad river of dust which ran from the little station to where the warehouses and small shops gave place to the larger dwellings which presided pleasantly over the neighboring fields. 1

The little town which Ellen Glasgow calls Tappahannock in THE ANCIENT LAW is not well-known Tappahannock in Essex County, but is the little town of South Boston in Halifax County, where Ordway worked out his salvation in Baxter's warehouse. 2

South Boston, now a bustling industrial town and big tobacco market was in 1900 a town of but 1,851 people. 3 Unable to find work at first in Baxter's warehouse, Ordway is told, "You might try the cotton mills -- they're just down the next street." 4

Aside from Mrs. Twine's boarding house, the home of Emily Brooke just outside of Tappahannock is the setting for the first half of the novel. No such house can be found near South Boston or Chase City today, according to a number of natives interviewed; however, Miss Glasgow did as she often did -- she took a house which she knew or visualized and placed it where she wanted it. The house is vividly described:

Broad, low, built of brick, with two long irregular wings embedded in English ivy, and a rotting shigled roof that sloped over dormered windows, its most striking characteristic as he first perceived it under the moonlight was the sentiment which is

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1. Ibid., p. 16.
 2. Louise Collier Willcox, op. cit., p. 57.
 3. Census Reports, Vol. I, Twelfth Census of U.S. Taken in 1900, William R. Merriam, Director
 4. Ellen Glasgow, The Ancient Law, p. 17.

inevitably associated with decay. 1

Some simple dignity still attached to its bowers of ivy and its ancient cedars,...at the end of the avenue six great trees had fallen a sacrifice. 2

To Daniel Ordway, trying to make a new life in Tappahannock comes the terse message, "'Your father died last night. Will you come home? Richard Ordway'," He leaves Tappahannock for another part of Virginia.

Southside Virginia furnishes at least a part of the setting of *THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH*. The eastern part of the area was familiar to the author, who on visits to Miss Sully in Petersburg, made side trips to the nearby counties; in addition, Miss Glasgow's maternal grandfather was William Yates Gholson of Brunswick County. (Mrs. Glasgow was born in Prince Edward County in the Southside.) Miss Bennett said that Miss Glasgow and Miss Sully, some time between 1908 and 1910, called on a Mrs. Broadnax at her home, an old house, in Brunswick County, probably "the inaccessible scene." Miss Glasgow says, "I have heard there is only a chimney left of the old house." Miss Bennett recalls having heard Miss Sully tell Miss Glasgow that Mrs. Broadnax's home had burned.

THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH, which was first published in 1911, parallels in a measure, an earlier and more dramatic novel, *THE DELIVERANCE*, one of the scenes from country life in my history of the Commonwealth. In both books I have tried to depict the prolonged results of Reconstruction and the social transition, though *THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH* is placed in a later

1. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

3. Ellen Glasgow, *A Certain Measure*, p. 128

period and a different province of Virginia. In this locality, which is known as the Southside, the first settlers were almost entirely English; and twenty-seven years ago, when I studied the somewhat inaccessible scene of my story, the native speech was still tinged with the racy flavor of old England. 1

In the novel, sandy land, marshes, cattails replace the red clay, the green fields, the mountains, the lush crops of wheat and tobacco of Miss Glasgow's earlier agrarian novels. The author has created a rustic scene at a crossroads, at which there is a tavern. The setting is not too far from Richmond: Molly Meriweather and Jonathan Gay go from Richmond back to Old Church to spend the day. Miss Bennett said that she and Miss Glasgow on a trip to the springs in the summer of 1910 visited a local cemetery to choose names for the characters in the books.

In that same summer Miss Glasgow visited at Beechwood, the Coleman home in Louisa County. Mrs. Duke at the Glasgow Seminar in the winter of 1950, said, "Ellen knew all the people around Buckner -- aristocrats, poor whites, and negroes." Visits to that area indicate that Louisa furnished some of the parts of the whole scene. On the road from Buckner to Beechwood there is at the crossroads an old house, Pottiesville, once operated as a store,² and later "as a sort of tavern" according to a number of natives interviewed. One native spoke of Dabney's mill somewhat north of Jerdone's Castle as "a public meeting place in the old days." It is now in ruins. A visit to

1. Ibid., p. 127.
2. Harris, op. cit., p. 122.

Jerdone's Castle reveals a house and yard reasonably recognizable as the house of the Gays in THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH. The house is called "Jordon's Journey," which is the name of a home in Tidewater.¹ Jerdone's Castle has a circular drive on the "old front," now considered the back of the house. The old approach was on the "front" where the boxwood drive is. Standing on the porch at Jerdone's Castle, one looks to an old whitewashed house in the yard, the overseer's house in the days when the Glasgows lived there. From the house to the overseer's house there is a "curved flagged walk leading from the main house to the cottage."² Jerdone's Castle is in a grove of fine oaks; so is Jordon's Journey.³ Furthermore, in approaching Jerdone's Castle from Bumpass, one passes land which belonged to the Bumpass family. On arrival at Jordon's Journey, Jonathan Gay says of his horse, "I had a sharp tussle with him about passing that threshing machine in Bumpass' field."⁴

1. Ibid., p. 313. It was the home of ancestors of the Farrars of Louisa.

2. Ellen Glasgow, The Miller of Old Church. Molly is forever "tripping back and forth" on the flagged walk between the main house and the overseer's cottage, occupied by her and her grandfather, old Reuben Merrieweather.

3. Ibid., p. 23.

4. Ibid., p. 29.

Professor Fishwick says, "THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH is a composite rural picture. "¹ Mrs. Tutwiler says of the book and the locale, "Many of my sister's locales were composite." And the author says it is not Old Church in Hanover County.² The background of the novel appears to be a blend of several scenes.

At any rate, there is no doubt about the background of VIRGINIA, one of Miss Glasgow's most powerful novels, laid in Petersburg, chief city of Southside Virginia. In A CERTAIN MEASURE she says:

For a whole afternoon I had searched, when, just at sunset, we turned into Bolingbroke Street, and I stumbled upon the exact house that I wanted. The instant my eyes fell upon the narrow brown front, I expected the door to open and Cyrus Treadwell to come out on the shallow 'stoop' and descend the steps to the pavement. ³

She is as realistic and detailed in picturing the chief city of Southside Virginia as she is in portraying the country scenes and the growing of tobacco in THE DELIVERANCE. Grace Church, called Saint James in the book, and the old house, called by her the rectory, behind it are on High Street. One may still climb "the twelve stone steps which led up the terraced hillside at the rectory."⁴ High Street today is much the same as it was

1. N. W. Fishwick, "Ellen Glasgow and American Letters," Commonwealth, Vol. XVII, January, 1950, No. 1, p. 113

2. E. Glasgow, A Certain Measure. p. 128 and as a footnote on the opening page of The Miller of Old Church.

3. E. Glasgow, A Certain Measure. p. 137

4. Ellen Glasgow, Virginia. p. 502

when Virginia went to Miss Pricilla Batte's Dinwiddie Academy for Young Ladies.

The chances are that a luggage factory, a part of the American Hardware Company, now stands where Miss Pricilla's school was, but one may follow the same path that Virginia, her mother and her cousin took down High Street to Short Market Street and Tin Pot Alley where Old Aunt Ailsey's cabin was.

As they (Mrs. Pendleton, Virginia, and John Henry) turned into Short Market Street, Mrs. Pendleton's voice trailed off at last into silence, and she did not speak again while they passed hurriedly between the crumbling house and the dilapidated shops which rise darkly on either side of the narrow cinder-strewn walks. The scent of honeysuckle did not reach here, and when they stopped presently at the beginning of Tin Pot Alley, there floated out to them the sharp dried odor of huddled negroes. 1

After Mrs. Pendleton has ministered to Aunt Ailsey, she and the two young people walk on to Bolingbroke Street to "speak to Belinda Treadwell a minute,"² and to find out "if she has engaged Miss Willy Whitlow for the whole week, or if there is any use my sending a message to her over in Botetourt."

As the trio walks to see Belinda Treadwell down on Bolingbroke Street:

Sometimes the sidewalks over which they passed were of flagstones, sometimes they were of gravel or of strewn cinders. Now and then an old stone house, which had once sheltered crinoline and lace ruffles, or had served as a trading station

1. Ellen Glasgow, Virginia, p. 45
2. Ibid., p. 46

with the Indians before Dinwiddie had become a city, would loom with two small shops where the owners, coatless and covered with sweat, were selling flat beer to jaded and miserable customers. 1

One finds concrete sidewalks in the same area today; yet one with an imaginative mind and keen eyes sees dignified doorways in the midst of low grade business houses. These doorways seem to say sadly, "Once fine ladies and gallant gentlemen passed through my portals."

After the walk down High Street, Short Market Street, the side excursion into Tin Pot Alley, and the leisurely stroll down Bolingbroke, Mrs. Pendleton, John Henry, and Virginia reach

the small old-fashioned brick house of the Treadwells, with its barren windows set discreetly with outside shutters, and she (Mrs. Pendleton) saw that the little marble porch was deserted except for the two pink oleander tubs on either side of the curved iron railings. 2

The shutters, the railing, and the oleanders are gone but the house is identifiable on Bolingbroke Street, east of the bridge.

The Botetourt of VIRGINIA, not to be confused with the Botetourt of THE ANCIENT LAW is obviously Blanford, east of old Petersburg, but now a part of the city. Miss Willy Whitlow, the seamstress, is able to walk from the Treadwell house to her home "over in Blanford." People in Petersburg still say "over in Blanford" in referring to that area of the city. Mrs.

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1. Ellen Glasgow, VIRGINIA, p. 47
 2. Ibid., p. 187

Pendleton said to Mrs. Treadwell, "And you'll tell her without my sending all the way over to Botetourt."¹ Miss Willy's home was near the Treadwells: Susan, on the day of Virginia's return to Petersburg said to her mother "I've asked Miss Willy to come and sit with you this evening...."²

York Street where Oliver goes to board with Miss Peachey is obviously Grove Avenue, "like a frayed seam of gentility between the prosperous and impoverished quarters of Dinwiddie.. To reach it Oliver was obliged to pass the rectory,"³ and from the window "even the church towers showed like spires of thistledown, and the winding streets, which ran beside clear walls and dark shining gardens, trailed off from the ground into the silver air. Only the bulk of the Treadwell factory beside the river defied the magic of the moon's rays and remained a solid reminder of the brevity of all enchantment."⁴ On approaching Petersburg from the north, one is struck with the number of church spires visible.

Oliver's room, "warm in the afternoon", is on the west of Mrs. Peachey's and "outside, the sunrise," which he cannot see, "was flooding the roofs of Dinwiddie with a dull golden light."⁵ Furthermore, "Saint James' Church is only a few

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1. Ellen Glasgow, Virginia, p. 50.
 2. Ibid., p. 242.
 3. Ibid., p. 116.
 4. Ibid., p. 123-4
 5. Ibid., p. 131

minutes' walk from here...."1 and Grove Avenue is parallel to High Street. Oliver is able to see Grace Church, : "Virginia's face, framed in her wreath of hair, floated beneath the tower of Saint James' Church at which he was gazing."2

Mr. Dewberry's market, now Dance's market, still stands at the bottom of Old Street. The old brick building is octagonal. "She [Virginia] gazed earnestly down the street to the octagonal market, which stands on the spot where slaves were offered for sale when she was born."3 One may see today descendants of the "Pendletons" and their friends marketing there in spite of the new super markets with their tiled walls and self-service in a newer shopping district.

After about seven years in West Virginia, after her marriage to Oliver, Virginia returns to Dinwiddie and goes to live in "a little house" on Prince Street, a name unknown to anyone with whom I have talked. It is evidently one of the short streets near Grace Church because Mrs. Pendleton is "forever running" over to Virginia's.

The years go by. Oliver attains success and with characteristic accuracy and realism Miss Glasgow moves Virginia into the fashionable part of her "Dinwiddie", namely, Sycamore

1. Ellen Glasgow, Virginia, p. 133.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

3. Ibid., p. 63.

Street, where Oliver and Virginia have a fine home, "the house was a new impecably modern dwelling, produced by a triumph of utilitarian genius of the first decade of the twentieth century."¹ There, on her forty-fifth birthday, "Virginia knelt on the cushioned seat in the bay window of her bedroom...."² One sees many of these "impecably modern dwellings" on Sycamore Street today.

The girls, charmed to have made the momentous passage into Sycamore Street, were delighted with the space and elegance of their new home, but Virginia had always felt somehow as if she were visiting. The drawing room and especially the butler's pantry, awed her. ³

Cross's corner is perhaps east of Blanford, the Bote-tourt of the book, because Gabriel walks east when Cyrus, fresh from the despicable and pathetic scene with Maddy, mother of the accused murderer, joined the rector. Cyrus was on his way home to the house, which even in 1890 was in the present business area, and Gabriel parted from him because "It's the shortest way to Cross's corner."

In A CERTAIN MEASURE Miss Glasgow does not name the city of Petersburg. "I was walking with a friend along a street called Bolingbroke, in one of the older aristocratic towns of our Commonwealth...."⁴ She calls the town "Dinwiddie". "As soon as my foot touched the earth of Dinwiddie, I was at home in the place."⁵ She regrets what has happened to her Dinwiddie,

1. Ellen Glasgow, Virginia, p. 410.
2. Ibid., p. 410
3. Ibid., p. 410
4. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 78
5. Ibid., p. 81

"caught between the training of war and the spurious prosperity of munition factories, the town could scarcely be recognized by one who had known it before the post-war disintegration had set in."¹ "The training camps" refer to Camp Lee and Camp Pickett, and "the munitions factories" to the many plants for the manufacture of products used in munitions which are at Hopewell, ten miles north-east of Petersburg. In 1913 a reviewer was able to say definitely "...the scene is laid in Petersburg."² Emily Clark says that Dinwiddie is "...a lazy little town easily recognized as Petersburg...."³

Petersburg and the south side are to appear once more in Ellen Glasgow's novels. In *THE BUILDERS*, published in 1919, Caroline Meade's home is near Petersburg. Her mother speaks of having gone to school there with Mrs. Colfax, who has secured Caroline a position in Richmond. Southern College was operated in Petersburg from 1862 to 1941. Considered a good school, it was well attended by young ladies living in near-by counties. Caroline's train ride from her home in the Southside to Richmond is brief.

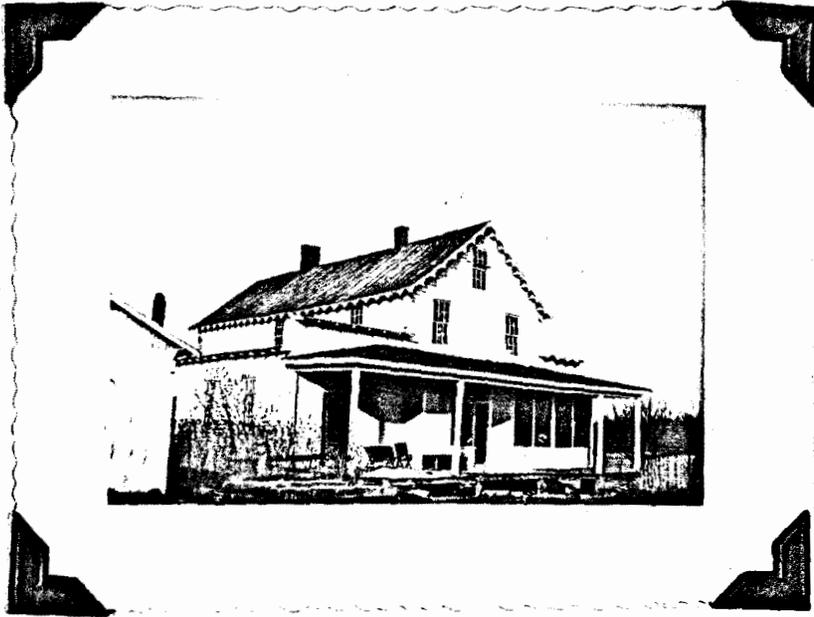
Through observations and experiences in Southside, Virginia, and from her many visits to her friend Julia Sully in Petersburg, Ellen Glasgow made from a poor section of Virginia a rich background for three novels.

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1. Ellen Glasgow, *A Certain Measure*, p. 85
 2. Lewis Parke *Chamberlayne*, *The Sewanee Review*. 21:500-3 Oct., 1913.
 3. Emily Clark. *Innocence Abroad*. p. 60



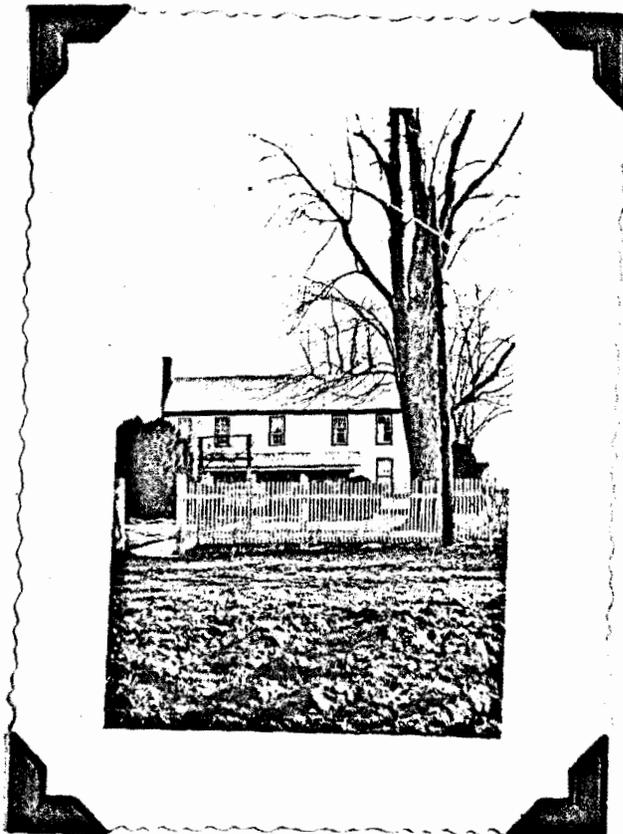
" Jerdone's Castle "

Louisa County



"Store Where Dorinda
Worked"

BARREN GROUND



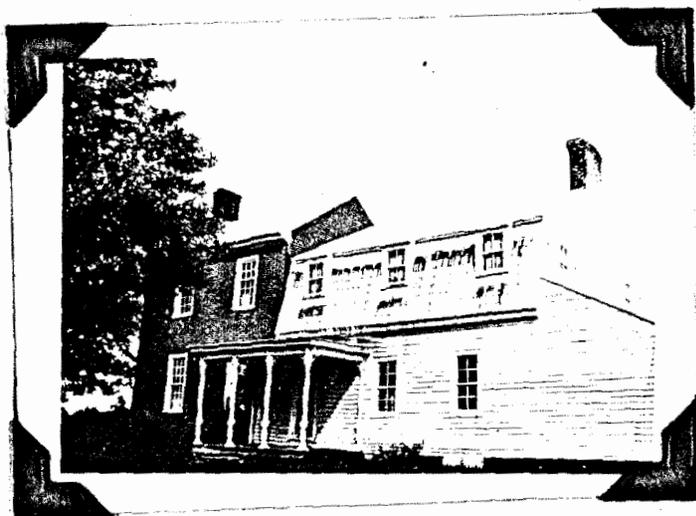
"A Stone's Throw from the
Road"

BARREN GROUND



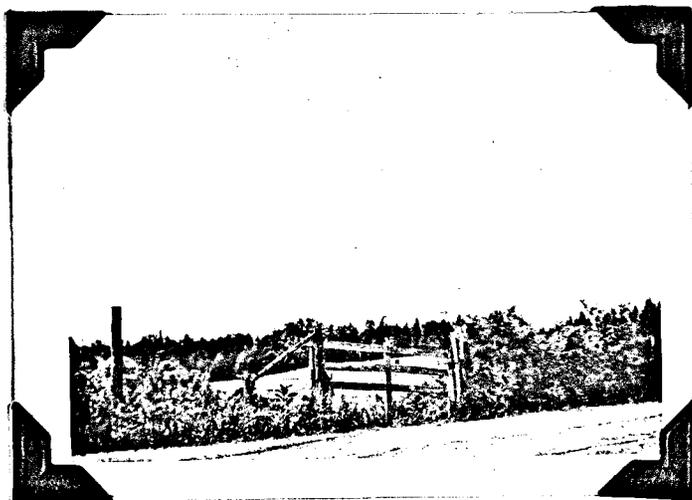
"The Hollies"

Louisa County



"Pottiesville"

Louisa County



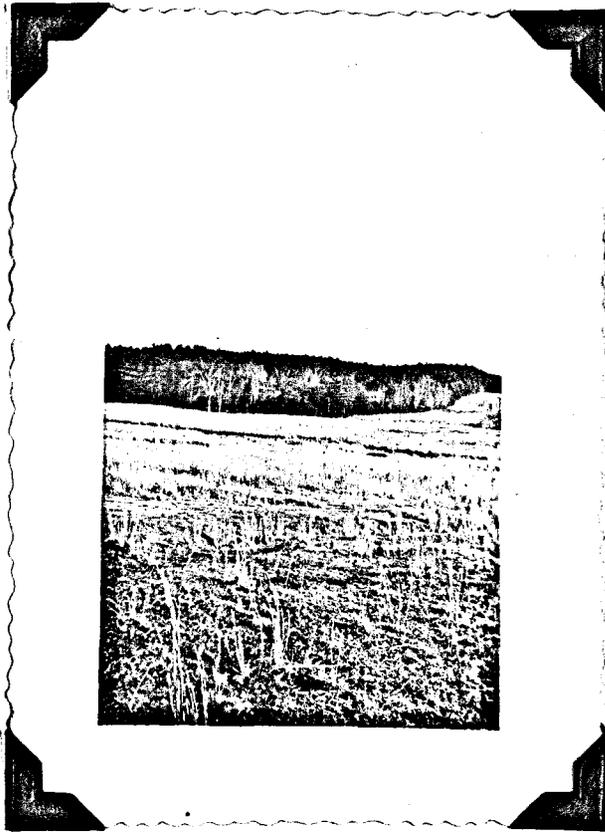
"The Snead's Pasture"

BARREN GROUND



"The Red Brick House Through
the Trees"

BARREN GROUND



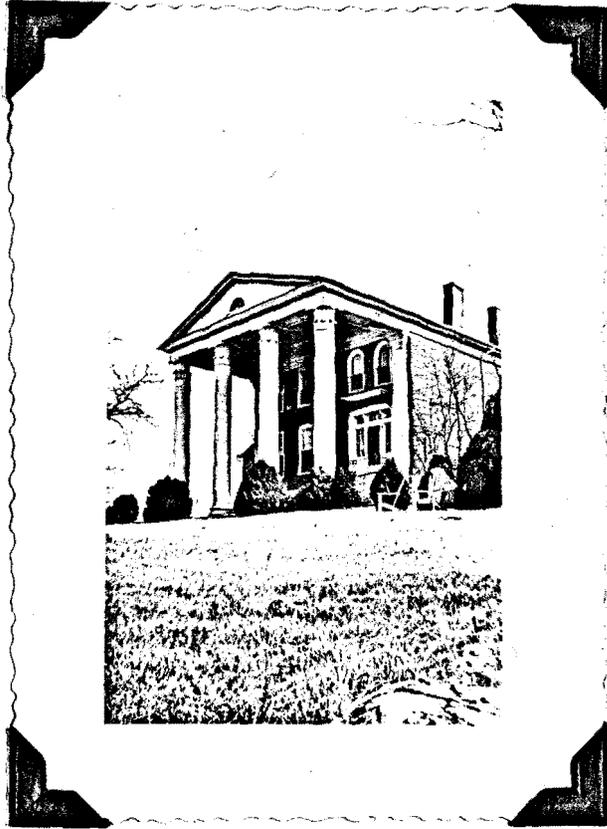
"The Dull Glow of the
Broomsedge"

BARREN GROUND



"The Crumbling Hollows in the
Strip of 'Corduroy' Road"

BARREN GROUND



" A Square Brick House Behind
Tall White Columns."

THE ANCIENT LAW

CHAPTER III

LOUISA AND SPOTSYLVANIA

The Descendant, Phases of an Inferior Planet,
The Deliverance, The Ancient Law, Barren Ground

1895-1925

If I were to walk out into the country and pick a scene for a book, it would remain as flat and lifeless as cardboard; but the places I loved or hated between the ages of three and thirteen compose an inexhaustible landscape of memory. 1

From 1879 when Ellen Glasgow was five years old to 1887 the Glasgow family traveled by train from Richmond to Buckner. The arrival of the train at Bumpass, last station before Buckner, was the signal for the children to get ready to leave the train at Buckner. "Train's blowing now down at the next station."² When the next station was reached the Glasgow children, excited over going to Jerdone's Castle for the summer, would leave the train and be driven past the frame store with its "white gate between two apple trees"³ down a long slope, by pasture land and a square red brick house, past

1. Ellen Glasgow, "One Way to Write a Novel," Vol. XI:21, p.344, Saturday Review of Literature, December 8, 1934.

2. Ellen Glasgow, Barren Ground, p. 197.

3. Ibid., p. 87.

a burned cabin at the fork and on to Jerdone's Castle. These scenes were imprinted on the mind of Ellen.

The little Glasgow girls and boys and the neighboring children, the Colemans of Beechwood, whose ancestors had built Jerdone's Castle, played happily at the Castle and at Beechwood. On an old oak tree between the homes they nailed a cigar box, "on the back side so that it would be hidden from prying eyes."¹ Into the box they placed notes for each other. They fished with bent pins and fishing worms in the little creek that flowed between the two places. They read, especially one little girl,² who composed and directed a play at Jerdone's Castle.

The red clay, the marshy places, the creeks, the cattails, the hills, the meadows, the mills, the houses, the gardens, the village of Buckner, the landscape between Buckner and Jerdone's Castle impressed themselves indelibly on Ellen Glasgow's mind and were used in later years to furnish the Virginia scenes of several novels.

There is in every human being, I think, a native country of the mind, where, protected by inaccessible barriers the sensitive dream life may exist safely. Frequently, the fields within are no more than an extension of some lost and remembered earlier surroundings. However that may be, my country of the mind was, for the purposes of fiction at least, the familiar Virginian scene of my childhood. My happiest days were those in which I ran wild over the red clay roads and the

1. Carrie Coleman Duke
2. Carrie Coleman Duke

ragged fields, where the shadows of birds flitted by, and a secret community of small furry creatures scurried close to the ground. 1

Ellen Glasgow was thirteen when her family spent the last of the summers at Jerdone's Castle. When she was eighteen (1892) she began ²THE DESCENDANT, her first novel, published in 1897. Naturally, she laid the country scenes of that novel in Louisa County, "the familiar scenes of childhood." She says of the novel, "The background was too close; the setting was too much a part of my interior world." Michael Akershem was ³"an outcast escaping from rural Virginia," where she had first seen him "sitting, ragged and barefooted in the dust and ⁴sunshine."

The child sat upon the roadside. A stiff wind was rising westward, blowing over stretches of meadowland that had long since run to waste, a scarlet tangle of sumac and sassafras. 5

The child stood in the white dust of the road. A pale finger of sunshine struggled past him to the ditch beside the way leading to the earth's throbbing heart. 6

Over the swelling hills, where the corn-ricks stood marshalled like a spectre batallion, he fled....Beneath him the valley lay wrapped in a transparent mist. 7

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1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 31.
 2. Ibid., p. 19.
 3. Ibid., p. 56.
 4. Ibid., p. 56.
 5. Ellen Glasgow, The Descendant, p.3.
 6. Ibid., p. 7.
 7. Ibid., p. 13.

The graveyard at Jerdon's Castle is a remarkable feature of the place and every one associated with the place mentions it. It is a wilderness of wild flowers and weeds and is suggested by the churchyard of the novel, ". . . the white tombstone glimmered among the rank periwinkle. In a rocky corner he knew that there was one grave isolated in the red clay soil.¹ And as Michael walks on home, he sees "upon the rail fence the dripping trumpet vine . . . in limp festoons, yellow and bare of bloom. He paused to gather a persimmon, but it put his teeth on edge and he threw it away."²

Louisa County has varied soil -- from sandy loam to red clay, from dry areas to meadow land. "The different types of soils have distinct and easily determined boundaries, with the exception of the Cecil fine sandy loam, the sand of which frequently is so fine as to make the type resemble the Cecil loam."³ The survey showed 11,520 acres of meadow. In addition to Cecil loam there is "Cecil clay, to an average depth of six inches a heavy red clay loam."⁴ Any traveler to the county backroads in 1951 will agree that the clay is "heavy."

1. Ibid., p. 15
2. Ibid., p. 15
3. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture Bureau of Soils, Milton Whitney, Chief "Soil Survey of Louisa County", by Hugh H. Bennett and W. E. McLendon. Washington Printing Office, 1906 p. 10 .
4. Ibid., p. 8

"The meadow is composed of alluvial and colluvial areas along streams, subject to frequent overflows and the seepage from higher lands."¹

Since the Louisa County scenes became a part of Ellen Glasgow's "inexhaustible landscape of memory," it is logical to place in Louisa County the home from which Marianna, in PHASES OF AN INFERIOR PLANET, fled. The book follows THE DESCENDANT and was written before Ellen Glasgow had spent time in the Southside . . . Marianna, having lost her mother and resenting her step-mother, goes to New York. "From the small Southern village, under the protection of an elderly female relative, she has flown to New York."² At the end of the novel Algercife and Marianna talk of going "to a farm in the South."

During the summers spent in Louisa County, Ellen Glasgow had seen the farmers plant, tend, and cure tobacco. Carrie Coleman Duke says that she believes unequivocally that all of Ellen's early country scenes are laid in Louisa and Caroline counties. Caroline County adjoins Louisa about ten miles northeast of Jerdone's Castle. It is in Louisa and Caroline that Mrs. Duke places THE DELIVERANCE.

1. Ibid., p. 10

2. Ellen Glasgow, Phases of an Inferior Planet, p. 22

Tobacco was for a hundred years or more the chief crop of Louisa and Caroline. While the Southside area of the state is the area that most Virginians think of as "tobacco country," Mrs. Duke says that the only two counties in Virginia which grow the kind of tobacco called "the yellow wrapper" are Louisa and Caroline. The particular kind of leaf is called "yellow wrapper," because it is used to wrap cigars. She also says that in her girlhood "Tobacco was king" in Louisa.

Miss Glasgow says in A CERTAIN MEASURE:

As a child I had been familiar with the uncertain crop of tobacco; and I had followed the different stages of growth, from the first seedlings to the curing of luxuriant leaves. No sooner had I recognized the right surroundings for my narrative than I decided to go back to the farm and retrace the entire scene by the side of a tenant farmer. Together, we moved up and down through the long furrows; and with the changing seasons, we dropped young plants into the earth, or watched "'suckers' pinched off as the stalks shot up into the sunshine. For a month or more, scarcely longer, the whole landscape would be clothed with wave after wave of a rich tropical green, which was gradually tinged with yellow as the immense leaves matured. Methods have changed, even in Virginia, in the past thirty-four years; but when THE DELIVERANCE was first published, many readers remarked that the pages were 'drenched with the smell of tobacco.'"¹

Research has not yielded a house in Louisa County that answers to the description of Blake Hall: however,

1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 32

Caroline is an older county than Louisa, having been formed in 1727 for the three older counties of Essex, King and Queen and King William. On the other hand, Miss Glasgow possibly created the house in the proper setting because she wanted to show a great house lost to its owners and turned over to the rising middle class in Virginia.

At any rate, against a background of red clay hills, vast fields of tobacco and Blake Hall, the ancestral home of the Blakes, now living in the overseer's house across the fields from the Manor house, Miss Glasgow depicts realistically and feelingly, events in the lives of the Blakes. Tobacco is almost a being in the book, for ". . . Tobacco's king down here an' no mistake, We've a sayin' that the man that ain't partial to the weed can't sleep sound in the churchyard."¹ And Carraway says of Christopher Blake, "Raises tobacco now like the rest doesn't he?"² Tobacco permeates THE DELIVERANCE. Miss Glasgow says "I placed my story among the tobacco fields, in that part of Virginia where tobacco possesses an almost elemental power to bless or curse."³

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1. The Deliverance, p. 62
 2. Ibid., p. 7
 3. A Certain Measure, p. 31

From Blake Hall to the town nearby Cynthia Blake goes to pick up her sewing. She takes the stage at the crossroads, attends to her business, sits on the steps of church to eat her lunch, and returns home by the evening stage. The town suggested is Fredericksburg, which has brick sidewalks in places even today and which has an old Episcopal Church, St. George's, built in 1849.¹ Blake Hall is near battlefields because Chris "laid his ear to the ground and [was] thrilled with the strong shock which seemed to run around the earth."² It is probable that the sound of cannon could have been heard anywhere in Caroline County from the Richmond or Fredericksburg battlefields. Carrie Coleman Duke says that her mother told her the sound of the guns around Richmond was audible at Jerdone's Castle, and the writer has heard her paternal grandfather say that he was in Baltimore during the Battle of Gettysburg and could plainly hear the bombardment.

In her shabby black dress, with her heavy bundle under her arm, [Cynthia] passed, a lonely pathetic figure, through the streets of the little town. The strange smells fretted her, the hot bricks tired her feet, and the jarring noises confused her hazy ideas of direction. On the steps of the old church . . . she ate her lunch.³

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1. John T. Goolrick, Old Homes Around Fredericksburg, p.47
 2. The Deliverance, p. 94
 3. ibid., p. 116

Travel between Louisa and Fredericksburg was usual even in Colonial days. Francis Jerdone shipped corn, wheat, and tobacco "from the wharves at Pages or Hanovertown in Hanover, shaccoes in Henrico, or from Fredericksburg."¹ In going from buckner station to Jerdone's Castle plantation, the traveler goes over the Cartersville Road, which extends north to Fredericksburg. Malcolm Harris quotes from Washington's diary:

Thursday, 9. (June 1791) . . . Breakfast at widow Pains [sic] 17 miles on North side of the river [the North Anna between Spotsylvania and Louisa], and lodged at Mrs. Jordan's a private house where we were kindly entertained and to which we were driven by necessity having rode not less than 25 miles from our breakfasting, stage thru very bad roads in a very sultry day without any refreshment and by missing the right road had to get to it.

Friday 10th. Left Mrs. Jordan's early and breakfasted at one Johnstone's 7 miles off reached Fredericksburg after another short halt about 3 o'clock.²

Mr. Harris comments, "It appears that the General was taking the Cartersville road. Mrs. Jordan was evidently Sarah Jerdone of Jerdone's Castle."³

In 1905 Ellen Glasgow and Carrie Coleman Duke stayed at a hotel in Fredericksburg for a week. They visited

1. Malcolm Harris, A History of Louisa County, Virginia, p. 123

2. Washington's diary, vol., iv, p. 198, quoted by M. Harris, op. cit., p. 124

3. M. Harris, op. cit., p. 124

in town and made side trips to Gunston Hall, Stratford, and Elmwood. Fredericksburg appears in THE ANCIENT LAW published in 1908. When Daniel Ordway, trying to work his life in "Tappahannock" in Southside Virginia, receives the telegram to come home, he goes to "Botetourt." The "Botetourt" has nothing to do with the county of Botetourt or with the Botetourt of the novel VIRGINIA. The evidence in the novel points to Fredericksburg as the Botetourt of THE ANCIENT LAW: it is a quiet town with historic atmosphere, low roofs, and church spires. It is surrounded by battlefields. "As the train rounded the long curve, Ordway leaned from the window and saw spread before him the smiling battlefields that encircled Botetourt . . ."¹

"All at once," Ordway, having started to walk to his home from the station in Botetourt, thinks, ". . . what Tappahannock needed was not progress, but age; and he saw for the first time that the mellowed charm of Botetourt was relieved against the splendor of an historic past background."² He recalls the ivied walls of the old church. His home in Botetourt is such a house as Brompton in Fredericksburg. "The old Marye House, known as Brompton, . . . is today a handsome, imposing brick structure with white-columned porch."³

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1. The Ancient Law, p. 281
 2. Ibid., p. 284
 3. John T. Gollrick, op. cit.

An old lamplighter tells Ordway that he has seen the town "when it warn't mo'n a middlin' village and seen soldiers dying in its streets."¹ Fredericksburg in 1850 had a population of 2889 and in the fighting 1861-1865, "it was the scene of two battles and a bombardment."² Soldiers died in the streets and lie buried in a cemetery that is now a green terraced hillside.

The time consumed in travel by Ordway fits the South Boston-Fredericksburg hypothesis; when Alice, the daughter of Ordway elopes, Ordway goes to Washington to find her. On being told that Geoffrey Heath, Alice's lover, has taken the afternoon train, Ordway ways, "I shall take the next train there, which leaves at 9:45."³ He goes to Washington, gets wet during a storm, sees Alice in a hotel,⁴ and returns to Botetourt in wet clothing the same night. "You know he travelled home from Washington in wet clothes."⁵ Fredericksburg is about an hour's ride from Washington. Also, the train ride from Fredericksburg to South Boston requires about five hours. Ordway returns once to "Tappahannock" and leaving "Botetourt" at 4 p.m., arrives at "Tappahannock" at 9 p.m.⁶

1. Ellen Glasgow, The Ancient Law, p. 468

2. Susanne Williams Massie and Frances Archer Christian, Home and Gardens of Old Virginia, p. 16

3. Ibid., p. 371

4. Ibid., p. 372-3

5. Ibid., p. 380

6. Ibid., p. 454

Almost thirty years after Ellen Glasgow had begun THE DESCENDENT, for which she knew that she "must return to the familiar earth."¹ in which were her roots, she returned again to that familiar earth, which she used as the Virginia background of BARREN GROUND, a powerful and moving novel.

For the setting of this novel, I went far back into the past. The country is as familiar to me as if the landscape unrolled both without and within. I had known every feature for years, and the saturation of my subject with the mood of sustained melancholy was effortless and complete. The houses, the woods, the endless fields of broomsedge and scrub pine, the low, immeasurable horizon -- all these images I had seen with the remembering eyes of a child. And time, like a mellow haze, had preserved the impressions unaltered. 2

The Pedlar's Mill of BARREN GROUND is Buckner on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, and Queen Elizabeth County is Louisa between Richmond and Gordonsville.

The novel opens at the station, 'a girl in an orange-colored shawl stood at the window of Pedlar's Station ... when the last train of the day had gone by without stopping and the station of Pedlar's Mill was as lonely as the abandoned fields by the track. From the bleak horizon, where the flatness created an illusion of immensity, the broomsedge was spreading in a smothered fire over the melancholy brown of the landscape." 3

In the opening pages of BARREN GROUND, Ellen Glasgow creates the village and nearby farms graphically. She takes the little station, store and post office at Buckner, places a

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1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 153.
 2. Ibid., p. 154.
 3. Ellen Glasgow, Barren Ground, p. 3.

ruined mill nearby, and makes the Roman Catholic Church "on the other side of the railroad" a Presbyterian one for the "verisimilitude." There is at a distance of a scant mile Swift's Mill, an old frame structure, still standing. The artist in Ellen Glasgow is at work and the result is a picture so vivid that the reader sees all the places that are not at Buckner when he goes to find them. On the near side of the railroad lie Old Farm, home of Dorinda Oakley and Five Oaks, "ruined farm and home of Jason Greylock." Between the station and the farm every dip in a road and every turn and every crossroad is realistically described.

The traveler can today go to Buckner in Louisa County and retrace the steps of Dorinda Oakley.

Beyond the small white gate the Old Stage Road, as it was still called, ran past the cleared ground by the station and dipped into the band of pine woods beyond the Haney place, which has been divided and let in shares, to negro tenants. Within the shadow of the pines the character of the soil changed from the red clay on the hills to a sandy loam strewn with pine needles. 1

They [Dorinda and Jason] passed Honeycomb Farm and sped lightly over a mile of rutted track to the fork of the Old Stage Road, where a blasted oak of tremendous height stood beside the ruins of a burned cabin. On the other side of the way there was the big red gate of Five Oaks, and beyond it a sandy branch road ran farther on to the old brick house... Usually, as the mare knew, the doctor's buggy turned in at the big gate, but today it passed by and followed the main road, which dipped and rose and dipped again on its way to Old Farm. First there was a thin border of woods...; then a strip of 'corduroy' road and a bridge of logs over a marshy stream; and beyond the bridge,

1. Ibid., p. 26.

on the right, stood the open gate of Dorinda's home. The mare stumbled and the buggy swerved on the rocky grade to the lawn. 1

The red brick house on the right is today as Dorinda saw it.² The low place between Old Farm and Five Oaks is still there, and the Gooseneck Creek of the novel is Rock Creek of Buckner community. Natives remember the big oak, no longer standing, and the ruined cabin. Corduroy roads can still be found in out-of-the-way spots. The "Piping Tree" of the novel is the Plum Tree community of negroes, three miles from Buckner station. Ellen Glasgow placed a prosperous stock farm three miles "on the other side of Pedlar's Mill."³ Today exactly three miles "on the other side" of Buckner is a beautiful, prosperous looking stock farm, Oaksby Plantation, owned by George S. Goodwin.

Dorinda leaves Pedlar's Mill to go to New York. In the city Dorinda is continually referring to Pedlar's Mill, Old Farm, and the struggle her parents have with the "barren ground" and the broomsedge.

Would they soon bring her something to drink? The old well bucket at home. The mossy brim... Cool places. Violets growing in hollows. A hollow at Whistling Spring... 4

There were moments when she missed Old Farm, vivid moments when she smelt growing things in the Park [Central], when she longed with all her heart for a sight of the April fields and the pear orchard in bloom and the big pine where the birds

1. Ibid., p. 33.
 2. " p. 196.
 3. " p. 282
 4. " p. 214

were singing. 1

'I feel as if the farm were calling me to come back and help it,' she said. 2

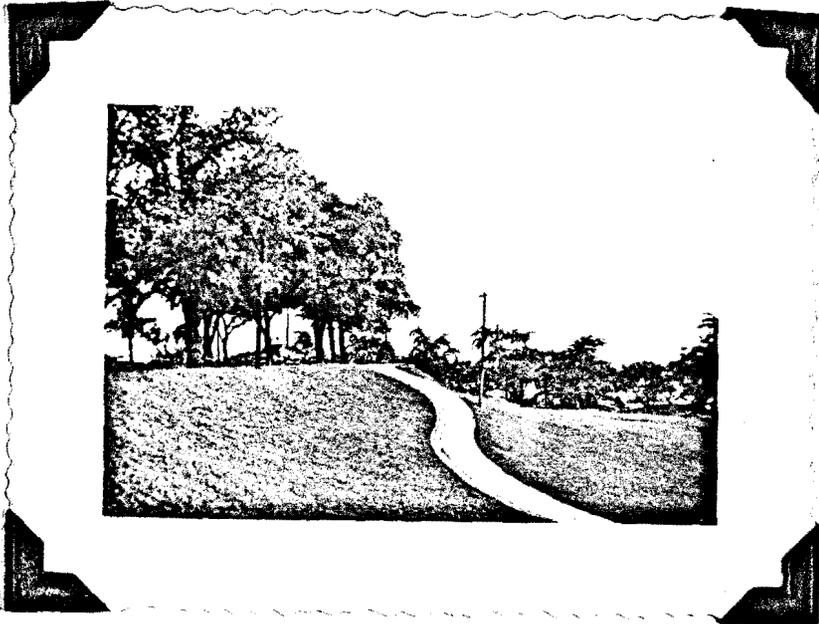
'Did you see those lilacs in the florists' window as we passed? It is lilac time at Old Farm now, and the big bushes in the corner of the west wing are all in bloom.' 3

Dorinda, called home by the illness of her father, is glad to see the familiar landscape, looks across the fields to see the "serpentine curves of Whipperno⁴ck River." Travelling to Buckner by train, one can see the North Anna River from near Beaver Dam, the station immediately before Bumpass. She returns to help her mother and to take up the fight against the smothering, relentless, frustrating broomsedge. "..."⁵ the broomsedge, subdued by twilight became impenetrable." Broomsedge dominates BARREN GROUND as tobacco dominates THE DELIVERANCE. "'Broomsedge ain't jest wild stuff. It's a kind of fate,' old Matthew Fairlamb used to say."⁶

Mrs. Tutwiler, Miss Bennett, and Mrs. Duke, all say that BARREN GROUND is laid at and near Buckner. The traveler to the neighborhood will find the community almost unchanged outwardly, and with time and patience he can trace the footsteps

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1. Ibid., p. 228.
 2. " p. 239.
 3. " p. 245.
 4. " p. 245.
 5. " p. 91
 6. " p. 4

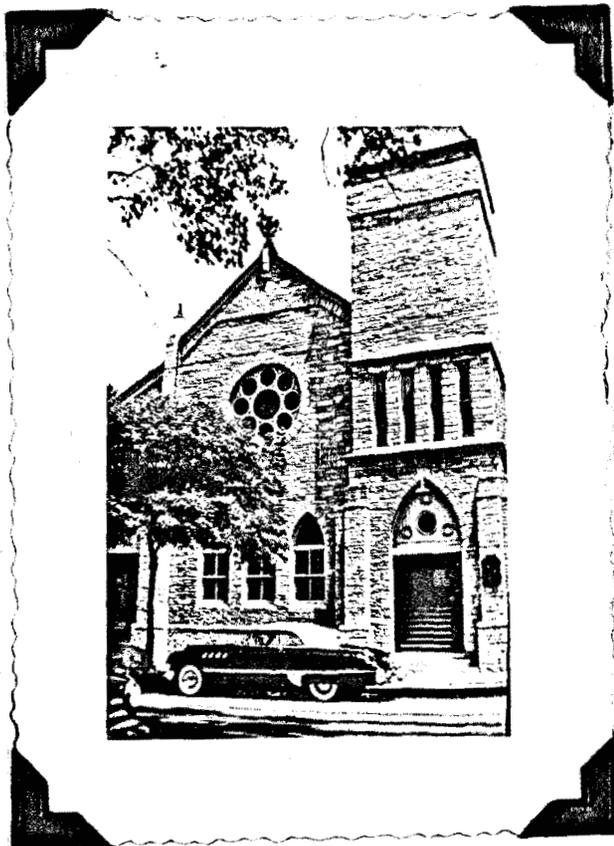
of Dorinda Oakley and find the roads and houses used by Ellen Glasgow.



"I Shall Call My Little White Dog and Set
Out for the Terrace on Gamble's Hill. "

Ellen Glasgow

" A Tesselated Entrance."
THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



"The Old Gray Church on the
Opposite Corner"

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



" The Capital Building Stands On
A Slight Eminence."

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



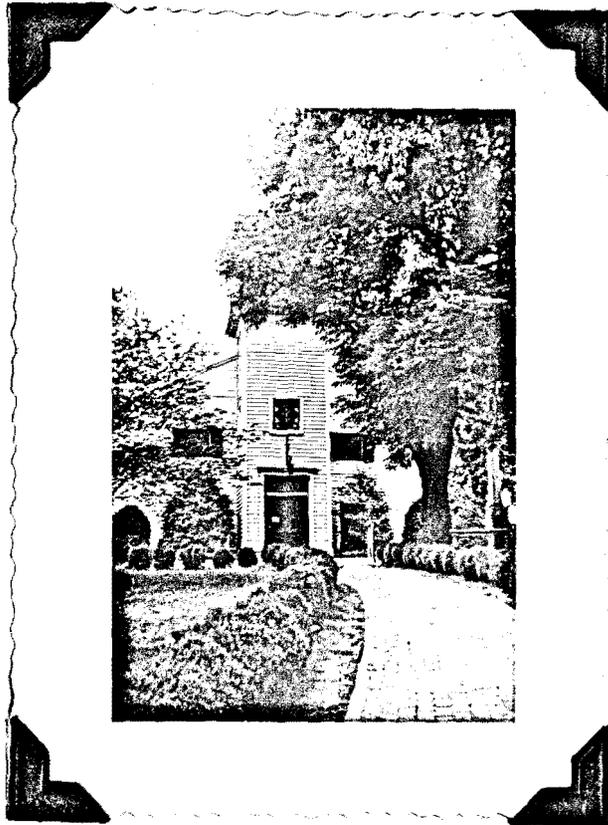
" Ben Starr's Home."

THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN



" A Small Box-like Frame House."

THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN



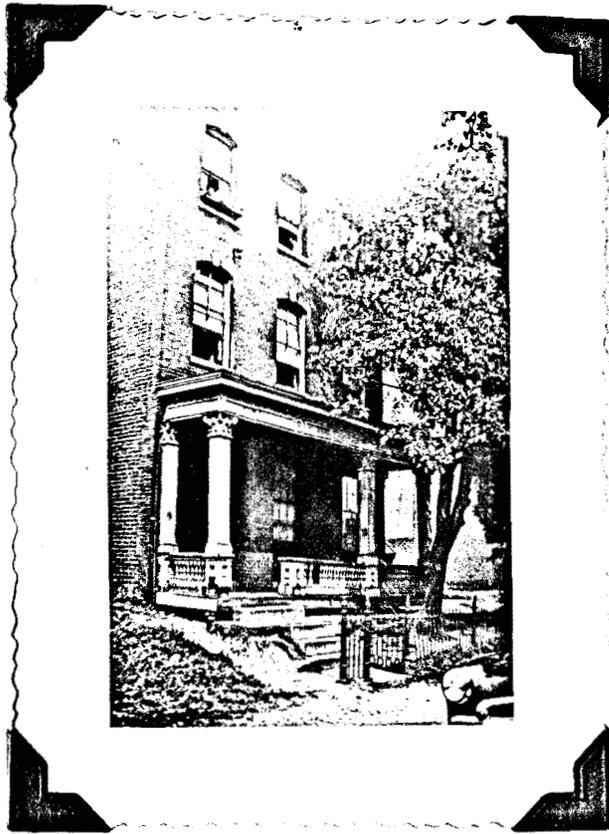
" The Ancient Church."

THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN



"Its Shady Graveyard"

THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN
MAN



" A Look Of Desiccated Gentility."

LIFE AND GABRIELLA





"Small Framed House on Pine
Street"

THE BUILDERS



" A Modest Reminder of the
Centuries When Men Had
Built Well "

THE BUILDERS



"A Small Place but It Held Beauty"

THE SHELTERED LIFE



"Steps Flowed Down from a
Baptismal Font of a House"

THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS



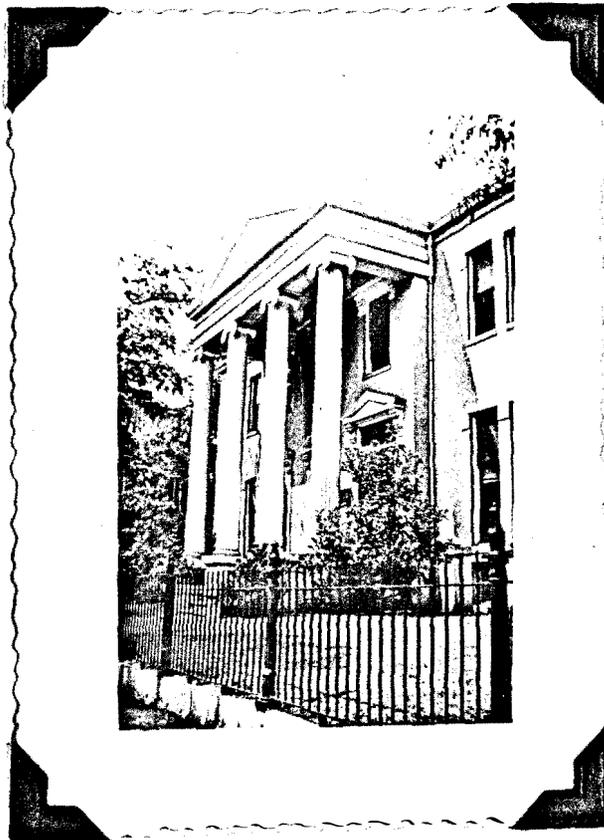
"A Plebian Park"

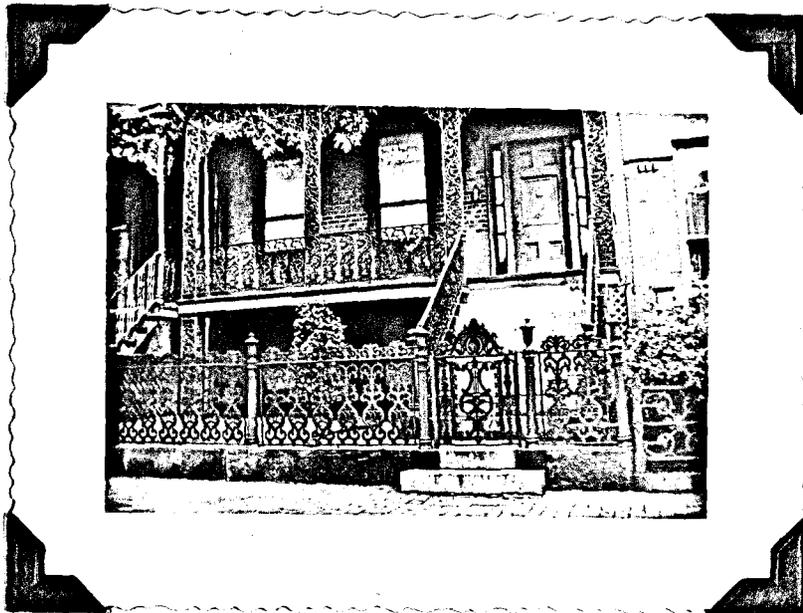
THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS



"The Look of Ancient Nobility"

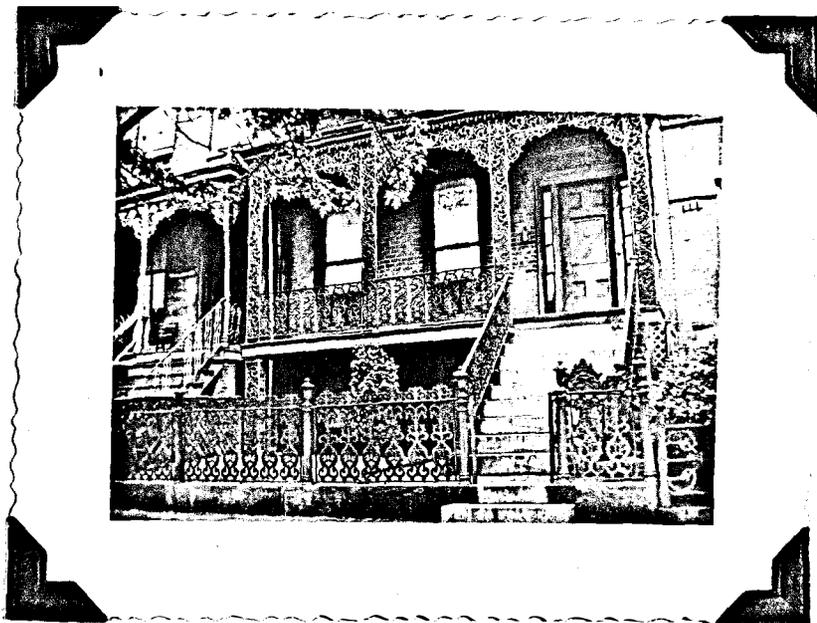
VEIN OF IRON





"Mulberry Street--217 South Third"

VEIN OF IRON



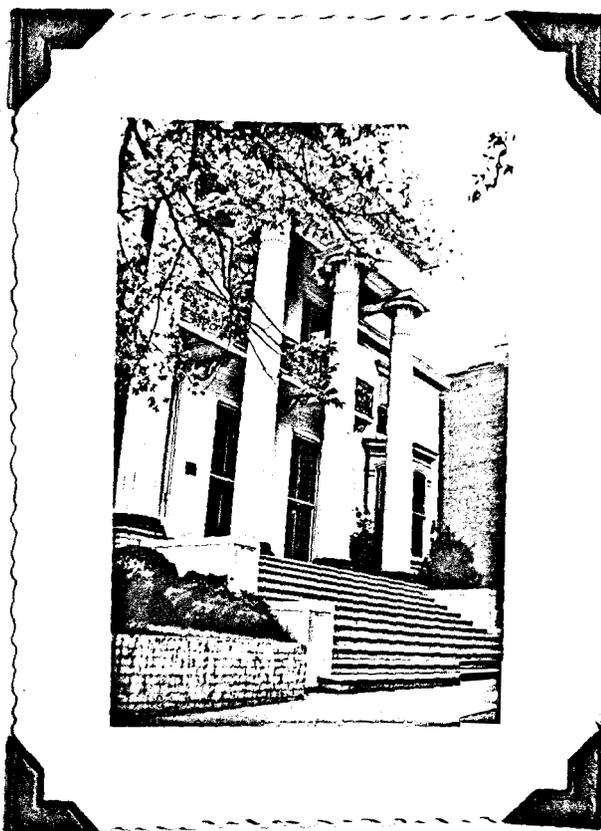


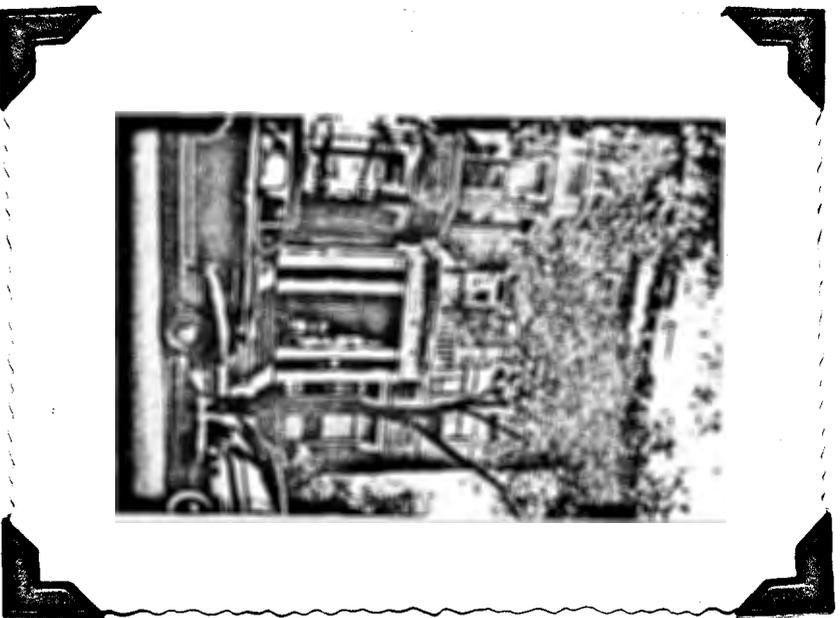
"A Journey into Mean Street"

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME

"Firmly Established Above the
Street and the Age"

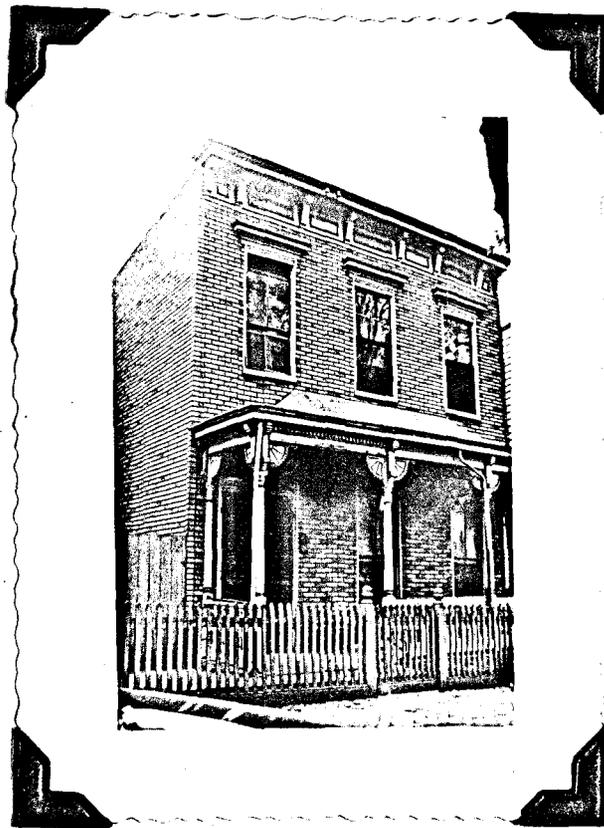
ONE MAN IN HIS TIME





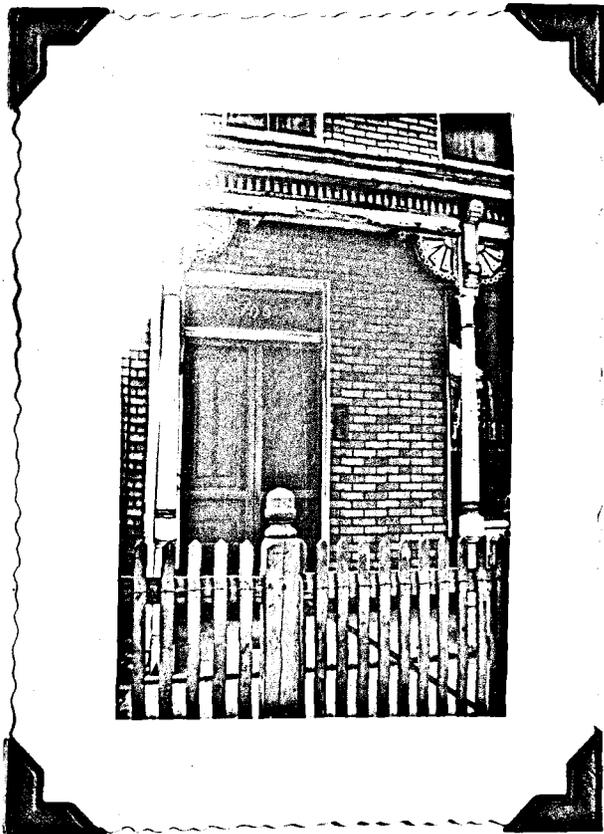
" All the culture to be derived from a fortune
safely invested in Northern Securities "

THEY STOOPED TO FOLLY



"A Framed House Amid the
Dilapidated Dignified
Old Houses"
706 North Sixth

IN THIS OUR LIFE



CHAPTER IV

FOUR RICHMOND DECADES

The Battle-Ground, The Deliverance, The Romance of a Plain Man

1862-1889

Voice of the People, Romance of a Plain Man, Life and Gabriella

1890-1909

Life and Gabriella, The Sheltered Life, The Builders

1910-1919

Vein of Iron, Romantic Comedians, They Stopped to Folly

One Man in His Time, In This Our Life

1920-1941

As a child in Richmond, I was familiar with the work and the atmosphere, and more especially with the smells, of one of the tobacco factories... I have walked with Able Clay in his back yard which he had transformed by diligence and devotion.

The city of Richmond, birthplace of Ellen Glasgow, first by its own name and later by the name of Queensborough, is used by Ellen Glasgow time and again. Seven novels are developed entirely against the Richmond background -- THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN, THE BUILDERS (save for a few scenes at Caroline's home) ONE MAN IN HIS TIME, THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS,

1. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure, p. 254.

THEY STOOPED TO FOLLY,¹ THE SHELTERED LIFE, and IN THIS OUR LIFE. Five novels are laid partially in Richmond -- THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, THE BATTLE-GROUND, THE DELIVERANCE, LIFE AND GABRIELLA, and VEIN OF IRON. Furthermore, in THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH several characters go to Richmond and in BARREN GROUND Miss Swena Snead goes to Richmond to buy dresses and materials.

There are some charming pictures of old Richmond in VOICE OF THE PEOPLE. After Nick Burr, the commoner, has progressed as far as the Governor's mansion:

In the center of the square, whose brilliant green slopes are intersected by the gravel walks that shine silver in the sunlight, the grave old building remains the one distinctive feature of a city where Iconoclasm has walked with destroying feet.

A few years ago -- so few that it is within the memory of the very young -- the streets leading from the Capitol were the streets of a southern town -- bordered by hospitable southern houses set in gardens where old fashioned flowers bloomed. Now the gardens are gone and the houses are outgrown. Progress has passed, and in its wake there has sprung up obvious structures of brick with brownstone trimmings... but in the Capitol Square, one forgets today and lives yesterday. Beneath the calm eyes of the warlike statue of the first American, little children chase grey squirrels across the grass, and infant carriages with beruffed parasols are drawn in white and pink clusters beside the benches. 2

1. Though Professor Fishwick (op. cit.) says, "The background of They Stooped to Folly is a composite of several Virginia cities...", the writer sees only Richmond as a background.

2. Ellen Glasgow, The Voice of the People, p. 322.

The house that Eugenia Battle Webb took in Richmond is unmistakable, One West Main.

Miss Chris in her hired carriage, rolled leisurely into Franklin Street where pretty women in visiting gowns were going in and out of doorways... When Emma Carr threw her a kiss from Galt's porch, she responded amiably... Up the quiet street the leafless trees, made a grey vista that melted into transparent mist. The sunshine stretched in pale gold bars from sidewalk to sidewalk, and, overhead the sky was of a rare Italian blue... Presently the carriage turned into Main Street, halting abruptly while a trolley car shot past. 'Please be very careful,' called Miss Chris, nervously gathering herself together as they stopped before a big gray house that faced a gray church¹ on the opposite corner. ²

The "big-gray house," the Ellen Glasgow house, and the "grey church," now a Greek Orthodox Church, still stand on opposite corners of Main and Fouchée Streets. One climbs the same "flight of stone steps... from the doorway to a short tessellated entrance leading to the street."³

THE BATTLE-GROUND has vivid pictures of Richmond during the Seven Day's battle, when Virginia, thinking her husband has been seriously wounded, goes out to search the temporary hospitals for him. This part of the book is poignant, moving and realistic.

With the opening spring, Virginia went down to Richmond where Jack Morison had taken rooms for her in the house of an invalid widow whose three sons were at the front. The town was filled to overflowing

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1. Grace Church, now a part of Grace and Holy Trinity Church.
 2. Glasgow, op. cit., p. 366.
 3. Ibid., p. 366.

with refugees from the north and representatives from the south, and as the girls drove through the crowded streets, she exclaimed wonderingly at the festive air the houses wore. 1

The "invalid widow" must have lived in the shadow of the Capitol since "Virginia walked from church." THE church of war time Richmond was Saint Paul's where Jefferson Davis was at Morning Prayer when he was told that he must flee from the city in April, 1865.

Virginia waited day in and day out that hot summer of '62 for something -- anything -- to break the agonizing days. With terror the residents of Richmond learned that McClellan's forces had crossed the Chickahominy, "that afternoon the sound of guns rolled up the Williamsburg Road and in the streets men shouted hoarsely of an engagement with the enemy at Seven Pines." 2 Today going east of U.S. Route 60, travelers see historic markers along the way telling the story of McClellan's campaign. At Seven Pines rows of white stones testify to the bloody battle fought there while Virginia sat in Richmond "at her southern window."

Only a few pages at the end of THE DELIVERANCE are laid in Richmond. Chris is in the penitentiary where his health has failed, "There was no disease, the physician in the hospital assured him; it was only his unusual form of home-sickness feeding upon his weakened frame." 3 In THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH the Gays and Molly go to Richmond to "the new,

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1. Ellen Glasgow, The Battle-Ground, p. 357.
 2. Ibid., p. 263.
 3. Ellen Glasgow, The Deliverance, p. 540.

brilliantly lighted hotel, and were led through stifling
corridors, carpeted in red.¹"

LIFE AND GABRIELLA has graphic Richmond scenes. It opens in old downtown Richmond on Leigh Street in a house with "deep Victorian gloom in the front parlor."

The house, a small brick dwelling, set midway of an expressionless row and wearing on its front a look of desiccated gentility, stood in one of those forgotten streets where needy gentlewomen do light housekeeping in an obscure hinterland of respectability. Hill Street which had once known fashion, and that only yesterday as old ladies count, has sunk at last into a humble state of decay. Here and there the edges of porches had tumbled; grass is beginning to sprout by the curbstone::: Only a few blocks away the stream of modern progress, sweeping along Broad Street was rapidly changing the old Southern city into.... a 'metropolis', but this river of industrialism was spanned by no social bridge connecting Hill Street and its wistful relics and the statelier dignities of the more ephemeral gaities of the opposite side. To be really 'in society' one must cross over either and all, or in the dilapidated hack which carried Gabriella to the parties. They were given by school mates in West Franklin Street. 2

This passage together with Gabriella's thoughts in the Sixth Avenue scene in New York places the house in the neighborhood of the White House of the Confederacy and the Medical College of Virginia.

When Gabriella comes back, Charlie says, "If you were to go back to Hill Street, you'd scarcely know it for the hospitals and schools we've got there."³

"Brandywine and Plummer's" with its "established reputation" is Fourquaran and Temple's:

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1. Ellen Glasgow, The Miller of Old Church, p. 321.
 2. Ellen Glasgow, Life and Gabriella, p. 12.
 3. Ibid., p. 501.

In the late seventies and early eighties the most important shop in the town of Gabriella's birth was known to its patrons... as Brandywine and Plummer's drygoods store... To be sure, even in those days, there were other shops in the city -- for was not Broad Street already alluded to in the newspapers as 'the shopping thoroughfare of the South?' but, though they were as numerous as dandelions in June, these places were by no means patronized so widely by 'the best people'... O'Connell's linen store, Twitlow's China Store, Mrs. Tonk's doll store, and Green and Brady's store for mothers, all these were situated on Broad Street hardly a stone's throw from the second Market. ¹ But none of these excellent as they were, could bear comparison with the refined atmosphere... which enveloped one in the quiet gloom of Brandywine and Plummer's... with a distinguished Confederate soldier at its head and front. ²

When Gabriella returns from New York for a visit after an absence of seventeen years, she comes into the "upper station," Broad Street, and Charley says "...and as for this part of town -- well, I reckon the apartment houses will fairly take your breath away -- apartment houses." ³ Charley wants to show Gabriella West Franklin Street. "The finest apartment house in the city," ⁴ which he points out proudly, is recognizable as Monroe Terrace or Prestwould; the first hospital Stuart Circle; and the second -- "he's (Darrow) got his too, just around the corner on the next street," Saint Luke's. Then the monuments appear. Charley points out the mansions along Monument Avenue, "the finest in the city," as they go to Charley's house on that street. Arthur Peyton the next

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1. The market at 6th and Marshall streets.
 2. Glasgow, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
 3. Ibid., p. 501.
 4. " " p. 501.

day comes for her and as they go westward to the country "pointed out the houses as possessively as Charley."¹ In VEIN OF IRON Richmond is Queensborough, first called that in THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS. The Richmond scenes of VEIN OF IRON are during the time of the great depression. The house taken by the Fincastles is on Third Street, not far from "the hillside going down to the river." The hill is Gamble's Hill at the foot of Third Street, which Ellen Glasgow loved and where she liked to walk. She wrote to Beverley Cooke, young Richmond pianist when he was in the European Theatre/^{of} Operations during World War II, "It is a happy thought that you remember so vividly Third Street and Gamble's Hill, which you know so well..." When Ada Fincastle leaves her work at Shadwell's department store, "even if she waited for a streetcar and was fortunate enough to find a seat, she would be taken only a few blocks nearer home. Mulberry Street, where they lived in a dilapidated house, had once belonged to a prosperous quarter of

Queensborough, but that was before the tide of fashion and business alike had turned toward the West End and the new Granite Boulevard.

The walk from Shadwell's department store was not long and in fine weather Ada was glad of the exercise... 3

1. Ibid., p. 517

2. From a letter written by Ellen Glasgow to Beverley Cooke of Richmond, whose childhood home was on South Third Street, near Gamble's Hill, December 28, 1944.

3. Ellen Glasgow, Vein of Iron, p. 273.

From Broad Street she had turned into Mulberry Street, where the sunken brick pavements stretched dimly away to the terraced hill presiding over the canal and the river and the iron furnaces that shot up flame and smoke into the twilight. 1

Ellen Glasgow loved Third Street, Gamble's Hill and the terraces as she wrote Beverley Cooke.

... in April, perhaps, I shall call my little white dog and set out for the terraces on Gamble's Hill. When you were a child, did you roll down those steep terraces: And do you remember, as I do, the gold of the buttercups? 2

Meanwhile, Third Street still awaits your happy return.

Third Street, though damaged, still stands.

But, before I left Richmond, I did go down to dear old Third Street and that part of town has still kept an attraction. I thought of you on Gamble's Hill... 3

John Fincastle finds work in a school for young ladies, presumably Miss Jennie Ellett's, which in 1930 stood at 12 North Laurel Street. On his return from the school, "John Fincastle turned into Washington Street," 3 where "every afternoon, rain or sun, he walked several blocks out of his way for the sake of passing the Bland house in West Street." 4 The Bland house was the home of his dead wife and is identified by Miss Bennett as the Mayo House at Franklin and Jefferson streets.

In the remaining novels Richmond is the setting save for brief spaces in *THE BUILDERS* when Caroline Meade is at home.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

2. Quotations (from letters written by Ellen Glasgow to Beverley Cooke)

3. Glasgow, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 295.

Caroline leaves her old home in Southside, near Petersburg, to nurse the little daughter of the Blackburns on River Road in Richmond. When Caroline arrives in Richmond, she is met by Mrs. Colfax, the friend with whom her mother has attended school in Petersburg. Leaving the station, they talk on "while the car shot into Front Street, and ran straight in the direction of Monument Avenue."¹ They go on to Briarly, with its white columns, "just off River Road... the finest house anywhere around Richmond." The interior of Briarly is vividly described:

As they passed through the wide hall and up the beautiful Colonial staircase, Caroline felt that the luxury of the place bewildered her... there was nothing in her memory... that could compare with the decoration of the drawing room. 2

In *THE BUILDERS* not only far West End, Franklin Street "with its church spires and trees," Broad Street with its shops, are depicted, but also the poor quarter of Richmond is treated realistically. Angelica shows her soul as twisted as the tree outside Mrs. Macy's home on the afternoon when Angelica, Caroline, and Letty go to "the small frame house in Pine Street," where the Riddleys lived and on "to the next block" to Mrs. Macy's. Pine Street is about ten blocks west of Gamble's Hill in a poor quarter of Richmond.

In *THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN*, the reader sees the movement of Richmonders from old Church Hill to the West End, along with the rise of Ben Starr, the "Plain Man." The book opens in the humble Starr home, on East Broad Street, beyond

1. Ellen Glasgow, *The Builders*, p. 28.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

the "bottom," near old St. John's Church between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Streets.

For three days the clouds had hung in a gray curtain over the city and at dawn a high wind, blowing up from the river, had driven the dead leaves from the churchyard like flocks of startled swallows into our little street. Since moving I [Ben Starr] had watched them across my mother's 'prize' red geraniums ... until they flew almost as high as the living swallows in the belfry of old Saint John's. 1

Across the street and on either side of us, there were rows of small box-like frame houses built with narrow door-ways which opened from the sidewalk into funny little kitchens, where women, in soiled calico dresses, appeared to iron all day long. It was the poorer quarter of what is known in Richmond as 'Church Hill,' a portion of the city which had been left behind in the earlier fashionable progress westward. Between us and modern Richmond, there were several high hills..., a railroad station, and a broad slum-like Bottom vaguely described as the 'Old Market'... there were still left the ancient church, with its shady graveyard, and an imposing mansion or two from the forgotten splendor of former days... My early horizon was bounded by the green hill, by the crawling salmon-colored James River at its foot, and by the quaint white belfry of the parish of old Saint John's. 2

In 1922, one of the "imposing mansions," the VanLew home, was demolished to furnish space for Bellevue School from which children may, like Ben Starr, look down on the "salmon-colored" river and up "to the belfry of old Saint John's." That house was the Van Lew mansion, called in the novel, "the Adams House." Ben, having met Sally Mickleborough when she and her mother took refuge in the Starr home, makes President, his brother, take him the next day by "the old Adams house where

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1. Ellen Glasgow, The Romance of a Plain Man, p. 2.
 2. Ibid., p. 3.

the little girl lives. It was the one great house on the hill, with its spreading wings, its stuccoed offices, its massive white columns at the rear, which presided solemnly over the terraced hillside." When President lifts Ben so that he may look over the garden wall he thinks that he is "gazing upon an enchanted garden."

With his mother dead and his father married again Ben Starr leaves the house on East Broad Street to move about three blocks west to the old Seventeenth Street Market. There in the shadow of the market he works for and lives with Mr. Chitling.

I... crossed the narrow street [from the market]... to a row of dingy houses, with darkened basements, which began at the corner. By the number of ragged and unwashed children playing in the gutter before the second doorway, I concluded that this was the home of John Chitling. 2

A meeting with General Bolingbroke, the president of the "Great South Midland and Atlantic Railroad," helps Ben in his rise to power and toward the "other" Richmond west of the market. He goes to work in a tobacco factory toward which he "set out down Twenty-fifth Street in the direction of the river." The ambitious boy studies Latin under Doctor Theophilus Prey and "In my [Ben Starr's] eighteenth year... I left the Old Market forever, and moved into a room... in the house of Doctor Theophilus." ³ The Plain Man is on his way.

Ben Starr's first experience in Richmond society comes

1. Ibid., p. 31
 2. " p. 72
 3. " p. 127

when George, Doctor Theophilus' nephew, takes him to a ball, given by Sally Mickleborough in the "old barn, where a softly coloured light streamed through the windows." The polished floor and the strange surroundings prove to be the downfall of Ben.

Sally and Ben are married in historic Saint John's and go to live in the house "I've bought... beyond the Park in Franklin Street." The Park is Monroe Park at Franklin and Belvedere; the mansion described is like the Ginter property, now the Administration Building of Richmond Professional Institute, though Miss Bennett says she always thinks of 712 West Franklin as the home to which Sally and Ben went. "The house was large and modern, with a hideous brown stone front... In the brilliantly lighted hall, I saw masses of palms and roses under the oak staircase." The Administration Building has a hideous front and an oak staircase. From the front door, one looks into the dining room at the foot of the steps and on one's right in the hall there is a fireplace; "...I heard their merry voices floating down from the bedroom above. The pink light of the candles on the dinner table in the room beyond... and the warmth of the wood fire burning on the andirons seemed to grow faint and distant."³

From the mansion Ben and Sally impoverished in a financial crash, go back to the old house on Church Hill. There they lose their child whom they bury "in the old Bland section at Hollywood." Later when Ben begins to make money again, he

1. Ibid., p. 233.
 2. " p. 237.
 3. " p. 239.

buys the old Bland house on lower Franklin Street near the Capitol. For that house Miss Glasgow used the Archer House which stood at the corner of Sixth and Franklin Streets, according to Miss Bennett. "The Archer House was used by Ellen Glasgow in one of her novels..."¹ The Plain Man has made two westward trips and realized his great ambition. Ironically he refuses the presidency of the "Great South Midland and Atlantic Railroad," a position for which he has yearned.

In ONE MAN IN HIS TIME Ellen Glasgow takes her readers from the Capitol to Three Chopt Road in the West End and to the North Side of Broad Street in a neighborhood not far from Gabriella's house on "Hill" Street. The story opens in Capitol Square.

The winter's twilight, as thick as blown winter's smoke, was drifting through the Capitol Square....

Stopping midway of the road, Stephen Culpepper glanced back over the vague streets and the clearer distance... From that city, it seemed to him a new and inscrutable force--the force of an idea--had risen within the lazy few months to engulf the Square and all that the Square had ever meant in his life.... Clustering traditions had fled in the white blaze of electricity; the quaint brick walks, with their rich colour in the sunlight, were beginning to disappear beneath the expressionless mask of concrete.²

Not all the brick pavements have even yet given way to "concrete with its expressionless mask" as any pedestrian in downtown Richmond knows.

There follows an accurate description of the Governor's mansion:

1. Massie and Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
 2. Ellen Glasgow, One Man in His Time, p. 5

charming Georgian front...separate plot, broad, low, and hospitable, the house stood there divided and withdrawn... a modest reminder of the centuries when men had built well because they had time... The arrested dignity of the past seemed to the young man to hover above the old mansion within its setting of box hedges and leafless lilac shrubs and snow-laden magnolia trees. I

The old mansion presents the same appearance in 1951 as it did to Stephen.

It is easy to go to Capitol Square and from there to trace Stephen's footsteps to the "old print shop in Franklin Street, where Corinna Page... sat amide the rare prints which she never expected to sell." The "quaint place in Franklin Street" must have been between Capitol Square and Fifth Street. Though Stephen walks rapidly up Franklin Street, the reader does not feel that a long space of time elapses before he reaches the shop, "beyond the pyramidal cedars and the hedge of box."

Stephen is able to walk back and forth from his office near the Capitol to his home. The home of the "Culpeppers", a gray and white mansion with its Doric columns, is standing firmly established in its grassy lawn above the street and the age.³ The Culpepper house suggests the fine mansion on the corner of Third and Canal streets, recently purchased by the Virginia Education Association, or the Mayo House, opposite the Jefferson Hotel, now the property of the Diocese of Virginia.

The home of the Berkeleys "known as 'quiet people'" is "an incongruous example of Mid-Victorian architecture... [with] the walls untouched for years, covered in embossed paper and

1. Ibid., p. 5.
 2. " p. 37.
 3. " pp. 58-59.

paneled in yellow oak." A number of Mid-Victorian houses on West Franklin are "incongruous," the house at 1000 West Franklin, now occupied by doctor's offices is suggested, but there are others quite similar.

Stephen is a devoted member of his club, obviously near Capitol Square. It is likely that Miss Glasgow had in mind the Westmoreland Club, which stood at Sixth and Grace and was demolished about two decades ago.

It is easy to go out Three Chopt Road and imagine that one can spot the home of Judge Page and Corinna, "The car turned out of the road into the avenue of elms which led to the Georgian house of red brick, with its quaint hood doorway. In front of the door was a flagged walk edged with box." The walk led "to the porch of the house where rows of white and purple iris were blooming on the garden terrace."¹ Certainly the house is a symbol of the modest mansions built by wealthy Richmonders in the far West End near the Country Club, as they relentlessly progressed out "Westward Avenue."

In ONE MAN IN HIS TIME, Miss Glasgow takes us not only to the Governor's Mansion and the other fine homes but, on a "Journey into Mean Streets."² Darrow, whom Stephen encounters at the Governor's Mansion, takes Stephen over to Marshall Street where Stephen, "lifting his sensitive young face, stared up at the row of decaying tenements and said, 'What places for homes!'" Not satisfied with that much, Darrow takes him to see "part of

1. Ibid., p. 287.

2. " " Title of Chapter XII.

the Culpeper estate."¹ Stephen is shocked to know that income from such dilapidated houses helped to keep his family in luxury in the "gray and white mansion with Doric columns."

The same sordid, down-at-the-heel neighborhood is the setting for the melodramatic death scene of Mrs. Greene. To that section Corinna accompanies Patty Vetch, summoned from a party at the beautifully decorated Harrison home. They pass from the Harrison house, obviously in the West End, through "deserted streets" to Capitol Square where they turn "sharply north" out Ninth Street, "sometimes... through lighted spaces and sometimes through pools of darkness" past "closely packed houses" to a house that had once seen better days, for it has a "broad old-fashioned flight of stairs." The house is in the vicinity of Leigh Street because of the time it takes them to travel from Capitol Square. Miss Glasgow's use of contrasting environments in the two scenes just described is effective.

THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS, THE SHELTERED LIFE, THEY STOOPED TO FOLLY, and IN THIS OUR LIFE are grouped by Miss Glasgow as "Novels of the City."² THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS is a comedy of manners played against a Richmond background. The novel opens in Hollywood Cemetery, where Judge Honeywell is putting flowers on Cordelia's grave. On the way to his home Judge Honeywell passes "a plebian park," Monroe Park, where, "Beyond the few ancient elms, which had been threatened but not destroyed by the political ax, he could see the once aristocratic and now

1. Ibid., pp. 191-192.

2. Ellen Glasgow, A Certain Measure.

diminished length of Washington Street,"¹ the name given to Franklin Street. The "St. Luke's" is not the St. Luke's in South Richmond but probably St. Paul's at Eighth and Grace streets or St. James' at 1209 West Franklin Street.

If one travels east on Franklin Street from Monroe Park with the judge, one sees on the south-west corner of Franklin and Foushee streets the home assigned to him by Miss Glasgow. It is now the property of the Baptist Church. "A few blocks away stood his house, of which he was inoffensively proud; a collection of brownstone deformities assembled, by some diligent architect of the early 'eighties', under the protection of Queen Anne. In front the stone steps... flowed down from a baptismal font of a porch..."² The font is still there.

In this novel Ellen Glasgow uses both the Confederate Home for Ladies on Sheppard Street and the Episcopal Church Home on Grove Avenue. When "May Preston lent Annabel her car, she [Annabel]... took out an old lady from the Confederate Home."³ And when Annabel returns from her honeymoon, she brings gifts for the family, servants, and also "for a number of old ladies in the Church Home."⁴ Another specific place mentioned is the Woman's Exchange, which was in Linden Row but later moved farther east on West Franklin Street: "...Mrs. Upchurch, hastening to the Woman's Exchange on the next block, ordered her favorite dessert." Though Miss Glasgow calls her city Queensborough, she

1. Ellen Glasgow, The Romantic Comedians, p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. " p. 177.

4. " p. 65.

identifies it clearly and undeniably as Richmond.

In *THEYSTOOPE TO FOLLY* the setting is far less specific than in the other novels laid in Richmond; however, the Queensborough is still Richmond and the High Street, one of the main West End streets, probably Franklin. The "Brooke Mansion ... embodied all the culture to be derived from a fortune safely invested in Northern securities." With its "spacious hall" and Victorian gloom it could be any of a number of houses on West Franklin beyond Monroe Park. It is located within walking distance of "Juniper Hill" where Marmaduke lives with Mrs. Burden; "Juniper Hill" is none other than Gamble's Hill.

Threading his way through noisy streams of children, he passed rows of dilapidated houses.. and the street emerged upon the brow of a terraced hill, which presided over an ochre-coloured canal, a group of empty smoke-stacks, and the smothered fires of the sunset. Farther away, the sad-looking hill was enlivened by a bleached plot of grass, a fantastic fountain,... and a scattered row of inhospitable benches. 1

"The Vigilant Club [that stern-fronted building]" appears to be the Commonwealth, as *Virginus Littlepage* passes it on his way down to his office.

After a lapse of thirty-two years since the publication of *THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE*, Miss Glasgow uses again her own home, One West Main, as the setting for *THE SHELTERED LIFE*. The house of General Archibald "looked over the diminished grandeur of Washington [here Main instead of Franklin] to the recent industrial conquest of Queensborough."² The garden at One West Main, still a romantic island in an industrial area, is charmingly described.

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1. Ellen Glasgow, They Stopped to Folly, p. 94.
 2. Ellen Glasgow, The Sheltered Life, p.4.

In the garden, which was reached by stone steps from the back porch, Splendall flickered over the tall purple iris that fringed the bird-bath and rippled like a bright veil over the grass walks and flower-beds. A small place, but it held beauty. Beauty, and that deep stillness through which time seems to flow with a perpetual rythm and pause. 1

One likes to think that Miss Glasgow must often have sat in that peaceful garden and watched the birds and the butterflies and meditated, though often with regret that "One by one they saw the old homes demolished, the fine old elms mutilated."²

At the other end of the block stood the Birdsong house, less pretentious than the Archibald residence. It too had its back porch and pleasant garden. "Jennie Blair... darted through the library [of the Birdsong house] and out on the little square porch beyond the lattice door," and "after she had opened the window, she tried to see beyond the intervening houses into the Birdsong's garden..."⁴

Penitentiary Bottom and Memora's home in Canal Street are realistically pictured, though Jerry Blair knows perfectly well that she is forbidden to go there. "By the time she reached Canal Street, the sun was going down in a ball of fire, and the deep and thrilling shadows of the penitentiary slanted over the pavement."⁵

There is no evidence in the novel to place the house Miss Glasgow had in mind for the home of the Peytons, but it

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1. Ibid., p. 7.
 2. " p. 7.
 3. " p. 3.
 4. " p. 240.
 5. " p. 49.

must have been a new place in the West End, for "the lawn was hung with lanterns." The use of the word "lawn" indicates a larger yard than one would find anywhere near Main and Foushee. In *THE SHELTERED LIFE*, Miss Glasgow pictures background as realistically as in *VIRGINIA*.

Richmond, on the eve of World War II is the setting for *IN THIS OUR LIFE*, but the author is not so precise in picturing background as in some earlier novels. Asa Timberlake's childhood home "in lower Washington Street," is likely an old house in either Franklin or Main Street. It is the symbol of the old houses sacrificed to the god Progress. The house Asa saw being demolished stood next to the Mayo house on West Franklin Street. The Timberlake Tobacco Factory is one of the large tobacco factories that have helped to make Richmond a leading industrial city of the South; however, Miss Glasgow refers to it as a factory "on Canal Street." William Fitzroy, Asa's hated brother-in-law, lived "in Lakeview Park," which suggests Byrd Park, an earlier development than much of the far West End. The "Westward Avenue," where William has given Lavinia "one of a row of commonplace houses he owned" is distinctive West Avenue. "Granite Boulevard," identified easily in *LIFE AND GABRIELLA* as Monument Avenue, is not so easily identified in this novel. In this novel it suggests Cary Street Road rather than Monument. The house to which Roy went with the stranger could be any one of a number of old

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1. Ellen Glasgow, *In This Our Life*, p. 10.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

houses now falling into ruin, "The house stood behind a brick wall, with an iron gate which opened into a brick-paved yard."¹ It has a "tesselated entrance" and crumbling plaster.

Minerva's house is more recognizable as a specific house than the other houses in the novel. Traveling from Westward Avenue, Minerva passes the big houses, goes into a less fashionable part of town and presently "to the other side of Broad Street and on through the market [Sixth Street]."² They travel past houses occupied by white people; then, in the negro quarter, Minerva reaches her street, again "Hill Street had been a fashionable neighborhood."³ Abel has bought a fram house amid the dilapidated dignified old houses. There he finds joy in his garden which he lovingly tends. The house is at 706 North Sixth Street.

Ellen Glasgow loved her native city. She knew it from the oldest section to the newest. She has presented Richmond from those heart-breaking days when McClellan's forces were reported to be crossing the Chickahominy during the Peninsula Campaign of the War Between the States to the days on the eve of World War II.

Today many of the scenes Ellen Glasgow used are changed:

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1. Ibid., p. 451.
 2. " p. 77.
 3. " p. 78.

the Archer house at Sixth and Franklin and the old Westmoreland club have been sacrificed to progress. On the other hand, one may see some places used by Ellen Glasgow as they were when she wrote of them: "the old gray house still stands" in 1951 and Ada Fincastle's house at 217 South Third has been restored by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. Ellen Glasgow's beautiful garden is still an oasis in an industrial desert.

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1. A quote from letter to Beverley Cooke, July 29, 1945.

CONCLUSION

Ellen Glasgow's native state, the Commonwealth of Virginia, was a constituent portion of her. "I am Virginian in every drop of my blood and pulse of my heart...," she said. With her Virginia she wove a rich background for her novels. At times the cloth was homespun like the background of the Burrs in *THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE*; at other times it was of a finer texture as in *VIRGINIA*; yet again it was a rich tapestry for people like the Archibalds in *THE SHELTERED LIFE*.

Always the landscape was Virginian. The topography varies from flat, sandy and marshy land in Tidewater to red clay hills and sandy loam of Piedmont to hazy mountains and fertile valleys of western Virginia. All these parts of Virginia Ellen Glasgow observed and used.

Always, wherever she went, Ellen Glasgow garnered a rich harvest of memories. Into the store she reached through the years to take a plot, a name, a setting for a part of some novel. The lower valley of Virginia and Louisa County were a part of her earliest memories. With her sisters, Carrie Glasgow McCormick and Rebe Glasgow Tutwiler, she visited, walked in, and rode over other parts of Virginia: the upper

valley, Southside, Williamsburg. Once with Anna Furness Grundy, a nurse, and again with Anne Virginia Bennett she visited Southside and northwest Virginia. For a number of years Anne Virginia Bennett was secretary and friend to Ellen Glasgow. Together they walked to Gamble's Hill, Penetentiary Bottom, Leigh Street. With Carrie Coleman Duke, Ellen Glasgow visited summer after summer at Beechwood, the Duke home near Buckner in Louisa County. The two of them walked through the woods and meadows of the section. Mrs. Duke said, "Ellen loved lanes." Later Miss Bennett was with them on visits to Beechwood and walked hours with Ellen while she pondered her scenes and put them together -- a house here, a low place there, a cabin yonder, an imaginary tavern -- fitting the parts together to make a perfect, artistic whole.

Ellen Glasgow used Virginia names of people and places. True, she often moved them like a puppet on a string or a piece on a map. Bolingbroke Street in Petersburg, named for a mansion that once stood on a hill overlooking the river, becomes the name of a person in *THE ANCIENT LAW*. Petersburg furnishes two names given to a person mentioned in *THE DELIVERANCE*, Miss Matoaca Bolling. Sometimes she ran a railroad track north and south instead of east and west as it runs in the actual setting. She did that in *BARREN GROUND*. Names are changed but evidently have been suggested by local names: in *THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH* there is an Applegate. The writer has been unable to find an

Applegate in Virginia, but there is an Applegate family in Richmond and in Louisa County there is an Apple Grove.

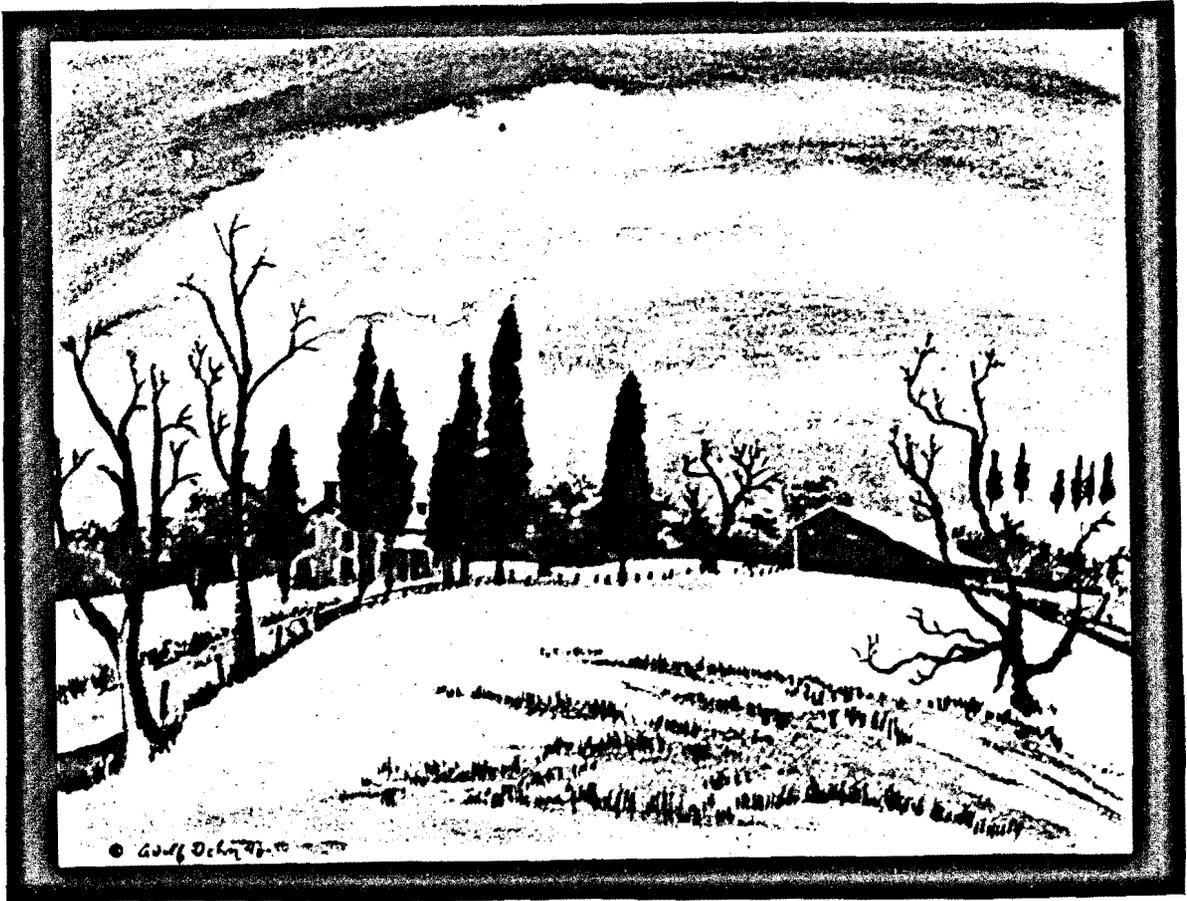
Washington Street in Petersburg depicts Franklin Street in Richmond. Henry Street in Petersburg becomes a street in the Botetourt of THE ANCIENT LAW.

In the novels that Ellen Glasgow laid partially or wholly in New York City, her love and yearning for Virginia is apparent. The characters are from the South and like Dorinda Oakley in BARREN GROUND are being called back. It is from the South that the characters in THE WHEEL "inherit their gentle manners." Undoubtedly Ellen Glasgow's "South" was Virginia. It was always the "old gray house" in Richmond to which Ellen wanted to return. She wrote best, and in the last twenty-odd years of her writing life, almost exclusively, in her upstairs study at One West Main.

Yes, Virginia was the setting for Ellen Glasgow's novels. Lest anyone think of Ellen Glasgow as a local color writer in the class with Mary Wilkins Freeman or Bret Harte, or Joel Chandler Harris, the writer feels compelled to call attention to certain facts. Ellen Glasgow moved her characters against a Virginia landscape because she was wise enough to use the part of the world that she knew best. She wrote, however, of problems that are not regional, not national, but universal. The farmer in Norway struggles with the soil just as does the farmer in THE DELIVERANCE or BARREN GROUND. War destroys culture in the Orient or in Europe just as it did in Northern

Virginia in *THE BATTLE-GROUND*. Her characters are universal: Dorinda Oakley epitomizes courage wherever one may find it. People rise and people fall in a Virginia county, as they do in *THE MILLER OF OLD CHURCH*, in England, in France, in Germany, in Russia. Men, like Daniel Ordway in *THE ANCIENT LAW*, leave off the old life and try in another part of the world to make a new life.

Ellen Glasgow has contributed to world literature, in polished, exquisite form, an unbiased picture of Virginia. Beginning with the plantation scenes of 1850 in *THE BATTLE-GROUND*, she takes her readers through almost a century of Virginia scenes and life. The reader sees back country, towns, cities through the changing years until Richmond in 1940 is portrayed in the novel, *IN THIS OUR LIFE*. Had Ellen Glasgow lived to write the contemplated novel, *BEYOND DEFEAT*, it is probable that she would have again portrayed Virginians against a Virginia landscape.



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Beverley Cooke

Dear Beverley, this card comes late, but
I bring you a word of good wishes for
the coming year and for all years.
I was so glad to have your letter and
your card from Paris. Meanwhile,
I trust I shall still expect your
happy return -

As always, S.G.

Season's Greetings

AND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

*

Ellen Glasgow

1944-1945

December 28th, 1944

ONE WEST MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Dear Beverley:

Your lovely remembrance from France has just come, and though I am still unequal to a letter, I shall try to tap a word of thanks on my uncertain keys. It has been a very real pleasure to hear from you, and that charming card, with its perfect message, gave me one of the few thrills I have known in this dark winter. And to think that you found an "Ellen Glasgow" time in France, even in war-time France!

How I enjoyed your letter reminding me of Paris! Not that Paris could ever come so near to my heart as London has always been. But it was delightful to read of the smiling faces everywhere, whether or not there could be smiling hearts. ~~xxxx~~ Surely, I must have written you this....

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year.

Always sincerely yours,

Ellen Glasgow

Well, I must stop now, with this greeting and this note of appreciation. It is a happy thought that you remember so vividly, not only Third Street and Gamble's Hill, which you know so well, but the Ellen Glasgow, whom you have never seen in the actuality. It proves what we both will not forget, that the actuality is only the shadow of the reality in any one human being. ... That is not in the least what I was trying to tell you, but my typewriter has broken away from me, and Miss Bennett, my secretary, who lives with me, and commands the household, warns me that I must stop writing and sign papers before my little strength is used up and the hour to rest has begun. But no matter. As soon as I am well again... in April perhaps, I shall call my little white dog and set out for ^{the} terrace on Gamble's Hill. When you were a child, did you roll down those steep terraces? And do you remember, as ~~the~~ ^{the} gold of the buttercups?

Every blessing for the New Year, and for every

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HAND COLORED

Castine, Maine, POST CARD
July 29th, 1945

Dear Beverley: I have been ill for months, or I should have written to you. Now, I can say no more that, "Welcome happily. Third street, though damaged, still stands. So does the old gray house. After many wearisome weeks in a hospital, the doctors made me come to Castine. This town is so lovely--or rather this hamlet, scarcely a town. I am still unequal to writing. It has been good to hear from you. Thank you for your letters and cards. As always,

Allen Cooke

Photostatically prepared by Dr. D. J. Storey, Inc., 110 N. York St., New York 17, N.Y.

THIS SIDE FOR CORRESPONDENCE THIS SIDE FOR ADDRESS

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Beverley Cooke

Battle Avenue

Castine, Maine

Dear Beverley:

COPY.

I was glad to have word from you, but your letter came while I was ill, and, since then, life has seemed to drift by me. But, before I left Richmond, I did go down to dear old Third Street and that part of town has still kept an attraction. I thought of you on Gambles Hill, and I wonder what you were doing that afternoon "somewhere in England." It was May, and you wrote "Cold!!!"

What a charming letter you enclosed, and how very much I should like to know Mrs. Herman. I am sure she is a lovely soul. Will you give her my affection when you write to her. If she ever comes to Richmond, I hope she will look me up-----

Let me hear from you, for I shall not forget you while the war goes on. When it is all over, we must meet in that old gray house and we shall not meet as strangers. Yes, I feel with you that most people blindly feel that they must know people in superficial ways, before they can know them in deeper ways of the mind. And to think that all your life and a good part of mine we were living within a few streets of each other. It is really very amusing, but Mrs. Hermans letter has made me know you much better.

With every good wish in the world,

~~I have written~~
I am not equal to a long letter, Ellen Glasgow

Sincerely yours,
Ellen Glasgow

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Cpl. Samuel B. Cooke, ASN332255 33,
5th Finance Distributing Section,
APO, 350 U.S. Army,
Care Postmaster,
New York,
N.Y.



From E.A. Glasgow, One West Main Street,
Richmond, Virginia.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

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APPENDIX

The research for this paper has covered more than a year and has taken the writer into the regions of Virginia used by Ellen Glasgow as backgrounds for her novels. It is possible for a traveler to cover the regions that the author knew from childhood experiences, from trips taken with family and friends, and from research journeys.

Starting with Louisa County, the background of THE DESCENDANT's early scenes, the traveler may go west to the Skyline Drive, north to Winchester, and east to Manassas, to see the scenes of THE BATTLE-GROUND. In Williamsburg, many scenes will be changed, but in the old courthouse, now a museum, are pictures of Williamsburg as it was in 1900. A trip to Southside Virginia will give the traveler the mood for THE ANCIENT LAW. In towns, even as small as Chase City, tobacco warehouses reflect the culture of the Golden Leaf which is entwined and interwoven in the history of Virginia. The endless acres of tobacco which border the highways, afford employment for many of the natives in this section.

Petersburg, in the downtown section, which is the part of the city used in VIRGINIA, is almost unchanged from the city that Miss Glasgow knew. In Richmond the seeker will be able to walk through the old parts of the city and find **like the ones depicted** in the novels. Lexington and the mountainous country round about will put the traveler in Ada

Fincastle's environment temporarily.

To the writer the trips to the scenes were rewarding, exciting, and, at times, amusing. There were people, particularly in Louisa who remembered Miss Glasgow or had heard of her. Almost without exception the natives around Buckner would say, "Miss Glasgow wrote a book about Buckner, or about Louisa, or about the people here." Today broomsedge still presents a challenge to the farmers in Louisa County. Quoting Matthew Fairlamb's speech about broomsedge evoked the following reply from Mr. Barlow, postmaster at Buckner, "Huh, there's plenty o' that 'round here now!" One afternoon, searching for the old back, corduroy road that once cut through in "front" of Jerdone's Castle, we met a young man. On being told that we were gathering material about Ellen Glasgow's books he said, "Yes'm, that old corduroy road cut right through this field, through the woods, and on across the field of Jerdone's Castle. It went on what is now the back of the house but what used to be the front. I've seen the old road many a time when I've been fox-hunting in these woods."

"Will you take us through the fields to the road sometime?"

"Yes, I surely will. You know Miss Glasgow used to live at Jerdone's Castle and she wrote a book about Buckner. I read it. I think it was called BROOMSEDGE." She would probably have been pleased to know that she had succeeded in making broomsedge so real that a native would remember BARREN GROUND as BROOMSEDGE.

Though crops in Louisa are diversified now, not too many years ago tobacco was the one crop of the county. In BARREN GROUND a character says, "The trouble with this here land is that tobacco has worn it out." A native of the county, living at Bumpass, about three miles from Buckner, said, "You know, the land on this side of the county is much poorer than the land on the other side. My father ruined his land. Land on this part of the county has been worn out with tobacco raising."

Of THE BATTLE-GROUND a young veteran of World War II was heard to remark, "For a woman, Ellen Glasgow depicted war with amazing reality and vividness. Her battle scenes are superb."

In Chase City one of the people questioned happened to be a former nurse who had worked for a doctor in Richmond. The doctor once had taken her to make a professional call on Miss Glasgow. When she was asked about Miss Glasgow, she said, "I was young and excited but I remember that Miss Glasgow was beautiful and charming and that her home was exquisite."

Doing the research has made the writer feel that Ellen Glasgow is a living personality. She has made herself a part of Virginia and has left her mark on Virginia life and literature.

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VITA

The writer was born at Allen, Maryland. She graduated from Wicomico High School, Salisbury, Maryland, attended Goucher College, Baltimore, Maryland two years, Westhampton College, Richmond, one year, and received an A.B. degree from the College of William and Mary in 1944. In 1948, she received an M.Ed. degree from William and Mary. She has taught four years at Cape Charles High School, three and one-half at Bolling Junior High School, Petersburg, and two and one-half at the Richmond Professional Institute. She is a member of American Association of University Women, American Association of University Professors, Kappa Delta Pi, and Delta Kappa Gamma.