

Distaff

policy is to fill a need at the present while there is need plus enthusiasm, rather than to divert the enthusiasm into other channels until business conditions are better.

It is with a feeling of pride that we offer to you the first issue of the *DISTAFF*—the first publication to be edited by the women of Duke University. We wish to thank you who have helped us in this undertaking, and to invite further any constructive criticism which you might be kind enough to offer.

ON HOUSES

WHILE YOU ARE BEING INTRODUCED to our new publication, let us introduce you to another relatively new feature of the woman's campus. We want you to know and call our dormitories by their real and proper names. Starting with number one and following in order they are: Giles House, Alspaugh House, Pegram House, Bassett House, and Joseph G. Brown House. The idea of calling them houses is taken from the English traditional notion of student rooming houses. The first one of these is quite appropriately named for the three Giles sisters, who were the first women to receive diplomas from old Trinity College when it was a small Methodist college in Randolph County. At that time women were not permitted to attend classes with men, but these sisters were allowed to study the courses required for a degree and were tutored by resident professors, thus winning their coveted diplomas from Trinity. The next, Alspaugh House, is named for a man who for many years was a member of the Board of Trustees and who befriended the school in many ways that are not soon to be forgotten. One of the buildings bore his name, and it seems fitting to keep the name for the new dormitory which supplants the old one. The third name was given in memory of a much beloved professor. Old Doctor Pegram, as some call him, was the first professor of science here, when he taught all the science courses which Trinity could boast. The last two, Bassett and Joseph G. Brown, are likewise appropriately named. Those two men figured largely in the history of the college and will always be remembered for their active part in its progress.

And now, since our rooming houses have been so well named, let us see that they are well called. Do you not prefer a fitting name to an insignificant number? A great deal of confusion would be avoided, if all of us would try a little harder to remember to use these names. E. L.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Tharlane: A Grim Novel with an Australian Background

THARLANE. By Dorothy Cottrell. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston and New York. \$2.50.

Reviewed by Harriet Fraser

If you're tired of the fictional slop of summer and fall, the endless round of smart society stories, pseudo-sophisticated sexualities, dull and poorly written, try Dorothy Cottrell's *Tharlane*. Even if it had nothing else to recommend it, the story is in a new setting and the characters and the plot have the freshness of untouched material.

The scene is laid in the sheep-raising country of Australia, and the story is almost epical in its portrayal of life. The author, an Australian herself, has a sure and vivid power of description, and a faculty for character analysis that is unobtrusive as it is keenly certain. The grimness of *Tharlane* is highlighted by a delightfully ironic humor that will twist your mouth up on one side.

Old H. B., around whom the plot is built, is a little reminiscent of Caleb Gare in *Wild Geese* in his passionate love for the soil. Old H. B. is an odd type, ruthless, hard-working, obstinate, revengeful, and yet, at times, strangely tender. He could tramp down any one who stood between him and his desire as unthinkingly as he could a blade of grass, and yet at the last, when the avenging flames came sweeping down over the vast territory that was the fruit of his years and his labor, when it was ready to take him as it had taken his work, he could use his last bullet to end the life of a faithful cur instead of saving himself from suffering.

The epical tale of H. B.'s struggle with nature, with drought and poor soil and storm, is threaded through with the tragic love story of Martha and Sandy, with the vain and bitter story of Sary's fight against the unconquerable, with the golden romance of Georgina and Donald the Shearer. The lesser characters are portrayed with the same keenness and sympathy as the main character.

The book *Tharlane* runs the scale of human emotions, and it blends them all into one vital tale. The horrible days of drought, the grim sweep of fire, the tragic death of Martha in childbirth, the loneliness of Sandy, the child, the happiness of Donald the Shearer and his beautiful wife, H. B.'s fierce love for the soil, and his pride in his land—these are woven together into an account of real and vibrant life.

One supreme compliment can be paid this work of Dorothy Cottrell's—it is alive. Read it, and it will make you feel and see and live.

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Hot Countries: In Which an Englishman Sails the Southern Sea

HOT COUNTRIES. By Alec Waugh. Literary Guild, New York. 1930. \$2.50.

Reviewed by Mary Heston Martin

Alec Waugh, with his insatiable wanderlust and his aimless wanderings into the unattainable, brings to mind Richard Halliburton, yet he lacks the romance and unrestrained dare-devilry of the young Princetonian. His persistent inquiry into seas, islands, and jungles marks him as a typical traveling Englishman. However, he does propose "to sail into the sunset," and it is not without a genuine touch of romance that he searches out the truth about lands lying under the Southern cross.

Because he is British, he does not travel with the expectation of illusion; he sees beauty where it exists—in the ennui of months at sea; in the wilderness and savagery of Polynesia; in the delightful slothfulness and soft loveliness of Tahiti; in the restraint of the life in La Martinique suddenly forgotten in the abandon of rare carnivals; in the glamour of Bangkok and the garishness of Ceylon; in the lawlessness of the New Hebrides; and in the courage of the black men of San Domingo, who gropingly try to govern themselves rather than be bound by the tyranny of foreigners. He views these things in the light of realism.

He perceives in the islands of the South Seas economic degeneracy as well as their idyllic geography; he understands the disruption which followed the coming of "whiskey and missionaries", beachcombers, traders, and planters into countries where native beauty, unexploited by a white civilization, is the chief asset, but he does not lament this loss of naturalism; for, being of Oxford, he knows that where such a merging of two civilizations is found on any frontier, the better quality will gradually surmount.

Hot Countries is far more than a series of geographical descriptions. Besides picturing the various places which the author visited, and telling of a few incidents in his travels, as is the routine of most travel books, it discusses the social and economic problems which he encountered in the Southern islands and in the Far East: the business disturbances which arise from the inevitable clash between American enterprise and island slothfulness, the chaotic attempt for stable governments among peoples of different races, the position of the white man and the brown woman. By seeing these problems clearly, Mr. Waugh has discovered the real truth about the East—that its glamour and romance are not concerned with "palm trees, moonlight nights, golden sands, and softly lapping waters" so much as it is represented by the real "fortitude, patience, and strength of those who have developed in a hundred years a strange and hostile country into a happy and prosperous dependency." The East is essentially a man's world; the woman is unimportant. It is a world of pioneers whose lives are bound up in work.

Hot Countries is a suitable addition to the long list of successes from the Literary Guild, not only because of its intrinsic worth in subject matter, but also because it is charmingly written in a pleasantly narrative, but nevertheless discerning style.



The Great Meadow: Indians, Frontiers, and Philosophy

THE GREAT MEADOW. By Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Viking Press. 1930. \$2.00.

Reviewed by Joanna Crim

After reading Elizabeth Madox Roberts' *The Great Meadow*, the present writer wonders why it was a Literary Guild selection. Miss Roberts draws her material from the exciting days when men like George Rogers Clark and Daniel Boone were pushing their way across the mountains to establish settlements and a new order of things in the rich meadowlands of Kentucky and Tennessee.

There is little worth reading in the way of plot. It is the story of Diony Hall, a Virginia backwoods girl, who marries Berk, one of the slow-spoken, roving Jarvis clan on the adjoining plantation, and ventures out with him to the uncertain life of the newly opened wilderness forts. Then follow innumerable details of their everyday life, soap-making, gourd-planting, cooking, and gossiping. The plot reaches its one dramatic height with the rather worn situation of Diony's having to choose between her two husbands, since she had married a new one after Berk's prolonged absence on a wild goose chase after Indians.

The real purpose of the book seems to be the psychological development of Diony in her attempt to bring the unrest and questioning within her and the overwhelming strangeness of her wilderness life into some kind of harmony with certain teachings of Berkely, impressed upon her by her father, Thomas Hall, whose books were all that was left of a Tidewater landowner heritage. Though parts of the treatment of Diony are good, even this phase of the book seems strained. The author is vague and seems to leave Diony's mind in as pitiful a maze as it was in the first few chapters of the book. There are bits of high improbability. In one instance, Diony and her mother-in-law venture outside the fort to gather hickory nuts. They are set upon by two Indian braves and Diony is struck on the head with a club. When she recovers consciousness, she sees Elvira, the mother-in-law, dead and scalped beside her. It seems strange that the redmen, bloodthirstily eager for trophies of war, should scalp one woman and leave the other lying there, her hair intact. No doubt we are to attribute this miracle to the timely intervention of Berkely's "Author of the Universe."

Perhaps the greatest value of the book lies in its portrayal of frontier life. Miss Roberts cannot be accused of painting only the glamour in the life of these pioneers; she paints it in all of its primitive harshness and difficulty. Indeed, her fault lies in

giving too much detail. One learns everything, from the way her characters attack platterfuls of apple pie (which seems not greatly different from the way other people do, except that we are accustomed to use forks instead of spoons) to the way the hornets come and go through a chink in the cabin wall. If there were a stronger plot to knit these details together they would hold one's interest, but as it is one feels that he might have got a much more condensed and equally valuable picture of frontier life from a well-written history text.

Miss Roberts affects the slow deliberate speech of these people with irritating thoroughness. She overdoes it. It seems, except in rare instances, that the characters are having to work hard to speak as the author thinks they should. The words never seem to roll off their tongues with the natural ease of a language really their own. One wonders a little whether these brawny, plainspoken pioneers had to labor to make themselves naïve by calling a wren a "wrenny-bird", a kitchen a "kitchen-room", or bread their "bread-food". These double words return again and again to grate on the reader.

None but lovers of stories of frontier life should attempt this book, and there is a question whether even they would find this novel convincing.

EXIT CHRISTIAN

(Continued from page 10)

He had once tried to explain me to Helen.

"I know," she had said, "you feel just the way you did when you were a little kid reciting poetry or something before the whole school and you couldn't think of the next line. And acting indifferent and uninterested is like mentally lighting a Murad." Poor Ronnie! I made him repeat her words so many times that he finally presented me with a copy of them scrawled in his almost undecipherable hand.

And now having come back to Helen, I'll continue the story:

That night I started my first letter to Helen. It was a night in early April with a soft rain pattering through the leaves of a tree just outside my window. There was a freshness and a fragrance in the air that made you happy for no other reason but that you were alive and spring had come. At first I had some trouble starting, because I wasn't sure just how much Ronnie really cared for Helen. In the three years I had known him, he had been deeply in love with no less than twenty-three different girls, so I didn't have much faith in his constancy. I asked him about it, but he didn't seem to care how devoted I made him. I asked him if he thought it would be playing square with Helen.

"Sure," he answered oratorically. "She asked for literary love letters, and so it's my duty to provide her with them."

I didn't agree with him, but knew better than to waste time in arguing. After thinking the matter over I decided to let Ronnie carry out his duty to Helen.

After wrestling with the first few lines, I became utterly lost in the pleasure and thrill of being able to tell Helen just what I thought of her. I gave her all the similes and metaphors, quotations and classical references her heart could desire.

After a while I noticed that Ronnie was getting restless. Finally he shut his Economics book with a slam and came over to the desk. After reading a few lines over my shoulder, he said,

"It seems to read o.k., but, Buddie, be careful what you say 'cause Helen thinks I'm a pretty good guy, and I wouldn't want her to—"

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"Don't trouble your little head," I said. "She will never learn the truth from me."

When I had finally finished the letter, it was eight pages long. Ronnie read it over and had to admit that it was the best letter I'd ever written for him. I didn't tell him why.

I wrote again in the middle of the week, and then on Saturday night Ronnie went to see Helen. I felt as nervous as the author of a play on the opening night! I tried to study but couldn't, tried to read with the same result. I reverted to pacing the floor, rumpling my hair, lighting cigarettes and throwing them away, and all the other stock actions of a nervous man. At last Ronnie came in. He was the perfect example of what it is to be "all hot and bothered."

"You villain! You traitor! You louse!" he said coming toward me menacingly but with just enough good humor in his eyes to keep me from leaping through the window—glass and all.

"Do you know what we did all evening?" he demanded in a disgusted tone.

"Stoked furnaces," I guessed, as I saw a bead of perspiration trickle down his forehead.

"No!" he said, "You'd never guess, so I'll tell you."

He sat down on the edge of the bed, took out his handkerchief and mopped his forehead. Then he glanced up and saw his reflection in the chiffonier mirror.

"Look at my face!" he said ruefully. "Do you know what that's from?"

"I tried to guess," I said humbly.

"It's from blushing modestly all evening over all the nice things she said about your *beautiful letters!*" he said, raising his voice to as mocking a falsetto as he could reach.

In spite of myself I must have looked radiant. Ronnie looked at me and said,

"Say, you look horribly happy about it."

"Just an author's natural delight in having his works appreciated," I managed to say.

He looked at me curiously but didn't say anything.

"Let's hit the hay," he finally mumbled.

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It was almost a week later that things began to happen. I was in the library working on a poem that would make Poe's "To Helen" seem like a bunch of slams, when a voice right behind me set every nerve tingling with a soft "Hello, Bill." I jumped up hurriedly and gathered up my work as quickly as I could without being obvious. I prayed that she hadn't seen what I'd been writing, yet found myself looking at her eagerly for some sign that she had. She seemed the least bit startled, but my own heart was pounding so hard that I couldn't be sure of hers.

"Hello, Helen," I said as calmly as I could. "It's rather unusual to see you here, isn't it?"

"Yes," she answered. "I'm afraid it is, but there was something I thought of when I was passing so I stopped to look it up."

"Can I help you?" I volunteered.

"Maybe," she said a little hesitatingly. "Do you know who Lady Clara Vere de Vere was?"

It took all my well-bred restraint to keep from saying, "Yes Lord! as well as Tennyson!" Instead I repeated "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" two or three times softly, as if I were trying to recall the name of a long forgotten acquaintance. As a matter of fact, only two nights before I had written two pages comparing her unfavorably, I hoped, to Helen. Finally deciding I had given the matter due consideration, I snapped my fingers impulsively and said, "I have it! Tennyson! Poem by same name! I'll look it up!"

I found it, and while Helen was reading it, who should come strolling over but Ronnie. He wore the funniest mixture of facial expressions that I've ever seen on anyone. He looked as though he'd been caught crocheting a doily or something.

"My God, man!" I said. "Do you know where you are?"

"Sure," he answered with almost a wistful smile. "I came here freely, willingly, and under my own power."

"You don't mean to tell me you've been reading!" I exclaimed in amazement.

"No," he answered reassuringly. "Just looking at pictures. I came here to find out what was being worn on the Rue de la Paix at the time of D'Artagnan for the masquerade tonight, you know. Costumes haven't

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changed much," he added, holding up a picture in "The Three Musketeers." "Look at these musketeers wearing plus fours!"

I laughed and looked at Helen, but she had her head still bowed over Tennyson's poem and was apparently paying no attention to our conversation. It was then that I realized that the remarks I'd made upon seeing Ronnie there wouldn't have led anyone to believe him a man of literary ability. I felt like a traitor and decided to get away before I made any more breaks.

"Well, I've got to get along to a class," I lied. "I'll see you both tonight at the masquerade, won't I?"

Ronnie boomed an affirmative, but Helen said nothing, just gave me a long searching look.

When Ronnie came in about an hour later, he looked as though he'd been walked on. For a few moments he stood in the middle of the room looking at me with sad, reproachful eyes, then with the sigh of a man who has endured too much, he went over to the desk, picked up Webster's *Standard Dictionary* and brought it over to me.

"Bill," he said slowly, "Stand up and put your hand on this and swear that you won't ever again, as long as you live, use any word in this book to write a letter for me. So help you God."

"What are you going to do after this?" I asked with a half-hearted attempt at wit. "Make me write in Latin, French, or have you decided on short hand?"

"Swear!" he insisted, ignoring my remark, so I swore.

After that ceremony was over, he seemed in a more cheerful mood.

"Was Helen mad!" he said sitting down on the edge of the bed and slapping his knee to punctuate his statement.

"You didn't tell her!" I almost yelled.

"And how," he said reminiscingly, "But she said she had already guessed it."

"Buddie," he continued, "We're both hateful hypocrites, and after tonight Helen doesn't want to have anything more to do with us. She said she'd go to the dance tonight because she'd promised; but after that—" he waved his arm dramatically over his head in a gesture of farewell.

A few minutes later he tore off in search of costumes for us, and it

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wasn't until five hours later that he returned tired but beaming with a huge box under his arm.

"Costumes," he announced, tossing it on the bed.

"Good," I said. "What am I?"

"Musketeer," he answered.

"And you?"

Musketeer," he repeated.

"Both of us?"

"Yep."

"What's the idea?"

"Only costumes left," he said evasively.

"Listen, Ronnie," I began sternly. "Now what have you got up your sleeve? Haven't we got ourselves into enough trouble as it is?"

"Buddie," he said earnestly, "this is the noblest idea I've ever had, if it only works; and I had to drive fifty miles to get those two costumes alike so you're not going to interfere, are you?"

I'd never seen him so serious in all my life, and it rather worried me, because I didn't know what to expect.

"No," I said slowly. "Do your worst; but for Heaven's sake be careful!"

At seven o'clock we began dressing and by eight were transformed into the most romantic pair of musketeers A.D. (after D'Artagnan). We were duplicate models of what the well-dressed musketeer should wear from our black felt hats with their long white ostrich plumes to our soft leather boots. We were standing in mutual admiration, feet apart with our hands on our broad buckled belts when Ronnie suddenly saw the two rapiers lying on the bed. Without any warning he slapped me across the face, and before I had time to retaliate, he held up the swords crying,

"That's an insult that gentlemen can wipe out only with a duel."

Handing me my rapier, he stepped back saying,

"On guard!"

For the next half hour we fought the hardest duel ever waged. We leaped over the beds, knocked over chairs and upset the inkwell, each trying to out-Fairbanks the other. Finally I had Ronnie cornered and with a terrific blow knocked the little rapier out of his grasp. But

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while I was busy placing my foot on the blade, Ronnie let out a victorious cry of,

"In the service of the king!" and pushed the bookcase, containing some sixty volumes in all, on top of me.

It took us the better part of an hour to repair our damaged appearances and become the perfect musketeers that we had been. Then arm in arm with our rapiers brandished high we marched out yelling together,

"All for one and one for all!"

When we got to Helen's street, Ronnie stopped the car and turned towards me.

"You have your mask," he said, "but that only covers your eyes. I got these black handkerchiefs to cover up the rest of our faces. Before you get there, stop and tie it on, and keep your hat pulled down so that she, I mean no one, will see your hair."

With that he drove off, and I was left to wander towards the Alpha Delta House, wondering what sort of devilment Ronnie had planned. At about a hundred yards from my destination I stopped and carried out Ronnie's orders. I could hear the orchestra playing soft, rhythmic music and could see swaying shadows passing the windows. A gipsy and a pirate hurried past me laughing merrily. A touring car with a cowboy sitting astride the hood, wildly waving a lasso, tore by with its cut-out open. A gunman and his bobbed-haired bandit were in close pursuit blowing their exhaust whistle.

When I arrived, the Alpha Delta House, with its branches of evergreens and myriads of Japanese lanterns, was already crowded with members of every existing race, nationality, and walks of life. Feeling safe in my disguise, I boldly cut in on the gunman.

"Who are you?" asked his little dark-haired bandit.

"D'Artagnan," I answered as I carefully avoided a collision with a six foot Napoleon.

"Oh, French?" she asked brightly.

"*Oui, chérie*," I replied as she was carried off by a very fair-haired and rosy-complexioned Spaniard.

After that I cut in on a Russian peasant, a Dutch girl, and an Apache dancer successively. Then I saw Helen.

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She was standing in the doorway with Ronnie. After that I didn't dance any more but stood in the shadow of a palm watching her glide gracefully about. She was dressed in a black Spanish shawl with yellow roses on it, and there was a yellow rose in her golden hair.

It was about midnight when I felt a strong grip on my arm and turning around found Ronnie.

"Cut in on Helen now, quick!" he commanded in a hoarse whisper.

I did; the orchestra was playing the Merry Widow Waltz. We danced only a few steps when Helen said softly.

"Take me out Ronnie. I want to ask you something."

We danced to the door and stepped out onto the porch. The garden was deserted. There were a few lanterns shining among the trees and a moon was rising over University Hill. She walked slowly down the steps, and I followed her.

When we reached the arbor, she turned toward me. She had removed her mask, and in the dim lantern light she looked pale and lovely and fragile. I didn't dare speak, for I knew that would break the spell.

"Ronnie," she said softly. "I wish that I knew the things you said about Bill were true; but—" she stopped and turned her head away.

I stood looking down on her hardly daring to breathe.

Suddenly from the house came a loud roll of drums, then a crash.

"Masks off!" someone shouted, and the cry was taken up.

I slowly raised my hand and removed my mask.

"Ronnie," she said almost pleadingly, with her head still bowed.

"Did you really mean it when you said that you *knew* he loved me and meant all that he wrote?"

"Helen!" I whispered, for no voice would come.

She raised her head quickly and uttered a little cry of surprise; then I was beside her and had her in my arms.

I don't know how many minutes later it was that I heard Ronnie's familiar tread on the gravel path as he came towards us, softly whistling "Somebody Stole My Gal."

When he was about ten paces away, he stopped whistling, hesitated, then walked briskly up. He stood for a moment before us. No one spoke. Then he said slowly.

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"I came to tell you that I didn't go to the library this afternoon to look at pictures. I read Cyrano de Bergerac. Buddie," he said putting his hand on my shoulder. "You should have told me that it ended like this."

He paused for a second, then stepped back, clicked his heels together and made a sweeping and gallant bow.

"Exit Christian," he said and turning walked quickly away.

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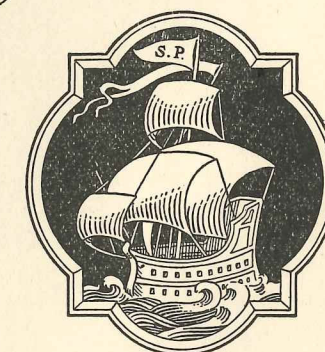
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