

reliefs representing the prince, sometimes on horseback, sometimes sitting on his throne, accompanied by as many of his wives and concubines as burned themselves to death on his funeral pyre. Few of these Maharajas of an earlier generation left the world without taking with them two or three unfortunate women. Some of them were accompanied to the fire by six, seven, and in one case, I counted, even nine victims. On the slab their images form a little frieze below the image of their lord and master — a row of small identical figures stretching across the stone. Nine luscious Hindu beauties, deep bosomed, small waisted, sumptu-

ously haunched — their portraits are deliciously amusing. But, looking at them, I could not help remembering the dreadful thing these little sculptures commemorated. I thought of the minutes of torment that ushered them out of life into this comical world of art which they now inhabit, under the weather stained domes in the desert. Every here and there stands a tomb on whose central slab is carved a small conventional pair of feet. These are the feet of those royal ladies who, for one reason or another, did not commit *sati*. Each time I saw a pair of these marble feet I felt like calling for cheers.

## TOWERS AND SILENCE

By Robert P. Tristram Coffin

**T**OWERS and silence, all holy lonely things,  
 Befriend me, now that Youth has fared afar  
 And I can feel no more tears sweet to joy  
 When I gaze upon the evening star.

I do not know what day Youth said farewell;  
 But one blue day the trees all stood and sang  
 Together and together, and in my brain  
 I heard great doors swing to with brazen clang.

And suddenly the winds were all too swift  
 And clouds too high and glorious, and I knew  
 Youth had gone and I was sole alone  
 On an endless road where dead things grew.

And I was sole alone. . . . My feet moved on  
 Along the road that leads through starry space  
 And never ends. O towers and silence, wrap  
 Your holy healing shadows round my face!



Tom Outland

# MY FAVORITE CHARACTER IN FICTION

By Zona Gale

*Sketched by Anne Merriman Peck*

THE best that I can do in naming a favorite character in fiction is to name the one which is occupying my thought at the moment. One has a new favorite character for every new favorite book. If I tried to name them all I should have to give a party. The character who occupies my mind at the moment is Tom Outland in Willa Cather's "The Professor's House", and this is for the same reason that a little while ago I was thinking most of the protagonist in Johan Bojer's "The Great Hunger". And for years, still earlier, of the bishop who offered up candlesticks instead of candles. And in my little girlhood, of Sydney Carton who said "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done." I suppose therefore that what I mean by my joy in Tom Outland is that he is one more who can set free whatever is in him by identifying himself with a great idea. Does not the slang phrase "What's the great idea?" seem, as many slang phrases seem, to voice a profound spiritual wonder. What is the great idea? The bishop found it, Sydney Carton found it, and the "Great Hunger" man found it in self identification with an idea. In every case, under whatever guise, the process was the same—the identification of self with some precious idea. To buy the soul of a "thief" with a gift of two candlesticks; to sow rye in an enemy's empty field; to ride off to the guillotine in somebody's place; and to develop a passion for the preservation of the heritage of a desert and of a dead people—these are not so different, since by such things the provincial limitations of self give way to the universal field of group emotion. The provincial self about its own affairs is a fascinating field for literary research; but what *amour* or personal adventure which Tom Outland might have had could be so emotionally thrilling as the passion and the hope and the understanding which he puts into this quest? In him Miss Cather creates a living being, passionately pursuing an objective that has no personal taint. He expresses the love of the unknown which is the basic hunger of the race. He has caught "the Great Idea".