

# OPINIONS about BOOKS



*They swayed about upon a rocking-horse, and thought it Pegasus. — KEATS*

## Reviews by

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### Realistic Romance

ROGUE HERRIES, by Hugh Walpole; Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50.

Reviewed by HERBERT GORMAN.

IT WOULD, perhaps, be saying too much to insist that Mr. Hugh Walpole has blessedly enjoyed a literary regeneration; but the full-blooded, lusty quality of *Rogue Herries* assuredly indicates a profounder and braver searching in the depths of human passions than has been perceptible in the English novelist's recent work. One must go back to *The Duchess of Wrex* to find a similar completeness; yet *Rogue Herries* is not at all comparable to that earlier achievement. This new novel is not important because of its length (and it is an extremely long one) but because of its meticulous and uncompromising creation of an exceptional and exceedingly intricate character. It is, in fact, romance turned inside out. The properties of the romantic novel are there but the development is realistic and modern.

Francis Herries, who eventually achieves the dubious nickname of Rogue, is all that the old romantic novel might desire, handsome, fiery-tempered, Byronic in temperament, devil-may-care, regardless of conventions, agnostic if not atheistical, and troubled by disaffection with the smaller world about him. He could be faithful if he found something worth his faith; he could worship if he could discover the one compelling altar. Because he cannot he fritters away most of his life in the dismal surroundings of Borrowdale, indulging in furious tempers and creating the legend that he is in league with the devil.

It is impossible to comment on Francis Herries without mentioning the background through which he moves. This background is a part of him; it is the atmospheric essence through which we see him; he is the Satanic figure in the fog and rain. Yet he enlists our sympathies always. Mr. Walpole, surely, fastidi-

ously, and with a high degree of strength, convinces us of the complex nature of this man and we see him much as we might see some proud Lucifer who is seeking for the road returning to Heaven. The wealth of detail that has gone into this creation makes up a novel of major elements.

It is a novel not of days but of decades for it is well under way in the 1730's and it does not terminate until the restless American colonies are about to break the umbilical cord that ties them to England. Through these years we see two figures, Francis Herries and his son David, growing older in time, fighting against fortune as best they may with their dis-

turned until it is too late for happiness. This might have been handled in an unconvincing manner and it is proof of Mr. Walpole's skill as a constructive novelist that he makes us believe in this passion and suffer with the man.

It is a large canvas that the novelist sets before his readers, a canvas that covers years and varying territories and a large cast of characters; but it never seems to lose its intensity. Francis Herries is always the focal point of the book. We return to him time and again. Even the other characters who have lives of their own to live and problems of their own to solve but serve as figures for comparison beside which Francis Herries looms all the greater. Mr. Walpole's method may be described as a psychological rationalization of romantic elements. Though the color and peculiar movement and essentially unique atmosphere of an early eighteenth century England are here, the final effect is of modernity, of living figures struggling in a real world with their passions. Yes, it may be said that Mr. Walpole has enjoyed a regeneration.



HUGH WALPOLE

parate temperaments. It is not an historical novel although a vivid picture is given of besieged Carlisle during the Rebellion of 1745 when the Pretender, Charles Edward, made his hopeless gesture toward the English crown. It is mainly the story of Francis Herries. And of Mirabel. Though David plays an important part in the novel, at the end it is the obsessive love of Francis Herries for the vagrant child, Mirabel, that we remember. This enduring passion becomes a painful and thorough cleansing of the spirit for Francis Herries. The tragedy of it all is implicit in the situation that Francis, seeking all his wild life for someone worthy of worship, should find her in Mirabel only to find his worship unre-

### High Adventure

THE CRUSADES, by Harold Lamb; Doubleday, Doran, \$3.00.

Reviewed by R. L. DUFFUS.

MR. LAMB's title is misleading, since the bulk of his book deals with the first crusade. But with that remark, and with the further comment that Mr. Lamb is a little sketchy, a little too romantic, and a little too much inclined to generalize in the preliminary chapters in which he sets his stage for the great adventure, the reviewer has said all that the strictest conscience demands in the way of disparagement. Those stubbornly curious readers who insist upon turning the last stone and poking into the last crevice in order to understand the remotest causes of the crusades will not go to Mr. Lamb. The truth probably is that the crusades

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