



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

tell WHY
they are publishingTHE
Baroness

by ERNST WIECHERT



When THE BARONESS was first offered to us it had not yet become the most successful novel of the year in Germany, where almost 100,000 copies have since been sold; but it seemed to us a very unusual book, unusually done—this story of the Baroness who rides alone, ruling over her estates, and of the soldier who returns after twenty years of wandering to become her game-keeper.

The story has suspense and there are intensely dramatic situations as aristocrat and peasant face their world; but it is not this alone which so won our admiration. It is the way the story is told, with such delicacy of apprehension, so nice a feeling for words and atmosphere, with so sharp an observing eye, with such insight into people and things and so profound an understanding of the countryside. It seemed to us that here was a book which might well be called a work of art. We believe that there are many people who will remember the Baroness as long and as vividly as any fiction character of our time. \$2.50



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ernst Wiechert was born a for-ester's son in East Germany. He has written short stories, novels and plays, winning the Wilhelm Raabe Folk-Prize and the Schumann Prize. *Die Majorin*, already translated into 7 languages and here published in English as THE BARONESS, achieved for him the position he now occupies as one of the most widely read and distinguished of European novelists.

W. W. NORTON & CO.
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A Family through a Century

THE YANKEE BODLEYS. By Naomi Lane Babson. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE MORRISON

THIS admirable novel, as nearly as any good book can, should appeal to the innate appetite of most readers for universality. "The Yankee Bodleys" finds the universal where it should be found, in a very particular family living in a very particular place, Cape Ann, in Massachusetts; a family that talks Yankee idiom, thinks Yankee thoughts, marries, dies, labors, quarrels, and suffers according to the ways of a tribe and the changes and moral climate of a small region during the better part of a century. But universal the book certainly is. Loves, jealousies, pleasures, and losses; the one way of being born into life, varying only as it is piously sanctioned or piously gossiped about; the many ways of getting out, which all end in one common finality; the lively and eager sense of the future, the solitary and heartrending sense of the past; this is the stuff of which "The Yankee Bodleys" is made.

This is Mrs. Babson's first novel, and as such it is surprisingly mature. I can see only one source of misgiving about Mrs. Babson's future, and one complaint with the book, one point at which the hand of the amateur may be detected. A century of time and four or five generations of people make a good deal of material for a single volume of ordinary size. One of the Bodleys complains, at some point in the story, that the family seems to be running out. The descendants of Adelia and Horatio are not recruiting the numbers of the clan. This is too bad for the Bodleys, but good luck for the reader. I found it hard enough to keep four generations of them distinct, especially when family names, Gamaliel, Serena, Deborah, and the rest, began to reappear in successive litters of cousins. The book, after a time, threatens to become the story of generations rather than of people, of change rather than of characters.

Will Mrs. Babson have any material left to write about after this book? That is the misgiving one feels at the end of "The Yankee Bodleys." If she has, and God forbid that she shouldn't, I hope that she will again take toward her material an attitude as wise, as understanding, shall we say as reconciled, as in this book. We have nowadays writers of fiction who take every attitude toward their material except that of sympathy. They use their material to browbeat the reader into a state of indignation with society, or to work off on him some other mood of the times. Mrs. Babson has few indignations; or if she has, she conceals them. She likes her people without condoning them.



NAOMI LANE BABSON

When they act from spite, hypocrisy, or cowardice, she does not disguise their delinquency; neither does she apologize for it. Much of their lives is passed under the influence of sexual appetite or timidity or jealousy. Mrs. Babson understands them, and represents their outward behaviour and their inward impulses with honesty and with knowledge, but without display, without false glamor, without turning aside for condemnation or defense.

The sense of change in the book is, properly, a sense of loss and of tragedy, of the ultimate sorrow of things. Mrs. Babson has a gift of pathos which is quite without sentimentality; two or three scenes in "The Yankee Bodleys" will not easily give up their hold on the mind.

Theodore Morrison is an instructor in English at Harvard University, and is the author of several volumes of verse; his latest book is "Notes of Death and Life."

The Bowling Green

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this kind of essay. We adjure the various academies to restrain their natural eagerness to solicit him for speech; universities are perennially loquacious; let them buy and contemplate his book instead and give him his chance to get on with his big exciting job in Baltimore.

Part of our own job, though ill accomplished, is to keep an occasional eye upon the outputtings of the university presses. If a father wants a stimulating book for a son at college, or an alumnus cares to make a small gift to his college library, or a college president would like a fire-side companion for the scant and late hours that are his own, try *A Design for Scholarship*.

The Fatal Years

THE EVE OF 1914. By Theodor Wolff.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. \$4.50.

Reviewed by SIDNEY B. FAY

THIS is an excellent translation of "Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus," which was published a couple of years ago. Its distinguished author, now an exile from Germany, was at one time Paris correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* and then editor of that great liberal daily from 1906 to 1933. He had abundant opportunity for intimate contacts with diplomatic personages of many lands, and like a shrewd journalist absorbed a great deal of inside information. In this volume he gives a vivid, spicily written, and generally fair-minded account of the fatal events from 1911 to 1914 which culminated in the World War. It is journalism of the highest quality, very readable, rich in literary allusion, and based more on personal information, the psychology of mankind, and on memoirs than on a close study of the more prosaic and tedious mountains of diplomatic documents. One gets the feeling of being on intimate speaking terms with many of the great ones in frock coats and uniforms who were responsible for the final terrible catastrophe. As he skips lightly from the dissection of one personality to another and passes from one dramatic scene to the next, one sees the figures moving across the stage to their doom as in a Greek tragedy.

The last third of this volume, in which Editor Wolff describes his own activities and personal impressions during the weeks just before the war, constitutes the most valuable and interesting part of the book. He explains how on May 21 he was invited by Baron von Stumm of the Foreign Office to expose in the *Tageblatt* the secret of the negotiations for an Anglo-Russian naval agreement, of which the German Government had secretly learned through Baron Siebert of the Russian Embassy in London. At the moment that Austria presented her ultimatum to Serbia he was with his family at the seashore in Holland, when he was urged by the Foreign Office to return to Berlin at once. On arriving he found that his newspaper had not lived up to his editorial injunction to caution but was giving too much support to Austria. During the following hectic week he visited the Foreign Office daily, often several times a day, and analyzes vividly the psychology of the helpless over-optimism of its inmates and of the excited street crowds whom he met on his way. Especially notable is his conversation with Bethmann-Hollweg some months later in which the grief-stricken Chancellor revealed his poignant suffering at the failure of his efforts for peace.

Sidney B. Fay is professor of history at Harvard. His "Origins of the World War" is the authoritative work in its field.

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