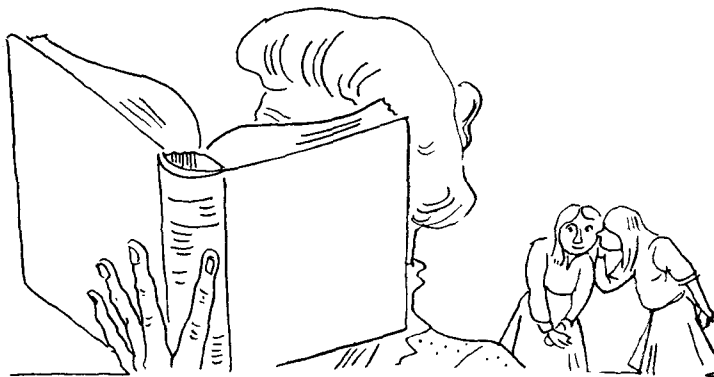


## BOOK PREVIEW\*

# Grandma Reads Thoreau

BY BERTHA DAMON



"After I had had a several years' course of Grandma, it was thought, most of all by Grandma, that I had better be put into district school again" . . . (Drawing by Julian Brazelton, from "Grandma Called It Carnal.")

"POOR Mrs. Parker," Grandma would say, gently shaking her corn popper over the yellow flame, while we children sat by listening to the popping kernels with the receptive expressions of young birds who hear wings flutter, "poor Mrs. Parker has had an extremely hard married life."

"Has she, Grandma?" I would inquire with hopeful curiosity.

"Yes, she has. I don't want to prejudice you against Deacon Parker, who is a good enough man in other ways as men go; but the truth is, Bertha"—her voice hushed—"after he was married to Mrs. Parker he was always wanting,—wanting—Cooked Meals!"

"But, Grandma . . ."

"Yes, he was. At night he'd come home after poor Mrs. Parker had been busy all day and want a Cooked Meal, and then after she'd given him one, next morning the first thing he'd want—he'd want—another. She had a dreadfully hard time with him. So disillusioning to a woman to find out that's what a man thinks marriage is."

Cooked Meals—that phrase signified to Grandma Domestic Enemy Number One. She felt that the everlasting trouble connected with them was what was keeping her North Stonefield neighbors from the real ends of life; it was the cost of providing "Cooked Meals" that enslaved the men; the toil in preparing them that kept the women forever over the stove; the difficulty in digesting them that caused dyspepsia to fret almost every household. "Cooked Meals" in North Stonefield were indeed large, elaborate—three kinds of fancy cake and two kinds of pie at once were only a start—and repetitive, for there was little difference in size and kind between breakfast, dinner, and supper. There was little time for doing anything except to get up a Cooked Meal, clean up after it, and then get up another Cooked Meal.

\* This week The Saturday Review presents excerpts from "Grandma Called It Carnal," by Bertha Damon, the story of two girls brought up in a Connecticut town at the end of the last century. "Grandma Called It Carnal" will be published by Simon & Schuster in November.

"I have traveled a good deal in Concord," Grandma read in Thoreau, "and everywhere, in shops, in offices and in fields the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. . . . The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison to those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve and had an end."

Grandma likewise traveled a good deal in North Stonefield. There she saw the remarkable and incredible scenes that Thoreau had witnessed among his townsmen. The men worked long and hard in the shops—from seven in the morning to six at night, with half an hour out for dinner; and the women worked even longer than their menfolks. The lives of almost all seemed to be a sort of tight slavery in which there was no leisure, no enjoyment, no vision. Almost all seemed to work and to get, to take care of and to hang onto, and finally to lie down in the cemetery, very tired, never having lived.

Yet all the time our village and the country round was full of dawns and sunsets and starry nights; of early springs, when in the dusk thawing hylas shrilled like sleighbells and the whip-poorwill insisted; of springs when by every gracious old house lilacs blossomed, and apple trees down the rocky hillsides; of summers when in all the millponds water lilies floated under flashing dragonflies; of autumns "bright as the sun . . . terrible as an army with banners," loud with katydid bands. But almost no one stopped drudging to look.

And there were books to be read—all the thrilling books that had happened since God dictated the Old Testament until, let us say, the last poem by Browning; but almost nothing was read except *The Farmer's Almanac*, the cooking and crocheting and fashion magazines, and the doings of the villagers and their acquaintances in the *Stonefield Guardian*. There were thoughts to be wrestled with or enjoyed, but for thoughts almost everyone was too busy: men tramping the heavy treadmill of chores and of shop work; women working over "ribbons" and Cooked Meals.

But Grandma, inspired by Henry Thoreau to reduce to an irreducible minimum all household furnishings, to renounce conventional Cooked Meals and simplify to a Spartan simplicity such vic-tuals as seemed indispensable to life, Grandma put herself and us—Alice used to say, "Thoreauly"—into the leisure class. We were never working all day long to conform to the standards of our neighbors.

After I had had a several years' course of Grandma, it was thought, most of all by Grandma, that probably I had better be put into district school again. I was then about twelve and so was considered mature enough to enter the South District School, which had two rooms, one for the primary, one for the advanced pupils. I was proudly in with the latter group.

Each morning school opened with song. Everyone took part sonorously. The song book was called *The Golden Robin*; we fluttered its pages and sang and sang. I can remember only two of the songs; even the titles of the others are completely obliterated. Both those I do recall seem an index of the temper of the North Stonefield mind. One was mournful. We loved it.

*Under the willow she's laid with care,  
(Sang a lone mother while weeping,)  
Under the willow, with golden hair,  
My little one's quietly sleeping.*

The learning we were offered in the South District School was not very modern—rather medieval. There was literature; there were also languages—of a sort. There was history that gave the impression unqualifiedly that America's wars with England and Mexico had been from start to finish absolutely glorious, victorious, righteous—God being delighted that we were so good as to take His part—and that the Civil War was the same, with superior everything and all worth-while victories on the Northern side. There were also a few scattered mathematics, here and there.

In all such nonessentials as quoting from Whittier's "Snowbound" or hazarding a guess as to what happened in 1066,

Alice and I, little neophytes of Grandma Griswold, could hold up our heads with anybody. But recesses and noon-times, being opportunities for social display, we dreaded acutely. For the other girls, little and big, had foolish and very pretty dresses—"ribbons," as Grandma scornfully summed up such vanities—while to call our garments common-sense is an understatement. Worse yet, the others all had fancy lunch baskets in which, among fringed napkins, nestled pie and layer cake, not one but several kinds of each—"fleshpots of Egypt," Grandma would say. We miserable health apostles had to expose our covered pail of milk, our bag of graham bread, our frosty apple. We tried not to expose; we ate covertly, pail under our desk. But they all saw.

It did not help me then that with Grandma I had read most of Shakespeare's plays and knew *Aquilezia Canadensis* at sight. It has not helped me to have since perhaps outdistanced many North Stonefielders in sartorial, gastronomic, or social experiences—nothing subsequent could ever heal the deep excruciating wounds I suffered in those childish humiliations in the old South District School.

School closed at four in the afternoon. Then my sister and I walked home to be with Grandma. Being with Grandma, though we did not know it, constituted our real schooling. Every night in the pleasant sitting room, where the wicked, in the form of big boys, ceased from troubling, and the weary, in the form of two little girls who had walked so far and lived so variously, could be at rest, Grandma required us to tell her what we had learned in school that day. Sometimes it was hard to make a showing. Later the candles were lighted, and the serious reading aloud began. Grandma's standards in reading were severe; she would not allow even moral content to excuse poor literary style. We had to bootleg such soft delights for children as the Rollo books, the Elsie books, and "The Wide, Wide World." Our normal diet was Isaiah, "Hamlet," Ruskin, Thoreau, and the like, not forgetting wide browsings in the dictionary (we used Webster's because he was Connecticut; Worcester's was foreign—Massachusetts); and I am persuaded that such a diet, even though at times forced, will make impossible in later life a taste for inferior style whether in movie captions or in sermons. Best of all, late afternoons, Saturdays, and Sundays, and vacation times there were long walks with Grandma and her botany. "What is a course of history," says Thoreau, "or philosophy or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen?" In that discipline Grandma schooled us.

And always there were the long talks we had with Grandma that often ended in lively argument. Grandma loved to argue—to reason, she called her part of

it. If you could hang on to the end in an argument with Grandma, you were argumentatively toughened for life. Her faculty for getting the last word amounted to genius.

One day Alice raised her hand to kill a spider that sat in a great foggy tunnel-shaped web over one of the sitting-room windows.

"No, no, Alice," said Grandma, "one should never on any account kill a spider. That is the Rule."

"I should just like to know why not," said Alice. "They might bite."

"The power to bite," said Grandma, as if He had personally informed her, "is just a part of the Creator's plan for them to kill flies."

"But spiders are so darned untidy," Alice urged, profanely.

"Also," said Grandma, entirely passing over this objectionable trait, "also, spiders are very intelligent creatures. I like to watch their bright ways."

"Huh," said Alice, "bedbugs are pretty intelligent, and no one wants to keep them to watch their bright ways."

For a second Alice thought she had Grandma floored.

"Not so intelligent," said Grandma conclusively, as if to say that were bedbugs a shade more on the intellectual side we should all cherish them in flocks and never need to study at the Sorbonne. From such one-sided encounters we used to go, endlessly pondering the question, hoping to find some better logic, some new authority for defeating Grandma.

Such questings sometimes led to embarrassment; I well remember one such occasion. Although it was several years later, and Alice and I had managed to achieve the impossible and be in a girl's boarding school, we each were still hoping to down Grandma just once. Each year a lady doctor was required to come and give a talk to all the assembled school on the Facts of Life, afterwards opening a question box and answering questions veiled in anonymity. On this day the janitor was always asked not to be in the building, not even in the basement. This lady doctor was said to be marvelously wise, very kind, very tolerant, and would tell a girl anything she had secretly been burning to know, but feared to ask elsewhere. My first year at that school, when I heard of this, I remembered my last argument about a certain matter, a question still pending, with Grandma, so I wrote out the question that had long been keeping me from sleep, printing it so that my handwriting might not give me away, and went early to hide it in the box unobserved; then waited with palpitating heart.

It turned out to be a most distressing lecture. Our sweet lady principal, who was obliged to sit on the platform in full view of everybody, hung her head. Most of the students hung theirs. One girl fainted and fell off a bench with a great startling bang, and was helped out. And

then the questions, read slowly and answered in well-considered words! Who ever would have thought that girls would want to know such things?

Finally, amidst this universal tension, this jittery suspense, my long-awaited question was reached. I held my breath; perhaps I should defeat Grandma yet. You could have heard a pin drop. My question was read out loud and clear: "Is there any real nutritive value in hominy?" For the first time the girls seemed able to raise their eyes, and they did. The lady doctor looked upset, somehow. She said she did not know.

## American Civilization

(Continued from page 4)

may not be able to find Dr. Beard's open doors at home, but we are trying. The social, economic, and cultural effects of this development are already great and are fast becoming greater.

Some observers would of course interchange the terms "victory" and "defeat" for these two great developments. Mr. Ford, Mr. Tom Girdler, and Mr. Hoover would say that the true American spirit has suffered a terrible defeat in the extension of government into new economic, social, and humanitarian spheres. They would assert that the old spirit of individualistic self-reliance should have gone marching on into the twenty-first century. Mr. Borah and other isolationists would hail the about-face toward an intense nationalism as a notable victory for the real interests and soul of America. But as to the fact of these two great changes there can be no question. The one represents a striking, and until Mr. Hoover took office, a most unexpected rebirth of the oldtime Progressive tendencies, tinged by new socialistic ideas; the other a striking and almost equally unexpected check to some of the most powerful currents of pre-Harding days—currents that seemed breaking down tariffs, fostering international ideas and cultural exchanges, and bearing the United States into the center of world affairs. So far as can now be judged, our people are committed indefinitely to a strongly socialized government, and to a staunch and self-conscious nationalism, political, economic, and even intellectual. In the perspective of the future these will probably seem two of the chief molding forces of our time.

They are not explicitly treated in Mr. Stearns's book, but inevitably they find many reflections in the thirty-six facets of his lens. The turn toward a strongly socialized civilization is at least tacitly recognized in half the chapters. E. D. Kennedy's "Industry" is largely an appeal to his readers against letting big-business leaders push us back to the old days. "They call upon economic principles which they themselves have made no longer applicable. They appeal to an industrial way of life which began to weaken in 1890 and which was almost entirely destroyed by 1929." The same position, though with less kindness toward

specific New Deal measures, is taken by John T. Flynn in his article on Business. Logan Clendening sees in the near future the creation of "a public, state-controlled medical organization open to all," alongside which private medicine will function much as the private school exists alongside the public school. H. Paul Douglass, writing upon Protestantism, describes a steady shift from the old frame of reference which assumed an aggressive capitalism and a rugged individualism. The Protestant view is changing; "positions still branded as economic radicalism have been widely advocated in the leading denominations for several decades and have had conspicuous place in official social pronouncements." The chapters on the various arts all include a similar recognition of the socializing forces at work. Sheldon Cheney, pointing out that the Federal Government in 1936 had more than five thousand artists on its payroll, adds that under this patronage our mural art for the first time "really came to flower"; he asserts that government support has "in countless ways served to revivify art interest, art education, and art showing."

In the same way, many of these thirty-six facets reflect the intense accentuation of the spirit of American nationalism. It would be hard to find a comprehensive book on American culture which makes so few references to British or Continental influences, which pays so little attention to what is happening or has recently happened overseas. Some writers, like Gerald Wendt in his article on Science, boldly assert an American leadership over all other nations. Others, like Mauritz A. Hallgren in his discussion of War, call for a recognition of isolation as our only hope of spiritual or material safety. The book as a whole supports the ideal of what may be called an introverted rather than extroverted culture. It is evident that since the Great War, and still more since the rise of the dictatorships, the idea of the self-sufficiency of American civilization has gained ground until it is generally accepted.

Upon one *continuing* tendency in American civilization this book throws much light, and very encouraging light at that. Just as it is crammed with evidence of the variety and energy of the American effort, so it holds proof in almost every chapter of an undaunted American optimism. This optimism is at bottom the sense of promise in American life which has been noted by almost every foreign writer, which gave title to Herbert Croly's book, and which shines in Franklin D. Roosevelt's latest utterances. Not so long ago half of our thirty-six writers would have struck a pose of disillusioned pessimism. That attitude is completely lacking here. It is true that some chapters are sharp to the point of acerbity. Louis R. Reid grills the radio to a crisp brown—though a few pages further on Deems Taylor pays it a glowing word of thanks for its contribution to the

popular knowledge of musical classics. Louise Bogan thinks that American poetry at the moment has dropped to a low ebb of spiritual strength, the vitalizing influence of Pound and T. S. Eliot having run out. John Chamberlain is equally harsh in his treatment of the recent novel. Business is presented by John T. Flynn as a lion eternally in the path, even now re-sharpening its claws for Uncle Sam. Its aim is to seize upon sovereignty; to see that our economic system is controlled not by all the people acting through democratic government, but by the entrepreneurs acting through some system of "self-rule." Jacques Barzun dexterously and wittily exposes our racial prejudices. Some very biting remarks may be found upon the faults of the movies, organized sports, and the popular magazines.

But that is not the prevailing temper of the volume. We get nothing of the old H. L. Mencken cynicism, the old atrabilious note, in the conclusion of Deems Taylor on music: "For the first time in history our entire people has been given access to music, regardless of financial or geographical conditions. Its response has been hearteningly cordial. . . . The growing intensity of that interest is unmistakable." Or in Gerald Wendt on the sciences: "We are, I believe, at the threshold of the age of science. . . . Opportunities for research have multiplied. . . . The flood of inventions grows year by year, and it is almost certain that the next decade will show more startling changes than the past." Or in Zechariah Chafee, Jr., on the law: "It is not unreasonable to expect that after our economic worries have lessened there will be many notable law reforms because of all the thinking that has gone on since the war. We know better where we are going and we are on the way." Or in John Cowles on newspapers: "On the whole, our papers are pretty honest and getting better each year. They are feeling an increasing sense of obligation to the public." Or in John Kieran on sports: "We have better athletes, better games, and better playing fields today, and more of them in every direction." Or in Logan Clendening on medicine: "Medicine in the United States is, at best, in the hands of men of real culture—with enlightened, advanced, humanitarian minds." Similar expressions of confident cheer might be quoted from V. F. Calverton on the Negro, and even from Joseph Wood Krutch on the commercial theater. It is all a striking reversal of the pessimism of Mr. Stearns's book of 1922. Some readers will almost accuse the volume of smugness!

The historic concomitant of American optimism and of our oldtime prosperity has been our tolerance. Was it not Santayana who said that if he met a man of unknown nationality and found him intolerant, he would at least know that he was not an American? As Mr. Stearns notes in his brief introduction, tolerance is a pervading quality of this book. Louis Stark discusses the new labor movement

with tolerance for all groups and views; George Soule lifts radicalism to a high philosophical plane; Evelyn Scott discusses "Communist Mentalities" with charitable calmness. In only one contribution, and there obviously by design of the contributor, is tolerance wanting. Father Francis Talbot in his paper on Catholicism thinks it proper to call Protestant steeples "gew-gaws," to assert that the Presidency has been withheld from Catholics by "undemocratic bigotry," to repeat that Catholicism "is the single religion founded by Jesus Christ," to declare that non-Catholics regard sex as merely "something more serious than a sneeze," to pronounce the limitation of families "decivilizing," and to fling at the old time cinema the pleasant epithet "undoubtedly syphilitic." The good father evidently wishes to be irritating, and is only rather absurd. But the volume as a whole is a model of how discussion should be conducted. The papers on the arts—for example, Sheldon Cheney on painting and sculpture, and Douglas Haskell on architecture—are free from any unfair or rasping dogmatism.

We have said that the book is journalism, but some of it is very good journalism indeed. The thirty-five pages on recent interpretations of the law by Zechariah Chafee, Jr., alone come near being worth the price of the volume. Several essays, like R. L. Duffus's charmingly reminiscential paper on the small town, have high literary quality. At the close H. Valle furnishes a stimulatingly frank Mexican view of our culture, which impresses him as plutocratic, restless, shallow, and inartistic; while Sir Willmott Lewis contributes a soothingly tactful tribute to our achievements and virtues. The good features of the work more than offset the weak, perverse, and dull contributions. And if the book as a whole is not profound, not very perceptive, and not at all unified, a reading of it nevertheless proves exhilarating as well as informative. In these 600 pages pulse the unquenchable vitality of the country, its still youthful eagerness and zest, and its unconquerable faith in its own future; the chapters exhale its broad charity and its idealism.

It is well that this is so; it is well that American civilization retains these qualities. The gloom that has settled over Europe and Asia, with their once proud and powerful cultures, may be only transient; but countless despairing intellectuals, from the Ebro to the Caucasus, from Rome to Peking, look now to the United States as the hope of the future. Whitman's lines have today a sadder eloquence than he could ever have anticipated when he wrote them:

Have the older races halted?  
Do they droop and end their lesson,  
wearied, over there beyond the seas?  
We take up the task eternal, and the  
burden, and the lesson,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Allan Nevins, professor of history at Columbia, has twice won the Pulitzer Prize for biography.

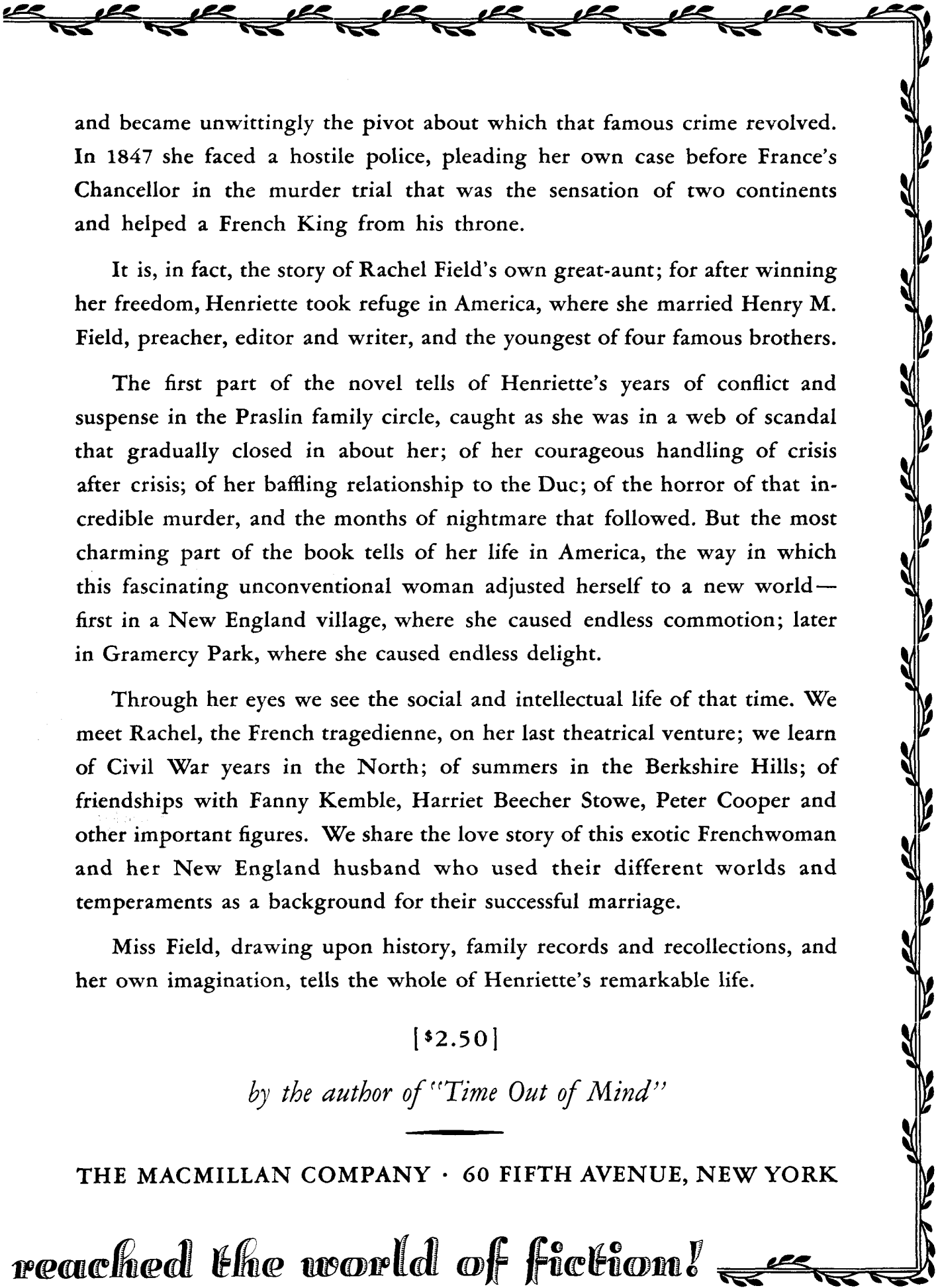




*Henriette*  
*of*  
ALL THIS, AND HEAVEN TOO  
BY RACHEL FIELD

This novel, as breath-taking a story as ever reached the world of fiction, is based on truth that is stranger than fiction. It combines the drama of one of the most notorious murder cases in France with a period of American history covering the New England and New York of 1850 to 1875. Henriette Deluzy-Desportes, a woman of rare gifts, fortitude and magnetism, lived as governess in the ill-fated household of the Duc and Duchesse de Praslin,

*as breath-taking a story as ever*



and became unwittingly the pivot about which that famous crime revolved. In 1847 she faced a hostile police, pleading her own case before France's Chancellor in the murder trial that was the sensation of two continents and helped a French King from his throne.

It is, in fact, the story of Rachel Field's own great-aunt; for after winning her freedom, Henriette took refuge in America, where she married Henry M. Field, preacher, editor and writer, and the youngest of four famous brothers.

The first part of the novel tells of Henriette's years of conflict and suspense in the Praslin family circle, caught as she was in a web of scandal that gradually closed in about her; of her courageous handling of crisis after crisis; of her baffling relationship to the Duc; of the horror of that incredible murder, and the months of nightmare that followed. But the most charming part of the book tells of her life in America, the way in which this fascinating unconventional woman adjusted herself to a new world—first in a New England village, where she caused endless commotion; later in Gramercy Park, where she caused endless delight.

Through her eyes we see the social and intellectual life of that time. We meet Rachel, the French tragedienne, on her last theatrical venture; we learn of Civil War years in the North; of summers in the Berkshire Hills; of friendships with Fanny Kemble, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Peter Cooper and other important figures. We share the love story of this exotic Frenchwoman and her New England husband who used their different worlds and temperaments as a background for their successful marriage.

Miss Field, drawing upon history, family records and recollections, and her own imagination, tells the whole of Henriette's remarkable life.

[\$2.50]

*by the author of "Time Out of Mind"*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY · 60 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

*reached the world of fiction!*

# Two Views of History

**A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.**  
By A. L. Morton. New York: Random House. 1938. \$3.

**THE RISE OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION.** By Charles Seignobos. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. \$4.50.

Reviewed by JOSEPH R. STRAYER

THESE two books offer an interesting contrast in the technique of historical writing. Both are written for lay readers. Both cover the period from the decline of the cave man to the rise of Hitler. Both emphasize social and economic developments rather than the details of political history, and give special attention to the life of the great masses of the population. Yet with all these points of resemblance the two books, published within a week of each other, might have appeared fifty years apart.

Mr. Morton writes from a frankly Marxist viewpoint while Professor Seignobos, less obtrusively, presents the liberal bourgeois point of view. Yet this is not the most striking difference between the two. Their concepts of the functions of a historian differ even more widely than their political and economic beliefs. Mr. Morton feels that it is his duty to furnish a plot for the story which he tells. Causal relationships must be shown and motives must be explained even if the resulting lack of space forces the omission of some of the facts. Professor Seignobos, while he has abandoned the nineteenth century belief that history is past politics, still clings to the nineteenth century creed of "scientific history." The facts are to be presented clearly and concisely, and the reader is to be left to draw his own conclusions.

Mr. Morton's method has the advantage of making his book very readable. Everything is explained; everything is easy to understand; there are no unsolved problems left dangling in the air. His special interest in the problems of the laboring class lead him to include a great deal of material not ordinarily presented in a work of this size. Everything, of course, is interpreted in terms of class interests and class struggles, and other influences, especially that of the Church, are minimized. Yet until the modern period is reached, there is no serious distortion of the facts. Mr. Morton is perfectly neutral in the struggles between the upper classes. He is able to see the merits and defects of each side: witness his excellent treatment of the English Civil War. But as soon as the class struggle becomes a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, Mr. Morton's sympathies are involved and he is no longer capable of making completely rational judgments. The bourgeoisie are made not only as wicked as Satan, which is conceivable, but as clever as Satan, which is not. No credit is given them for good intentions; every reform is simply a mask which hides a more refined type of exploitation. Every credit is given them for the most amazing foresight in guarding their own interests; a quality which most observers have not found conspicuous in recent years. Thus the abolition of

the slave trade was really a good stroke of business because it eventually opened up the interior of Africa for exploitation. Except for this exaggerated respect for bourgeois cleverness, Mr. Morton has written an interesting and often stimulating interpretation of English history.

The technique used by Professor Seignobos results in a book which gives more information and less excitement. It is, of course, doubtful if any historian can completely conceal his own opinions. Thus it is evident that Professor Seignobos detests Hitler's racial theories, has little sympathy for the Church, and, in common with most men of his generation, feels a great nostalgia for the pre-war period when Europe seemed to be creating a rational democratic society. Yet while the author's opinions appear from time to time, he has not allowed them to impose a pattern on the materials which he has assembled. The facts are left to speak for themselves. Unfortunately, if historical facts ever do speak for themselves, they can do it only when they have room to expand and to group themselves naturally. The book

suffers from compression and from excessive subdivision. Facts lose their personality and become lifeless. Fascism is discussed without naming Hitler or Mussolini; the origins of the World War are dealt with in three sentences. European history is divided into seventeen periods, and each period is further divided into sections on politics, economics, society, religion, and the arts and sciences. Causal connections between political and economic events, between social and intellectual developments are not made clear. Most of the sections on politics are mere catalogues of events, described so briefly that they would mean little to a reader who was not already acquainted with them. The sections on social and economic life are far better and contain most of the flashes of interpretation which make the book worth reading. As a whole, however, the work requires more ability in historical synthesis than the average lay reader is apt to possess. Professor Seignobos, with his great learning and wide experience, is eminently qualified to aid us in trying to evaluate the past experiences of the European peoples. Many readers will feel that he might have given more help in this difficult task.

Joseph R. Strayer is associate professor of history at Princeton.

## Factions in the C. I. O.

**THE STORY OF THE C. I. O.** By Benjamin Stolberg. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. \$2.

Reviewed by PAUL H. DOUGLAS

THIS is the fourth book which has been published during the last year on the history of the C. I. O. Unlike the works by Brooks and Walsh and Levinson, which confined themselves primarily to the forces which created the C. I. O. and its dealings with employers and the A. F. of L., Mr. Stolberg centers his attention on the intra-union politics and factionalism within the new organizations. Mr. Stolberg believes that the most disruptive forces in the C. I. O. are the Stalinists, whom he accuses of controlling some of the smaller unions and of having weakened the United Automobile Workers. He charges the Stalinists with having stimulated the long series of unauthorized stoppages in 1937 in the General Motors and Chrysler plants which followed the signing of the agreement with these companies. The purpose of all this, Mr. Stolberg alleges, was to make the position of President Homer Martin untenable, so that the official communists might replace him with a pliant follower of the party line. The author is also very bitter against Harry Bridges, whom he accuses of playing the direct communist game in his organizing work on the West coast.

It is difficult to get at the truth of all these assertions. It is probably true that some communists have wormed themselves into the lower levels of the C. I. O. leadership because of the initial short-handedness of Messrs. Lewis and Murray in not having enough trained organizers for the huge job which they undertook.

It is also probably true that the Stalinists use rough tactics against their opponents. But it would seem a gross exaggeration to charge that the vast majority of the wildcat strikes were communist stimulated. On the contrary, such guerilla tactics are an almost inevitable aftermath of the long period of constant strife which existed before union recognition was won. The men in such a situation distrust the foremen and managers, and the latter do not like to yield any of their former powers. If a speedy adjustment of grievances is not provided—and it was not furnished in the automobile industry—it is but natural, though lamentable, that the rank and file in many instances should try to use their new-found weapon. Such, for example, was the experience of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in the early days which followed their winning the Chicago market.

Similarly, while I have no doubt that Homer Martin is a sincere and honest progressive, the fact that such level-headed leaders as Messrs. Murray and Hillman were recently compelled to override him is surely an indication that all the right cannot be on his side.

Many may feel that Mr. Stolberg is continuing a policy of attacking, under the guise of radicalism, other radicals and even progressives, for the delectation of conservatives. It is probable, however, that it is better to have such issues brought out into the open, since sunlight is a powerful disinfectant. But one's confidence in Mr. Stolberg's poise is weakened by the spirit of misanthropic sadism with which he ridicules such essentially decent men as John Brophy, Walter Reuther, Norman Thomas, and Heywood Broun.