



Laura Z. Hobson

Modern Mixture

THE TRESPASSERS. By Laura Z. Hobson. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1943. 410 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM BATES

IT is strange, but desperately appropriate in these bitter days, to open a novel upon no heroine, no hero, and no peculiar personal problem. To find rather upon the beginning pages the sweep of continental movement, peoples—not people—on the march—a march not made voluntarily towards some desired goal but forced on before brutality, disaster, and extinction. This novel starts clearly with the broader theme. The story, intense, embattled, and sharply individualized, is swept forward on the implacable wave of the present.

Vera Marriner resents being called a "career woman" and although she has risen to the top of her profession she is right in her objection because she has never surrendered her whole self to her work. She is lovely to look at, smart, and finished with gloss of the cover girl but with personality and character to take the curse off that; she is shrewd and firm in business but generous, extravagant, and altruistic outside it. She illogically demands a logical righting of wrongs in a world given over to irrationality.

And Jasper Crown! Here is a character destined for discussion, dissension, and disbelief. No sooner will A contend that a man of such vehemence, contradiction, power, and weakness could never actually exist, than B will retort that he knows Jasper Crown in real life,—he is so-and-so. Two or three men in public life are sure to be taken as the prototypes of this radio tycoon who succeeds in bringing the arc of the world within his influence in a vain

effort to forget that whatever else he can do the simple, natural desire for a son, for a continuance of himself in this tangible form cannot be realized.

This portrait of a present-day, up-to-the-very minute, business man, is one of the most interesting aspects of the novel. Compare him with Dreiser's Titan, with Lewis's Babbitt. How much of the differences are accounted for by Mrs. Hobson's dexterous psycho-analyzing? How much by the woman's point of view? And how much by the strange commodity which Jasper handles (opinion and propaganda)? The driving power which carries him so precariously far derives from his neurotic urge to compensate for his sterility.

Jasper and Vera are on this side of the Atlantic destroying themselves in their desperate attempts at adjustment; on the other side Franz Vederle waits through dangerous and slow-footed months for his release from Nazi-dominated Europe. In this section Mrs. Hobson leads us through very different personality paths. Vederle himself is a Viennese psychiatrist capable of viewing the cataclysm about him with dispassion and pity, but his wife is broken on the wheel of uncertainty, the overt acceptance of the necessity for flight from the brutalized homeland not able to conquer the deep, hidden fear of the new and strange. Throughout the book Vederle and Vera are moving towards each other without being aware of it. By chance she has signed the papers necessary to start the mechanism for his emigration. As difficulties and red tape mount to hinder him the correspondence between the two develops and takes on personal color, and after her breakdown following the shock of the tragic parting with Crown she goes to Europe and stays with the Vederles. As ending, the two return to America with hope ahead and perhaps, with America in the war at last, hope too for all those who have been made into trespassers by the old order.

Mrs. Hobson has not been able to merge her two themes entirely smoothly. The story of the individuals and the saga of the migrant exiles,—the two do not quite meet in the end. But the experiment is interesting in itself and gratifying in bringing to the novel a breadth and depth so often lacking in entertainment fiction. And "The Trespassers" is entertaining. One criticism might be that it is occasionally a little too facile in its event-packed unfolding, its slick dialogue, its smart magazine type of detail. But if readers, like flies, are more addicted to honey than vinegar than Laura Hobson is justified in her use of enticement, for hers is a novel that deserves readers. It has something to say and says it with both sincerity and vigor.



—C. Edith Glogau, Vienna
Phyllis Bottome

Key to Endurance

SURVIVAL. By Phyllis Bottome. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1943. 339 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

PHYLLIS BOTTOME here again uses her training in dynamic psychology and her first-hand experience with the "gemütlich" Viennese as the background of her latest novel. I think in this one she wants to say that the only truth that can really set you free and help you endure these horrifying years is the inner truth of personality to which modern psychology offers the key.

The story is told in the form of a journal recorded by thirty-four-year-old Rudolph von Rittenhaus, a Viennese psychiatrist, the orphaned son of an Austrian general and a beautiful Jewish actress, the rejected of his wife and small son. When the story opens he is a penniless, heartsick refugee, a "ghost" as he calls himself, although an honored guest of a charming Oxford family whom he had known in happier days. Stringent medical rulings deny him the right to practise his profession in England. He wins some happiness by establishing a nursery school. Then comes the declaration of war and the bombing of the Island. The wealthy brother of his host turns his great house ten miles from Plymouth, into a hospital and installs Rudi at its head. Here he becomes involved with numerous characters, his special concern being the unhappy and neurotic wife of his employer, their repressed young daughter, and the too unrepressed American wife of the rector. All three women, as well as the two husbands and a son, suffer from sex conflicts. Rudi recognizes the origin of their unhappiness, that their behavior reac-

tions reflect their individual temperaments and early training and does his best to help them. But it is not until Plymouth is bombed and tragedy comes to them all that they realize the truth of his teachings and find the courage to remake their lives.

There are interesting high lights in this story; Rudi's bewilderment by the English character and his efforts to understand the blindness to danger, the casual detachment of their personal relations; the contrast of the articulate, emotion-embracing Viennese to the inarticulate emotion-repelling Englishman; the reactions of these English to the catastrophe of Plymouth. All of this and more is well done. Yet it is unlikely that "Survival" will add to Mrs. Bottome's stature as a novelist. That it is not a better novel is, I think, because in her desire to expound the teachings of the Adler psychology, to show their bearing on the mental disruptions of war, she tends to subordinate her characters to her "message." Thus she seems to have selected them almost as a psychologist might cast about among his case histories for illustrations of the main points of his "paper," to emphasize the variety of behavior and health reactions that may arise from warring forces below the level of consciousness. But all this must be explained to the audience, and Rudi is always ready to expound. We do not question the soundness of his psychology—although he does seem almost too wise and noble at thirty-four even for a famous psychiatrist—but that he should report verbatim all of his preachments in his journal strains our credulity, and even pleas for love and tolerance grow boring when they threaten the cohesion of the novel and the tension of our interest in its drama.

This is not to say that "Survival" is a dull book. It is unlikely that this author could write a really dull story. And after all in these jittery days when so little fiction can hope to have the significance we used to give it, who can blame an author if the message of her novel is more important to her than its artistry?

**SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTICS (No. 494)**

STEPHEN V. BENÉT:
WESTERN STAR

And the years pass by and are gone. . . .

If this song is

Crooked as rivers, rough as the mountain range

And many-tongued and a wanderer to the end,

It must be so, . . .

It follows the ways and the roads and the wanderings,

Not one man's fate.



He has a promotion to report. Or a week-end leave coming up. Or it's his mother's birthday.

Evening is about the only time he's free to call and it's important to him.

Will you do your best to avoid Long Distance calls after 7 at night, for the sake of millions of Joes — and Josephines? They'll appreciate it.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM



ONE OF THE weirdest collections of books I ever have seen in a single bookcase is on daily exhibition in the waiting room of my favorite dentist. His defiant claim that he never bought one of the books, and that all of them were left there over the years, possibly deliberately, by his patients, is substantiated by a casual inspection of the titles. The other morning I calmed my nerves, agitated by the expectation of a session of excavation and drilling, by poring over a timely little volume entitled "Inside the German Empire in 1916," by Herbert Bayard Swope, whose foreword ended with: "My especial thanks are due to Lewis Stiles Gannett for his assistance and revision of the manuscript." At least, I now knew what the "S" in Lewis's name stood for! Then my eye lit on a battered copy of the late Mr. Woolcott's "While Rome Burns." Flipping idly through its pages, I came upon a memorandum of his trip to Japan in the early 30's. Mr. Woolcott seemed to be particularly taken by the little Japs—their neatness and love of flowers, "the sweet hum of their voices, and the occasional deep boom of a vast gong at a temple on a hill." The last two paragraphs of the piece I copied on the back of a circular announcing the new War Bond drive:

Which leaves only one topic that I have not touched upon—to wit: our future war with Japan about which, from time to time, I have heard the wiseacres talking ever since I can remember. More often of late, than for some years past. Heaven knows, I heard enough about it over there, not from the Japanese, of course, but in the bar at the Peking Club, or in the veranda café of some Pacific liner, or aboard some small craft fogbound in the Yellow Sea. I heard it talked and talked about among the officers of our own Army and Navy who are stationed in the Far East and have a lot of time on their hands. I heard how many years a really satisfactory war would take, how we would have to begin by frankly yielding up the Philippines and then spend two years gathering forces for recapturing them. And so forth, and so forth. Oh, I heard much of the kind of thinking which made the last war come true.

Most of the talk was ever so cheerful, but war is not my trade and I am afraid I kept foreseeing this one in terms of youngsters now oblivious at school and of homes on midland farms waiting every day for letters that will never come. I only hope that if ever there is such a war and we win it, we shall re-

member that we won it because we are larger, richer, and more numerous, and therefore not feel too proud about it. For I have seen just enough of Japan and the Japanese to suspect that such a victory might be only another of history's insensitive triumphs of quantity over quality. . .

Bear in mind, if you please, that Alexander Woolcott was an ardent and uncompromising lover of democracy. He loathed fascism and was seized with his fatal stroke, in fact, while he was in the midst of a violent denunciation of Nazi Germany over the radio. The above paragraphs are reprinted as a reminder of how completely the wily Japs hoodwinked the best of us during the days when we had lulled ourselves into the belief that there would be no more wars in our lifetime at least. . . . Years later, the authors of several books about the invasion of China made even more glaring miscalculations. Jimmie Young's stories of how the Chinese stole entire railroad trains from under the noses of their enemies, and how Jap bombers and artillerymen missed targets by a mile or more, gave readers the precise impression of utter inefficiency that the Nips intended them to do. Japan put on a great show for us. We fell for it like a ton of bricks. . . .

TWO REALLY illuminating books on China have just hit the bookstalls: Agnes Smedley's "Battle Hymn of China" (Knopf), and "A China Handbook, 1937-1943," a thousand-page volume prepared by the Chinese Ministry of Information and published by Macmillan. . . . Macmillan also publishes Bernard Newman's "The New Europe," which is a study of the perplexing problems confronting post-war map-makers. Newman resuscitates the venerable tale of the professor at a cosmopolitan university who set his class to writing a thesis on the general subject of "The Elephant." The Englishman devoted his essay to "The Elephant and How to Hunt Him." The Frenchman considered "The Strange Love Life of the Elephant." The German entitled his tract "Are Elephants Aryan—and Can They Be Eaten?" The Russian produced "The Elephant—Does It Exist?" The Pole, whose piece was as long as all the others put together, wrote on "The Elephant and the Polish Question." . . . Appleton-Century threaten to name Lucius Beebe's forthcoming

tome on the night life of America "Snoot If You Must," but they still have time to change their minds. . . .

WILBUR CROSS'S autobiography, "Connecticut Yankee," will be a "must" book for anybody interested in New England. There will be a few hundred limited, autographed copies at \$7.50, as well as the regular trade edition. . . . Anton C. Pegis, Professor of Philosophy at Fordham, has completed a two-volume edition in English of "The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas," which will include the first part of the "Summa Theologica," "Contra Gentiles," and the shorter essays. It will be published in early Spring at six dollars a set. The Holliday Bookshop Bulletin comments: "If there was ever a time during the last seven hundred years when the works of Aquinas could be studied with the most profit by believer and sceptic alike, that time is now." . . . Professor Pegis chanced to visit the Random House offices at the same time as Richard McKeon, Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Chicago, and editor of "The Basic Works of Aristotle." "This joint is beginning to resemble a philosophers' convention," I grumbled. "Not with you around, it isn't," spoke up the good-hearted Dean. I retired in a huff, which happened to be at hand. . . . October 6th is publication date for Mary O'Hara's "Thunderhead," a sequel to her deservedly popular "My Friend Flicka." Percy Loring, sales manager of Lippincott, Miss O'Hara's publisher, states modestly, "Black Beauty" sold only about a million copies—but "Thunderhead" is a horse of a different color!" . . . If frenzied bulletins from Little, Brown publicity headquarters are any criterion, a new edition of John Marquand's vastly entertaining "So Little Time" is going on press every fifteen minutes. . . .

OUR OWN HENRY SEIDEL CANBY, biographer of Thoreau, will have a life of Walt Whitman on the Houghton Mifflin list this Fall. The first draft of the manuscript had been completed when out of the blue appeared what looked to be a rich new source of information. A peppery maiden lady in Cold Spring Harbor, who claimed to be Walt Whitman's cousin, began writing Mr. Canby long letters in a quavery and scarcely legible hand. The correspondence was growing really spirited when Clip Boutell, *New York Post* columnist, stumbled upon irrefutable evidence that the maiden lady was in reality a literary prankster named Christopher Morley. Chris, no mean student of Whitman himself, had given Mr. Canby some real nuggets for his book, so