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Dear Mr. Hart
I am
a true friend.
Sincerely,
1919

Photograph by Robert H. Davis

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER
THE MAN AND HIS BOOKS

BY LLEWELLYN JONES
*Literary Editor of The Chicago
Evening Post*



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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

THE salient fact about Joseph Hergesheimer is that he cannot be predicted. While his fellow American novelists — and the majority of his English fellows, too — run in orderly grooves, make social studies of labour, the church, or what not, Mr. Hergesheimer, intent only upon those passions and colours that appeal to the heart and that may be found everywhere, wanders where he lists. He refuses to impoverish the soil of any one field of human life by too continuous planting.

And perhaps that fact is not unconnected with the fact that Mr. Hergesheimer is the only contemporary American novelist who is treated by English critics without their two most usual manners toward American novelists: patronage or a very curt nod in passing. From Edmund Gosse down the English critics find him important as well as exciting: they forget that he is a foreigner.

Mr. Hergesheimer's position as the foremost American novelist has been gained, against the handicap of

tragically preoccupied times, since the middle of 1914 when his first novel, "The Lay Anthony," was published. It has been gained solely through the brilliance and worth of his work, without any claque, without adventitious publicity, without the running start of being in any way "in the game."

"The Lay Anthony" was published in August, 1914, and the present writer was the first, if not the only commentator on that book who prophesied by its lights of the future of its author. And of Mr. Hergesheimer prophecy is still in order: is in fact outstripped by each of his succeeding productions. And as he has still to reach the peak of his power so he has still to reach his ultimate public: for there is yet a part of the American reading audience that is not aware that Mr. Hergesheimer is our most brilliant fiction writer.

The first demand that the larger public makes upon a novelist is that his personal life shall be as romantic as his novels. Fortunately Mr. Hergesheimer can meet that demand — certainly any one who can recognize romance when he sees it will recognize it in Mr. Hergesheimer's life. Descended from an old Pennsylvania Dutch family, brought up in a Presbyterian home, he spent a boyhood in which ill health justified a large measure of idleness, read the paper-bound love stories to which his mother used to subscribe, later read "Ouida," made a very poor showing at school, and at seventeen entered the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts to study painting — but did not study it too persistently.

At twenty-one he was left some money and, instead of investing it, went to Italy. He lived in Venice until

his funds were gone, and then he had to come home. In a humorously detached account of his career which he contributed to *The Bookman* Mr. Hergesheimer has told us that he then began to keep "low company" and late hours — or early ones, coming home, he confesses, "in the cadaverous trolley cars of dawn." He suddenly tired of the scenes which this sort of life presented, and determined upon a change — a walking tour.

At its outset he met a woman novelist who requested his aid in her proof reading. His dislike for the fiction to which he was thus introduced eventuated in his determination to write fiction himself. His first attempt was a failure, but he had found what he wanted to do, and set about doing it in earnest. Retiring with a dilapidated typewriter and reams of paper to a village in the Virginia mountains, he wrote and rewrote one story from start to finish twenty times; part of it a hundred times. Fourteen years later, having worked incessantly in the interval, he sold his first tale. Since then he has not looked back. For some years he and his wife have lived in an old stone house in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His home overlooks beautiful country. There are Airedales on his lawn and rockbass not too far distant.

To have achieved such a life as that is romantic, and Mr. Hergesheimer's way of admitting it is to say to interviewers that "there, in common with most creative writers driven either by exterior fact or inner necessity, continuously at their labour, his life and work are singularly without romantic details."

Undoubtedly the length of his self-imposed probation

and the three years of comparative neglect before the public awakened to find him already one of the biggest figures in the literary landscape was directly due to his own artistic sincerity. As from boyhood he had insisted upon doing what he wanted to do, and nothing else, so in his writing he utterly ignored the market. He was an artist first, and a tradesman not at all. In a letter he even speaks with an accent almost of surprise that one publication takes from him stories which he has written in accordance with his own feelings and standards of excellence.

And the essential romance of his life must be that doing what he willed, following his own artistic inclinations, he has come out head and shoulders above any of those writers who anxiously follow the market—the sex market or the ethics market—who set up as ethical teachers or exploit “the masses” in books whose subjects condemn their writing to be done on sand.

HIS SUBJECTS

Dwelling, for the most part, on the American scene, Mr. Hergesheimer has written of the past of this country with a glowing beauty, a wealth of colour that makes a picture fresh or even totally new to most of us. With characteristic ingratitude, or perhaps more nearly, with characteristic carelessness and one-sidedness we have accused him of writing “costume novels.” Well, if they were only that they would be the best of their kind. Never have the Colonial days of Pennsylvania, the “train-brigade” and early industrial days of America and the later, more perturbed and introspective days beginning

with the eighties been more livingly pictured than by Mr. Hergesheimer in "The Three Black Pennys." Never was Salem more gloriously vibrant and alive in reality than it is in the magic reflection of it in "Java Head." And the same magic that gleams through these books makes vivid, too, the small town life in which Tony Ball, the "Lay Anthony," passed his days. It colours the Virginia highlands which are the background of "Mountain Blood" and of two of the seven tales characterized by and entitled "The Happy End."

It is only when one considers his stories one after the other that one realizes what an extraordinarily large part of the total American scene Mr. Hergesheimer has put into his novels. From the days when Pennsylvania was a province, when the real capital of America was still London, until the America of the Great War, and from Salem to San Francisco Mr. Hergesheimer has painted aspect after aspect of our national life. And his magic, the vividness of these pictures is gained by the most scrupulous writing and the most patient research. If the reader of "Java Head" feels, at the end, not that he has read about old Salem but that he has lived there, if the odour of Chinese cargoes almost lingers in his physical nostrils and if his eye is filled with peacock blue and other royal colours and dazzled with the reflections of silk, it is because Mr. Hergesheimer is both a stylist who knows his business and a historian who knows his facts. Before he wrote about Salem, he has told the readers of *The Bookman*, he read over ninety-five books on the history of the part. Lest the reader think the labour of reading those books more germane to a treatise than

to magic let him hearken to a critic of Mr. Hergesheimer (Mr. H. W. Boynton) writing in the same publication:

“As for his knowledge of place, there we come to a bit of mystery. He could solve it in a word, but I don't find that he has, thus far. His saturation with the atmosphere of the Pennsylvania of the early ‘iron-masters’ had a plain enough basis in his birth there and descent from a foundryman. But how does he come to know Salem, in Massachusetts, with its altogether different stock, and traditions, and colour of the past? His bibliography of ninety-five titles (which the editor of *The Bookman* lacked courage, or faith, to print in as a whole) explains his information; but what inner sympathy enabled him to distil a human story out of it?”

That is just the point. Mr. Hergesheimer's atmosphere is always rich and every person and object in it is always firmly planted, well drawn, and in the round — you never feel that his characters are representations, they have corporeal reality. That is the part of his work, perhaps, which has excited most wonder. But it is the part only. His real secret, as Mr. Boynton says, is in his sympathy: he can create real people.

And the most salient characteristic of all Mr. Hergesheimer's people is that they are alive and strongly in reaction against their surroundings. The vividness of their costumes and the colour of their backgrounds are matched by the fire and the vividness within. More than the characters of any other American novelist they live and are conscious of living, pressing hard against their fate whether it be tragic or joyful. Although a book of his shorter stories is called “The Happy End” Mr.





MR. HERGESHEIMER'S HOME—THE DOWER HOUSE

Hergesheimer has never indulged in a conventionally happy ending. But even where his endings are tragic they are happy in that they make us sympathize with a soul which has tasted every last individual possibility implicit in its fate. And, in his first book, "The Lay Anthony," and returning in a measure in the experiences of Gerrit Ammidon's high caste Chinese wife marooned in Salem, and more explicitly in "Linda Condon," there is the insistence, an insistence so keen as to force the reader into assuming it to be a very personal expression of the author's intuition, that the self-conscious individual can at once be mixed up in the wildest adventures or in the most hopeless mundane tangle, and yet be thousands of miles away from it all, so that an apparently shiftless but cheerful and mundane-minded youth like the Lay Anthony can, at need, walk right through the walls of life, throw his body recklessly away at the bidding of his soul.

THE LAY ANTHONY

But enough of general statements. Let us look at the books themselves. "The Lay Anthony," the first of Mr. Hergesheimer's books, has recently been revised and republished, and at that time one American newspaper reviewer expressed a liking for it as great as his liking for any of the author's subsequent work. On the other hand I have heard one reader condemn the book as sentimental, but his judgment is based, undoubtedly, on a misunderstanding of the author's intentions. The story concerns a youth who is, in the quite technical sense of that term, "pure," and who falls in love with a girl in

that headstrong, heart-strong and yet non-sensual way that is actually the most typical form of the first love of those whose spirits are fine—even though such an experience as that is the only touchstone for a fineness which otherwise is dumb, overlaid by vulgarity of education, of surroundings, of acquired conduct.

This was the case of Tony Ball. He could play wonderful baseball, he could run an automobile and could go through rather disastrous motions that were intended to repair automobiles, but he could not talk, his dancing was a purgatory for all concerned as participants or spectators, and he associated with the riff-raff of the town when he was not cleansing himself, unknowingly, from their contacts by long nights spent in the open country alone. Such a youth, with the white seed of nobility, of eventual spiritual flowering, hidden unsuspected under the grimmest of coatings, is more typical of youth in general than youth in general permits us to suspect. Tony falls in love in the mediaeval way, in the way of Dante and Petrarch, and his creator unfolds a tale in which contemporary American life in all its materialism and disillusionment and moral poverty on the one hand, and this love on the other hand, walk side by side, intertwine in a pattern of circumstance, but never mingle. And the book ends in melodrama—but the melodrama is only a noisy background for the silent-ness and steadfastness of Tony's love.

Yes, upon going back again to that tale I do not wonder that some readers will always give it its niche apart. For even if there be things in it which the older Mr. Hergesheimer or his critics may regard as blemishes there

is in it also that glow and that exaltation that are in a young author's first book—they are there as characteristically and by as divine a right as they are in a lad's first love.

MOUNTAIN BLOOD

Mr. Hergesheimer's next novel, "Mountain Blood," was probably the first realistic story ever written about that paradise of the romanticists, the Virginia mountain regions. Superficially it differs altogether from "The Lay Anthony." For the perhaps esoteric interest of the first book we have a more general appeal, moral rather than spiritual. Whereas Tony Ball lived an experience that was beyond time and space, Gordon Makimmon, the middle-aged stage driver between Stenton and his native village of Greenstream, high in the mountains, lives a life that is utterly cramped by limitations as galling and immovable as the mountains that surround his home. The village is dominated by two men, Simmons, a storekeeper, and Pompey Hollidew, a "capitalist," who squeeze the surrounding country dry. Loans at iniquitous interests, mortgages, debt-traps into which the unsophisticated mountaineers are led like sheep are their technique. Gordon owns a "place" upon which he lives with his sister Clare, who is dying of consumption. Thinking only of her comfort and pleasure he has bought things from Simmons, had them charged, and paid a little on account when he thought of it. On an evening Lettice Hollidew is coming home from her term at school, and Buckley Simmons, the storekeeper's son, is also a passenger. Gordon Makimmon punishes Buck-

ley for an insult to the girl, and as a result gains her friendship but is called by Simmons to pay his full account — which call is simply the preliminary to selling them out. Rather than pay even what he can manage Gordon uses the money in a vain endeavour to save his sister's life, fails, and is sold out:

“The seeds of revolt, of instability, which Clare and a measure of worldly position, of pressure, had held in abeyance, germinated in his disorganized mind, his bitter sense of injustice and injury. He hardened, grew defiant . . . the strain of lawlessness brought so many years before from warring Scotch highlands rose bright and troublesome in him.”

It is the harvest of that germination that is told in “Mountain Blood.” With neither the intellectual capacity rightly to orient himself to the situation nor further reason for self-restraint, all Makimmon's forces are turned to ways which eventuate in evil.

Perhaps the real triumph of the story is Mr. Hergesheimer's discovery that a mountain village is not necessarily the abode of people who in stature or emotions are “villagers.” Not only do we see in Makimmon a man whose forces are too great for his surroundings, who is bound to do evil by the very fact that he lives and must collide with others, but in Meta Beggs, the school teacher who hates the country, we have a veridical and well drawn woman of the kind that usually wreak their havoc in large cities.

“Meta Beggs was the mask, smooth and sterile, of the hunger for adornment, for gold bands and jewels and perfume, for goffered linen, and draperies of silk and

scarlet. She was the naked idler stained with antimony in the clay courts of Sumeria; the Paphian with painted feet loitering on the roofs of Memphis while the blocks of red sandstone floated sluggishly down the Nile for the pyramid of Khufu the King; she was the flushed voluptuousness relaxed in the scented spray of pagan baths; the woman with white-piled and powdered hair in a gold shift of Louis XIV; the prostitute with a pinched waist and great flowing sleeves of the Maison Dorée. She was as old as the first vice, as the first lust budding like a black blossom in the morbidity of men successful, satiated.

“ But Lettice was older.”

Lettice, Gordon had married for her money, and it is through Meta Beggs that Lettice is destroyed. However Mr. Hergesheimer's tragedy is much more subtly wrought than anything in the shape of a successful affair between Gordon and Meta. The book ends not with Lettice's destruction but with Gordon's dumb and bewildered efforts to turn aside from Greenstream those springs whence his own and Lettice's life had been overwhelmed. For a time it looks as if he were being successful. But the morass of his own earlier making still catches his feet. And it is only on the edge of ultimate defeat that he is permitted one gleam of success that is real and one gleam that is perhaps phantasmal.

A sombre and moving tale, more sombre indeed than anything else Mr. Hergesheimer has done, and a book that, published years before the first work of Johan Bojer was issued, yet reminds us curiously of that author's patient tracing of the moral nets that snare and hinder our footsteps.

THE THREE BLACK PENNYS

It is a curious thing that with the one exception just noted above, Mr. Hergesheimer never reminds one of any other author.

Especially original in conception and setting is his next and longest book, "The Three Black Pennys"—which is also a stumbling block for unwary critics. It is the story of three men in succeeding generations of the Penny family, iron-masters of the Province of Pennsylvania in whose veins a stream of black blood runs: a stream more like basalt beneath a mountain range than like blood, for it never mingles but outcrops, and the man in whom it shows is set apart from others by his "wildness," his inability to mingle with the pack, to obey herd law, to be happy in harness.

And yet this is not the story of three men, but of one man in youth, in early maturity and in weakening age. For if the individual passes the essential identity is in the blood.

The idea is a striking one, so much so that almost any competent novelist to whom it had been given would have created a *tour de force*. But, however his later books may surpass this one, it will surely remain the most obvious evidence of his genius that Mr. Hergesheimer did not make a mere *tour de force* out of this idea but a strongly-pulsing human novel, a veritable unity in spite of the triplicate character of its writing. It is true that he gives us three distinct stories, but the unity of the blood of the Pennys, the racial identity (how it would have delighted Samuel Butler as an exemplification of

his theory of unconscious memory), that as well as the beautifully worked technical devices in the story give it a unity that is absolute. And yet one critic — trapped by its form — did complain that this was really a book of three stories.

We begin with Howat, the son of Gilbert Penny, in 1750. In Howat the streak of Welsh blood had cropped out:

“Something deep and instinctive in him resisted every effort to make him a part of any social organization, however admirable; he never formed any personal bonds with humanity in particular. He had grown into a solitary being within whom were immovably locked all the confidences, the spontaneous expressions of self, that bind men into a solidarity of common failings and hopes.”

Howat's temper is displayed against a background richer than we are wont to associate with the early beginnings of America. Howat's father had known the court of King George before he had come to the Province, and at the time the story opens a gentleman of that court, Felix Winscombe, with his half Polish wife Ludowika, is visiting Myrtle Forge. Howat's love for this woman is the theme of "The Furnace," the first part of the story. As a very far background we have the rather Germanic English court. Ludowika is in full reaction against its pettiness, and is at once called by the American wilderness and the "Endless Mountains" and repelled and frightened by rough Americans and the eternal trip-hammer which keeps time to the Penny destinies. But that, Howat assures her, she must resign

herself to hearing all her life — after the time when he shall have succeeded in disposing of Felix Winscombe. . . .

In the second part, "The Forge," the black blood is older; Jasper Penny, Howat's great-grandson, also lives at Myrtle Forge, where one day he is nursing his uncomfortable thoughts and broken arm. He had gone to Philadelphia on the "train brigade," and there had been an accident. His mother had warned him: "It isn't safe nor sensible with a good horse service convenient. But then you always have been a knowing, headstrong boy and man . . . a black Penny."

It was true, he thought, as he remembered the difficulty he had always found in adjusting himself to organized society. His marriage had been a failure, and even that private love affair in which he had found a temporary play of energy and "exercise of his inborn contempt for the evident hypocrisy, the cowardice of perfunctory inhibitions and safe morals" had remained to plague him. Now he had determined to fix the limits of his responsibilities to mistress and child.

But this he finds difficult, and when he meets a woman who, old as he is getting, awakens love in him, he sees her dragged into the scandal of his past. But by now the black blood, insurgent as ever, is no longer able to carry all before it. Jasper all but loses out.

So thin, in fact, is the blood that Jasper's son loses control of the iron industry, and Howat, Jasper's grandson, finding practical life distasteful, returns from the New York of the 'eighties to Myrtle Forge with his scrap

books of opera programs and the memories which they recall. From his window:

“Below on the right, he could vaguely see the broken bulk of what had been Shadrach Furnace, the ruined shape of the past. The Pennys no longer made iron. His father had marked the last casting. They no longer listened to the beat of the trip-hammer, but to the light rhythm of a conductor’s baton; they heard, in place of ringing metal, a tenor’s grace notes. It was fitting that the last, true to their peculiar inheritance, should be a black Penny. He, Howat, was that — the ancient Welsh blood finally gathered in a cup of life before it was spilled.”

And the blood so gathered is old; no longer capable of the passions of its youth and middle age. What strength remains in the Penny family is in Mariana, Howat’s cousin, and the drama of the third book is made by Howat’s dismayed effort to hold Mariana to his own standards and to prevent her from keeping the man she loves — himself a Penny by Jasper’s mistress.

Such are the threads of the story and Mr. Hergesheimer weaves them into a glowing and significant pattern. As these lives blossom and pass, their motions seem feverish against a background which is itself not still. Not only Myrtle Forge and its slowly decaying buildings, but even the original Howat’s ledger with its memories, come into the later story bringing a poignant sense of continuity: the reader is by no means done with the youthful Howat when Jasper and the elder Howat enter. He is always aware that what he is reading is one story,

not three. It is one story with an ever deepening counterpoint of character, contrast and narrative rhythm. And it is a tale whose women, Ludowika, the passionate; Susan Brunden, the spiritual; and Mariana, the self-consciously alive — are worthy to stand alongside the men whom they successively intrigue or shock.

THE SHORTER STORIES

Mr. Hergesheimer is pre-eminently a master in the form that hovers between the short story and the “nouvelle,” and in “Gold and Iron” the reader who has loved his Pennsylvania iron founders will meet again their like — in “Tubal Cain” and the lover of “Java Head” will find something of the Salem atmosphere in Cottarsport and one of Mr. Hergesheimer’s most characteristic and delightful women in Honora Canderay, who is not afraid of a recently returned Argonaut even when he is drunk. From these three tales perhaps we may make one quotation to show their author’s command of a landscape magic that is at once pictorial and lyrical. Here in Florida Bay is the background against which a love-story at once tender and melodramatically set, is played out:

“The water, as clear and hardly darker than the darkening air, lay like a great amethyst clasped by its dim corals and the arm of the land. The glossy foliage that, with the exception of a small silver beach, choked the shore might have been stamped from metal. It was, John Woolfolk suddenly thought, amazingly still. The atmosphere, too, was peculiarly heavy, languorous. It was laden with the scents of exotic flowering trees; he

recognized the smooth, heavy odours of oleanders and the clearer, higher breath of orange blossoms."

It is in that bay and in the ruined house on its edge, with windows "broken in — they resembled the blank eyes of the dead"—that a beautiful love story and at the same time perhaps the most melodramatic tale that Mr. Hergesheimer has written has its setting.

"The Happy End" is Mr. Hergesheimer's happy title for a book of seven stories — short stories the endings of which are happy in the artistic sense as well as in the sense which may have intrigued the reader into buying the book. Mr. Hergesheimer has a sensitive artistic conscience, and also a philosophical idea of what constitutes happiness, so his reader need not fear that in this book he will meet pot-boilers — despite the witty introduction in which the author's grocer is mentioned.

The stories in this book are all laid in America except the one concerning a young Italian girl's very temporary infatuation for a Spanish bull fighter — with its wonderful bit of insight into feminine character which comes just before a very lurid ending. Two of them recall the scenes of "Mountain Blood," and of these one has so happy an ending that the author detaches it and prints it as a prelude — the result amply justifying him.

Who would ever have thought to see Mr. Hergesheimer delving into the field of the psychology of religion? Yet he has made a really thrilling story out of the most unpromisingly evangelical kind of religion and it reads as convincingly as a case from James's "Varieties of Religious Experience."

In case the reader is a sinner and not interested in that let us add that there is a beautiful revolver in the story too.

Out for what he frankly tells us is the pleasure of the chase, Mr. Hergesheimer has in these stories always given us a run for our money, has always captured a genuine thrill, and by fair means.

JAVA HEAD

Mr. Hergesheimer's English reputation was begun by the "Three Black Pennys" and he definitely arrived there with the publication of "Java Head," Mr. Gosse's enthusiastically expressed admiration for it undoubtedly helping to "put it over" with a public always keenly appreciative of stories with a sea flavour.

"Java Head" is a fast-moving story. The most unsophisticated reader will enjoy it, and yet only the sophisticated will be able to see what a beautiful piece of work it really is. The scene is Salem when the older and slower trading ships were about to disappear before the fast clippers — to be definite, in the presidency of the late Mr. Polk — and the picture of Salem and its autocrats of the sea is the most obvious feature of the book. It is a clearly drawn and colourful picture, one more addition to the author's re-creation of the older aspects of American life. It is a picture so vivid that the exotic quality of the Manchu lady who lends it so much colour does not seem exotic and does not overshadow the rest of it.

There are action and feeling as well as colour in the book. And the balance between the pictorial and the

psychological is beautifully kept. The human drama begins in earnest when Gerrit Ammidon, captain in the service of his father's shipping firm, comes home from the Orient with a Manchu wife — to the scandal of Salem and his family.

Gerrit had, however, married his wife with the full concurrence of those concerned and in full knowledge of the sort of reception he might expect at home. In so far as those expectations are gratified the comedy is worth watching and Mr. Hergesheimer lets us see it.

This aspect we leave soon, however, for the situation is inherently tragic, and two of the instruments of the tragedy are a Salem girl, born out of wedlock, and her uncle discharged from the Chinese service of a shipping firm. Nettie Voller, the granddaughter of an old seaman of Jeremy Ammidon, has felt the wrath of her pious grandfather — directed equally at her mother and herself — and she has also felt the social ban of self-righteous Salem. Gerrit, in a healthy reaction against that sort of thing, had gone out of his way to befriend the girl, and had been on the point of falling in love with her when the old grandfather — thinking that he had already done so, and not imagining that it could be an honest love — forbade him the house. Gerrit left the house, sailed for China immediately and when he came back he was married.

By that time Nettie Voller's uncle, Edward Dunsack, had also come back, a victim of opium. Half orientalized, he thought that in Salem he could forget the opium and the lure of the East. But the sight of the Manchu lady, bringing back not only his taste for opium but his

orientalized taste in women, was the last factor in a series of impulses that caused him to plot against Gerrit.

An alliance, he thought, between his niece and Gerrit would put him and his on a social parity with the Ammidons, to say nothing of renovating his family's shattered fortunes. And the separation between Gerrit and his wife that this would involve would serve Edward in his desire for Tao Yuen.

All of which, in summary, sounds melodramatic. But it is only the framework of the story that is really that. The point of interest is in the reactions of Gerrit to the two women, and in Tao Yuen's attitude to the situation whose danger she is not long in sensing.

Tao Yuen is not only a high-born woman whose every thought and gesture must be calculated and measure up to the ideals and standards of her class, but she is really in love, and she is read in the sacred books of her land. She is, naturally, a non-resistant, but hers is a sophisticated, reasoned non-resistance, the opposite of the spinelessness which we Occidentals associate with that word.

And here, in this absolutely unknown and disliked environment, her one resource is her philosophy. She lives literally "by the book." She sees in Edward Dunsack a man undone because he, a westerner, became half orientalized. She resolves that she will not make the corresponding mistake. In the end her attitude leads to what we would call tragedy, but from Tao Yuen's standpoint it was simply a well considered step in accordance with the rules of the game.

But why, after the emotional climax which she supplies, is there something that some readers will call an

anti-climax? It is not Gerrit Ammidon's change of attitude toward Nettie. It is the love affair of two other and minor characters — an unsuccessful one because the man lacks spine. Why, one asks, this addendum? And then it dawns upon us that Mr. Hergesheimer seeks by thus ending his book on a minor tragic note to bring us to the fullest understanding of the major note of his real climax. For the motto on this title page tells us, on the authority of Chwang-Tze, that "It is only the path of pure simplicity which guards and preserves the spirit." And certainly between the non-resistant Tao Yuen and the non-resisting, but not simple, American lover there is, at the end of this book, not the difference between a dead and a living body but that between a saved and a lost soul.

LINDA CONDON

We come now to Mr. Hergesheimer's latest book, "Linda Condon," a story which, curiously enough, is both a realistic tale and a further searching out of that gospel of eternal beauty and eternal love which the author adumbrated in his first book.

Were Mr. Hergesheimer asked to sum up the theme of "Linda Condon" in a sentence he would — rightly — refuse, but if one were to do it for him one might come nearest a very difficult thing to phrase by the following quotation descriptive of that general attitude toward the world which is called Platonism:

"It is only the born connoisseur of things seen and temporal who is likely to aspire to, and is able to attain to, and without abating his love of things seen and tem-

poral, is able to hold fast by that love or faith which is the certainty of things unseen and eternal."

In this story a sculptor is made great by his love for a girl, Linda Condon, a love which Linda, by reason of certain associations and memories, cannot return in its first manifestation of passion. In fact she flies from it into the arms of another man, who, like Pleydon, the sculptor, is much older than herself.

It is this finding in Linda, beautiful and inscrutable as her blue eyes look out from a bang of black hair cut straight across her forehead, with a scrupulousness of person and attire more inborn than learned from her beautiful but debauched mother — it is this finding in her of the beauty which will not give itself to the furnace of his senses but kindles his spirit, that is the making of Pleydon. Until he met her, beauty to him meant emotional debauch. In her he finds the beauty personified that, to be sure, passes, but is ever renewed, and the finding makes him a great sculptor. Linda herself is but dimly aware of what is taking place, for she is emotionally immature and almost illiterate. But once, in her girlhood, a dying man had talked to her of the Platonic and Petrarchan ideal of woman as an inspirer of beauty, and gradually, not until she had once attempted to be to Pleydon the other kind of solace, she learns the part she has played in his life — learns how his love for her had made eternal or at least had made incarnate for all the world to see, the reality of her beauty, the beauty of which her "looks" were but a passing symbol.

Let no sentimental reader imagine that this means that Pleydon became famous for doing a portrait bust of

Java Head
Joseph Jergesheimer

January fourth 1918

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Early in May, and hardly later in the morning, Samuel Amundson lay in bed considering two widely different aspects of chairs. The day before she had been eleven, and the comparative maturity of that age had filled her with a moving disdain against certain fanciful thoughts that had given her extreme youth a decidedly novel if not an actually adventurous setting. Until yesterday, almost, she had regarded the various chairs of the house as beings endowed with life and character; she had held conversations with some, and, with a careless exterior not warranted by an inner dread, avoided others in winter glooms. All this, now, she contemptuously discarded. Chairs were - chairs, things to sit on, wooden and inanimate. Yet she was aware of a slight sadness at

Linda. No, Mr. Hergesheimer goes immeasurably deeper than that.

IN CONCLUSION

In this story the author has really brought American fiction into a realm where heretofore it has hardly dared to enter. He has held up to us the subtle forces of sexual attraction and their "sublimation" into art, and he has done so not in the often offensive manner of the psycho-analyst, but simply without any parade of "scientific psychology" in a manner that the most unsophisticated reader can follow, and from these erotic and spiritual strands he has woven a delicate and yet definite pattern, beautiful, original, and owing little to precedent.

And having done that in his present work, having as before in each of his books made a definite advance, Mr. Hergesheimer remains a figure of surpassing interest in that he is alone among the contemporary novelists in his refusal to rely for aid upon current events, current "social tendencies" and current cant of any sort. With his eye set upon beauty and the movement of human life from refinement to refinement of emotional experience Mr. Hergesheimer stands for further flights which will be as unpredictable as ever. In fact he is the only unpredictable American novelist we have, and that is one very good reason why he is the greatest.

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

An Advertisement by his Publisher

“I KNOW of no contemporary writer so capable of charming from cold type the graces, the villainies and the simple conventions of almost forgotten days.”—*Chicago Daily News*.

“A writer whose utterances grow increasingly significant.”—*Boston Evening Transcript*.

“In the world of contemporary American fiction, moreover, Mr. Hergesheimer’s style is a consolation and a stay. . . . He is an artist through and through.”—*The Nation*.

“There is one man writing in America who has an uncanny power of imprisoning in words fragrances, textures, colors, whose pen is a five sensed human thing. He can paint in words the sunshine of Sorolla, weave a Gobelin tapestry, guide tingling finger tips over a sea shell’s satin, release the embalmed fragrance of a jasmine, wet lips with the acrid spray of a sea too eager in its rollings. That man is Joseph Hergesheimer. . . . One of the few great novelists of the period.”—*Chicago Tribune*.

“The easy and obvious are things which, apparently, Mr. Hergesheimer will never do. . . . His ambition is noble, he spares no pains whatever to make his work worthy of it.”—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

“There is simply not an English author of his generation — with the exception of Mr. D. H. Lawrence — who writes so brilliantly.”—Rebecca West in *The New Statesman*.

“Mr. Hergesheimer, far less unsurely than any other American writer of today, gives us hope for the future of American literature.”—*Detroit Sunday News*.

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LA HABANA

Published November 1920

“**A**S a book of travel dealing with a Spanish-American country, the volume is a rarity, in that it says not a word of trade, holds not a figure of commercial statistics, breathes not a sound of partisan politics and factional intrigue . . . And because an artist wrote it, it is a book not only about a city but about the soul of a city and the personality of the man who travelled to a new nook of himself via Cuba’s capitol.”—*Christian Science Monitor*.

“It is a delightful book, and its format is a triumph—a chalice made by an artificer who appreciated the wine it was to hold.”—*Chicago Evening Post*.

“One of the most remarkable and at the same time one of the most fascinating books of travel in the language.”—*Philadelphia Ledger*.

“As unusual a bit of autobiography and self-revelation as Conrad’s ‘A Personal Record.’”—*New York Globe*.

“It glows with a great artistic sincerity; it has the wistful charm of any authentic record of a beauty that is evanescent, elusive, fugitive. Reaches the full maturity of a perfect style.”—*Detroit News*.

“Hergesheimer lifts himself to lyrical heights in this book. His delicate and colorful prose was never better.”—H. L. Mencken in *The Smart Set*.

*SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA HABANA has also been published
in England by William Heinemann.*

LINDA CONDON

Published October 1919

“**H**IS book, as a whole is, like Linda herself, ‘remote and faintly wistful,’ enormously simplified in method despite its contacts with the roughness and the muffled tumult of life, slim and sweet, and as full of grace as a gavotte by Handel. . . . Her story and her character, both fragile enough by the more robust and perhaps more rational tests of life and art, are of a very high and singularly flawless distinction.”—*The Nation*.

“Linda has in her what Joseph Conrad attributes to his Dona Rita — ‘something of the woman of all ages’ — but Conrad only succeeded in picturing a wraith; Linda lives and breathes. A great book.”—*Chicago Daily News*.

“. . . *Linda Condon*, which discomforts me quite as poignantly by exposing to me my poverty in phrases sufficiently noble to apply to this wholly admirable book.”—James Branch Cabell, in *The Bookman*.

“Linda Condon has much of the mystic beauty of Dona Rita of ‘The Arrow of Gold,’ the deathless charm of a few great women in literature.”—*Chicago Tribune*.

“. . . reveals another phase of his surprising power as a novelist. . . . Perhaps the deepest and most remarkable study of character which he has as yet prepared for the printed page.”—*New York World*.

*LINDA CONDON has also been published in England
by William Heinemann.*

THE THREE BLACK PENNYS

Published September 1917

Now in its seventh edition

“**A**N altogether notable book, a novel that should be read by those people who pride themselves on reading only the few best things in fiction.”—*Chicago Evening Post*.

“An unusual novel, to be read slowly, thoughtfully and with a sense of luxury.”—*London Times*.

“The book is finely done, and the three black Pennys live as only rarely happens in the characters of fiction.”—*Boston Evening Transcript*.

“A work of shining distinction. The book has a passion that is most compelling, a deep-running intensity. It has a darkling beauty.”—*Reedy's Mirror*.

“He has here fashioned a novel out of distinctively American life on an original pattern, caught the very air and flavor of three widely separated epochs of our history, evolved living men and women, and told the story of their lives with skill and art and understanding. One hurries on from part to part as interested as if its scenes were all laid within a single lifetime. Every one of its many characters, in each of its divisions, is touched with life and glows with verity. The background of furnace fires and glowing metal is always interesting, and the social environment of the three central figures, each in its own generation, is marked with the truth of its own time. A book to arouse interest, inspire thought, and provoke discussion.”—*New York Times*.

THE THREE BLACK PENNYS has also been published in England by William Heinemann; in Sweden by Albert Bonnier; and on the Continent in English by T. Nelson and Sons. It is to be published in Denmark and Norway by the firm of Gyldendal.

JAVA HEAD

Published January 1919

Now in its sixth edition

“IT is in all respects an unusual and arresting story, and the lasting impression one carries away is the richness of atmosphere with which every page is filled.”—*Los Angeles Evening Journal*.

“A thing so consummate of its kind as almost to make one tremble for the author of it, in the wonder how he can either excel it or endure failure to excel it.”—*Wilson Follett*.

“One perceives at the close that there is beauty of design in the structure of the whole, and this, springing from the author’s philosophy of life, reinforces the aesthetic appeal of a memorable novel.”—*London Nation*.

“Romantic, colorful, mysterious; it is a dramatic interpretation of certain fascinating phases of life as it was in the eyes of the masters of the American merchant marine at the beginning of the great clipper ship era, a brilliant and fragrant memory of the port of Salem when that city was still rich with the traffic of the East Indies.”—*Chicago Daily News*.

“The most unsophisticated reader will enjoy it, but only the sophisticated will be able to see how beautiful a piece of work it really is.”—*Chicago Evening Post*.

“A strange, most unusual, beautiful, intriguing story. . . . It is quite a wonderful story, this ‘Java Head,’ not less strong or interesting because of the exquisiteness with which it is told from the beginning to the end.”—*New York Globe*.

JAVA HEAD has also been published in England by William Heinemann; in Sweden by Albert Bonnier; and is to be published in Denmark and Norway by the firm of Gyldendal.

WILD ORANGES
TUBAL CAIN
THE DARK FLEECE

*First published in 1918 in one volume under the title
"Gold and Iron"*

WILD ORANGES is the story of a man and a woman in the wilds of the Georgia coast. "A magnificent story. Few more powerful tales of the fantastic decay of the tropics have been written."—*New York Call*.

In TUBAL CAIN the early blast furnaces of Pennsylvania are the background of the story of Alexander Huling's rise.

THE DARK FLEECE is the story of a forty-niner who returns to his New England home. "The depiction of Honora Candaray is a piece of literary artistry."—*New York Times*.

THE HAPPY END

Published August 1919. Now in its third edition

CONTENTS: Lonely Valleys / The Egyptian Chariot / The Flower of Spain / Tol'able David / Bread / Rosemary Roselle / The Thrush in the Hedge.

“ONCE more Joseph Hergesheimer scores a decided success and makes more secure his position in the first rank of American writers of fiction.”—*Newark Evening News*.

“Each tale has some peculiar grace, and a quickening appeal to the imagination. The collection is a real addition to the work of a writer whose utterances grow increasingly significant.”—*The Dial*.

*Both these books have also been published in England by
William Heinemann.*

THE LAY ANTHONY

New, revised version, published October 1919
Now in its second edition

““**T**HE LAY ANTHONY’ reveals his art at its highest achievement. . . . has never been truer and more impressive than it is in telling this story. The reader will find it a veritable wonder piece of fiction.”—*St. Louis Dispatch*.

“It has all the originality, dramatic intensity and poetry of Swinnerton’s ‘Nocturne.’ And, moreover, it is as essentially American as that London idyl is English.”—*The Knickerbocker Press*.

“It is only at the completion that the knowledge comes of how beautiful a thing it is.”—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

MOUNTAIN BLOOD

New, revised version, published October 1919

““**M**OUNTAIN BLOOD’ is a book of clear, pellucid and rarely exquisite pictures of the wild winsomeness of southern mountains; it is a book of bizarre characters which are stamped on our memory by brief, unforgettable descriptions; but mostly it is a book of simply-subtle and subtly-simple artistry. Its beauty is the beauty of chaste, clean, cold things; its tragedy is the tragedy of blind, struggling man overwhelmed by the elemental forces which mock at our puny efforts to control them. If Mr. Hergesheimer had written no other book than this, he would be a distinguished figure in American literature.”—*Detroit Sunday News*.

“Mountain Blood” and “The Lay Anthony” are to be published in England by William Heinemann.

MR. HERGESHEIMER'S NEWEST
BOOK

CYTHEREA

Published January 1922

“CYTHEREA,” Mr. Hergesheimer’s first novel in over two years, while showing a new aspect of his genius, will not fail to give great satisfaction to the thousands of his admirers who for so long have eagerly been awaiting a new book by him.

The story is so modern that it could only have been written today, but its subject is as old as the legends of Venus. It is actually a legend of the Goddess of Love, but its setting is wholly contemporary: Lee Randon lost in the fascination of Cytherea, and his wife Fanny; the silvery Mina Raff of motion pictures and Morris Peyton; Savina Grove, relentlessly vital, with her conventional William—are people of our own experience and country.

“Cytherea,” however, is a novel of love rather than of shifting forms and expressions: the timeless web of passion woven incidentally in a design of familiar figures and scenes. \$2.50 net.

There is also a special edition of two hundred and seventy copies, printed on White Stratford Laid paper and bound in orange buckram with uncut edges.





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