

Old and New Family Skeletons of Main Street Exposed in "The White Flag"

By WALTER D. HICKMAN

MAIN STREET is not always a lane of sunshine and smiles. Gene Stratton-Porter knows full well that there are clouds and shadows on Main Street. Every one is not a Pollyanna relative on that street.

The author of "Freckles" has given the novel reading world a new one under the title of "The White Flag." It is published by Doubleday, Page & Co. I obtained a copy for review from the book department of L. S. Ayres & Co.

Many are the skeletons tucked away in the homes of some of the distinguished citizens of any Main Street in any little town of the Middle West.

I feel that the Main Street in "The White Flag" is not many miles from Indianapolis as both Indianapolis and Ft. Wayne are mentioned.

Gene Stratton-Porter has written a sort of melodrama, but touched with some true but cruel character drawing. We who have lived on Main Street recognize such characters as Mahala Spellman, the model child of the leading dry goods merchant of the town. The merchant was a 100 per cent egoist; in fact, he thought he was all of the little tin gods in the world rolled up in one. His rival was Martin Moreland, a banker, a pillar of the church, a typical member of the school board and, above all, the prize possessor of a large collection of family skeletons. He had a son, Junior, who was to inherit his father's fine collection of skeletons.

Then we encounter the children of destiny—Ellen Ford, Jason Peters, Becky Sampson, the bearer of the white flag; Edith Williams, Marcia Peters and others.

Every Tool of Story

Telling Used by Story

Gene Stratton-Porter knows the shadows of Main Street and in her new book she has used every tool known to writers to develop a powerfully dramatic tale, melodramatic at times but powerfully effective.

Before you start the first chapter, your eye will rest on the caption, "List of Characters" in which the author right off the reel introduces you to all of the principal characters.

I believe that I know Main Street because I lived for years just around the corner of a real Main Street of a small Illinois town. I know that Main Street is not a path of roses. I know it is life filled both with sunshine and clouds, with April showers and winter storms, and above all, I know that men and women of Main Street have their battles, defeats, fears and even death.

In considering the merits of "The White Flag," I believe that the author did not deliberately attempt to write Main Street, but rather to write a powerfully interesting melodramatic story. Gene Stratton-Porter has given us real Main Street characters and I believe that most of the dramatic scenes recorded could happen on anybody's Main Street.

There is much action in "The White Flag," but I believe that the author has given us real characters touched up here and there with liberal dashes of imagination. Some of the "children of destiny" may suffer a little too much for the sins of others, but I believe that is the rule these days.

To me "The White Flag" is masterpiece in melodramatic story telling because it puts real human characters through situations which are not altogether impossible. The story is powerfully told and when once started I am sure that no reader will want to stop until the final page is turned.

ILLINOIS TROOPS ORDERED HOME

Only Few Men Are Left to Guard Mills.

By United Press SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Aug. 22.—Adjutant General Carlos Black today ordered Companies D, Danville; M, Paris, and the medical detachment of Elmhurst part of the troops garrisoning the plant of the American Zinc and Lead Smelting Company at Taylor Springs as soon as strike plots back to their home stations.

The order leaves the cavalry units and one officer and three men of the medical detachment of the 130th Infantry near the plant which was threatened when employees struck because the company refused to recognize their union.

CHIEF CALLS ATTENTION TO NEW CITY ORDINANCE

Police Instructed to Enforce Name Law Rigidly.

Police Chief Herman F. Rikhoff at roll call today instructed members of the department to enforce rigidly city ordinance 68, which went into effect Aug. 4.

A letter to the chief from Frank G. Laird, manager of the Commercial Credit Audit and Control, Wright's Bureau, stated all names had compiled with the ordinance, which requires that coal, coke, wood and ice dealers give the name of dealer or company on both of delivery wagons.

Laird called attention to the fact that several dealers have failed to comply.

EVIL TONGUES SCORED

Nazarene Congregations Holding Revival in Tent.

Speaking on "Brothers and Sisters Who Talk Too Much," the Rev. J. G. Martin, evangelist from Pasadena, Cal., declared an "evil tongue has driven God out of many a church." Tuesday night at a revival meeting of the First Nazarene Church. The meetings are held in a tent beside the church in connection with the ninth annual assembly of the Indiana district churches.



GENE STRATTON-PORTER

Here is a magnificent story telling. It is a real yarn told by a woman who recognizes both sunshine and rain on our Main Streets.

There will be some objection because the author kills off too many characters when she has used them to suit her fancy. Remember this story is melodrama pure and simple. An author has the right to commit as man murders as she desires. The story may be morbid at murdering time but it remains to me a corking good melodrama with a dash of real character drawing at times.

Choosing a Few Big

High Spots in the Story

I am going to make no effort to tell the story as I believe much pleasure would be destroyed for those who will read it. I will record a few of the high spots as follows:

1. The chapters devoted to the home life and strict training of a model child. Here is powerful character drawing in detail, day by day, year by year, in a few chapters.

2. The character contrasts as reflected by Martin Moreland and his son, Junior. I believe that most of the Main Street people will recognize a Junior Moreland in every town.

3. The pathetic figure of Becky Sampson, who while insane carries a "white flag" through the streets of a small Middle West town and who

"awakens" long enough to expose the Devil of Main Street.

4. The fine work of the author in presenting a real small town high school commencement. Here is a gem of real writing.

5. The ability of Gene Stratton-Porter to develop one big dramatic scene after another and yet not permit her story to run away with itself.

I do not hesitate to recommend "The White Flag" as corking good entertainment. It very nearly acts itself.

I know it will hold you spellbound.

Thanks for telling us about it.

You are welcome.

Motorcycle Cuts Capers

Police searched the neighborhood around 800 N. East St. Tuesday night, but did not find a motorcycle driver, said to be drunk. Persons who called police stated the man was carrying a woman passenger in the side car and was endangering lives.

Schools will open this fall with the largest enrollment in the history of the State, Burris said. Most schools will begin Sept. 4, with a few opening Labor day, Sept. 3.

Teaching staffs in the public schools of Indianapolis will be substantially the same when school opens next month as they were at the close of last term, school officials said today. There will be no shortage of teachers, the present salary schedule being sufficiently high to attract teachers from other cities.

There is an adequate supply of teachers throughout the State, Benjamin J. Burris, State superintendent, said. Applications of more than 300 prospective teachers are on file in Burris' office, with an unusually small number of requests.

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For further information call Traffic Department, 208 Terminal Bldg. MA 2137, or Joint Ticket Office, MA 4500.

One-Half Fare for Children, Stop-overs Allowed in Either Direction

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