

comfort and security as they are in poverty, and the biographer's error here is one of faulty emphasis rather than exaggeration.

The story is slightly out of kilter at one other point. In his middle years, Tarkington was writing too much and a great deal of his output was of inferior quality. Woodress seems somewhat embarrassed by this fact and, to cover his embarrassment, devotes far too much space to a catalogue and analysis of the ephemeral work of this period, thus obscuring his point that the labor itself was a miracle of determination and courage on the part of the author, since this was the time when Tarkington's sight was failing and he was undergoing numerous operations with what must have seemed an almost certain prospect of blindness ahead of him.

But these are only minor flaws in the light of the biographer's whole accomplishment. From the book, the character and personality of Booth Tarkington—warm, generous, unaffected, and yet always urbane,—emerge alive and understandable. Finishing the book, the reader feels that he has lived for a time in the company of a great gentleman, who, in the perspective of time, may ultimately be regarded not only as the great Hoosier novelist but as one of the major artists of all American fiction.

Indiana University

William E. Wilson

The Raiders. By William E. Wilson. (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1955, pp. 244. \$3.00.)

The Raiders is a historical novel and, as such, presents a problem of considerable magnitude for a historian to review. The task is made more difficult since the narrative of *The Raiders* is based on the raid into southern Indiana and Ohio during the Civil War by General John Hunt Morgan and his Confederates—a raid which has confounded historical accuracy because of its legacy of legends. Therefore, it would not be fair to judge Professor Wilson's book according to standards expected of a scholarly piece of historical writing; to do this would be extremely foolish and would distort the real intent and purpose of the work. Consequently, comments here should be confined to what *The Raiders* actually is: a highly entertaining, rapid-moving novel.

Being as it is a many-sided art form, the novel usually possesses a plot, shows good characterization, reveals the imagination of the author, and presents a reasonable portrayal of life. In particular, the historical novel should be accurate as to time and setting, be true and life-like in regard to characters, and it should give a general impression of the historical reality of the era. Has Wilson met these requirements in his latest novel? Has he transformed the formal records of the past and the folklore of yesteryear into a credible portrayal of life and human experience?

The novel opens with Henry Clayburn, the mayor of Crescent City, observing during the gentle graying of the dawn the rebels from Dixie crossing the Ohio River from the Kentucky side. He knows that his city—a politically-divided river town disturbed by the conflicting loyalties of the North and South—will soon be invaded. What should he do? He fears a Copperhead uprising. He does not know how the townspeople—nor he, for that matter—will react to the impending events of the day ahead. Will the Home Guards succumb to panic after the first few volleys of shot have been fired? What does any man do when ominous clouds of war darken his door? In *The Raiders*, Wilson points out that Clayburn could not simply run home, lock the doors, and think that the danger of the moment would pass—one, by wishful thinking, does not brush those clouds away and make a brighter day. The invasion force gathers momentum! The portentous storm will soon rain its pellets of destruction upon Crescent City and Clayburn's home. His own family, like Crescent City, is caught in the web of conflict. His son by his deceased first wife is fighting with the Union forces. His second wife and his son by her are sympathetic to the Confederate cause. Henry Clayburn is a Democrat and believes in the preservation of the Union. In his determination to save his city, will he respond immediately, heroically, and dramatically, or will he "act simply upon the exigencies of each moment" (p. 35) as it approaches? Shouldering a gun and fighting would be much simpler than thinking about the complexities of the day.

As mayor of the city he meets with the council and arranges the details of defense. But after that, what can he do except wait, wait, wait? Herein lies the author's secret—that is, he creates a feeling of suspense and controlled excite-

ment which envelops the reader. The raiders begin to encircle the town! Mayor Clayburn has just received bad news and is engulfed with grief. His son, one of the Boys in Blue, has been killed by the Confederates—Confederates like those who are capturing Crescent City. The victorious leader of the Dixie Dons, Colonel Stacey Morey, is a cousin of the mayor's wife. While Colonel Morey is in command, Crescent City, although extremely tense, is safe. There will be no loss of life and no great amount of property destroyed. Colonel Stacey Morey, who leads this diversionary force into Crescent City and so augments Morgan's drive into Hoosierdom, is shot. The tension is relieved by the violent outbreak of a riot. The brutality of war unfolds before the eyes of Crescent City. The sons of the South begin to pillage and burn the mayor's city.

Henry Clayburn perceives the course of action necessary for the liberation of his beleaguered city: it is his responsibility to go for help. During the process of finding himself he frees from his mind the false notion that man, on some occasions, will have to stand alone. As he prepares to slip through the rebel line which surrounds the town and ride for military aid, he realizes that he is not alone. Neither will he be alone when he begins to pick up the broken pieces amid the smoldering embers. He and his people will salvage what is left of ravaged Crescent City—their home on the north bank of the Ohio River.

This tautly woven narrative shows expert construction. It is extremely compact and is filled with pulsating action. Some critics will argue that there is not enough characterization. There is, nevertheless, an impressive study of character and human experience in the central figure—Henry Clayburn grows in stature and dignity, and there are adequate descriptions for most of the minor characters. The reader, perhaps, could criticize this novel because there are not several minor conflicts or themes interwoven into the fabric of the main plot. But this fast-moving work is, in many respects, an elongated short story; therefore, too many subordinate lines of interest would not fit into the intended framework.

The author is a novelist of undeniable skill: the work, from beginning to end, reveals his imagination. Interspersed throughout there is romance and love, of both the romantic and scandalous varieties; there is reflective thinking, includ-

ing philosophical tidbits; there is a villain counterbalancing the hero; and there is the mentioning of sex, but passion is restrained and is not offensive to good taste.

The reader definitely gets an impression of the atmosphere and life of the times by the author's accuracy in time and setting, by realistic descriptions of houses and dress, and by the use of idiomatic language. Comic relief is attained by the witticisms of Goosehead, the Negro janitor at the City Hall.

Historians will recognize much of the Hoosier phase of Morgan's raid which Wilson has incorporated in this book—so much so that some may wish that the author had definitely located the fictitious Crescent City at a particular spot in southern Indiana instead of leaving the geographical location somewhat indefinite. The novel indicates that the author is well acquainted with the Civil War along the Ohio River. The historical background has been adequately reproduced for the plot and story. But historians and critics should remember: the author's purpose was not to record an episode in history but to study the reactions of a peace-loving and thoughtful man in a moment of violence and action. This reviewer suggests that Professor Wilson admirably achieved his objective.

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Gerald O. Haffner

America Takes the Stage: Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900. By Richard Moody. Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series No. 34. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955, pp. xii, 322. Illustrations, bibliography, selected play list, and index. Paper, \$3.75; trade edition, \$5.00.)

America Takes the Stage is an interesting exposition of the development of romanticism in American drama and theater from 1750 to 1900. Since the prevailing spirit in a nation to be conceived, born, and started on its vigorous way was essentially one of "restless eagerness," as Moody indicates, and since the American dream of the freedom of opportunity for each individual was often close to reality, it is not surprising that American drama and theater reflected the spirit of a new age of hope and expectancy. Theater managers are in the business to present popular fare before the eyes of an entranced public, and it was