



Ellen Glasgow

what 4 of the best critics
say about her new book

BARREN GROUND

Stuart P. Sherman

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4th Large Edition

BARREN GROUND (the 4th "best-seller" in America) is one of the 4 ACES of the season. The other three are: THE CONSTANT NYMPH, by Margaret Kennedy (the "best-seller" nation wide); LOVE, by Elizabeth (the 8th "best-seller"), and the Pulitzer Prize winner, SO BIG, by Edna Ferber.

Doubleday, Page & Co.

The Phoenix Nest

Sitting In, by Proxy

WE have always been execrable at cards. We realize the power they exert over many, but the desire to play has never been strong enough in us. In particular we have abjured poker, which is with baseball one of the two greatest American games. At last, however, we have fallen in a peculiar fashion for the lure of the pastime that causes strong men to sit up until six o'clock (and later) in the morning and desert their wives and families in the eternal-springing hope of a royal straight. We have been perusing Webster's Poker Book.

No volume on poker that we have ever seen so grabs one into that smoky midnight world of presumably impassive faces and weird jargon. Webster, a cartoonist in the great tradition of John T. McCutcheon, is a genius at conveying expressions, both in the faces of those he draws and, most aptly, in the cognate remarks that issue in conventional "balloons" from their mouths.

The publishers of Webster's Poker Book have dowered it with every additional inducement beside the cartoons. It is "completely equipped with Chips and I. O. U. blanks." George Ade pens it a preface. Marc Connelly furnishes it with interpolations. There is a section of authoritative rules and data, with hints from Hoyle, by R. F. Foster, and George F. Worts, founder of "The Straight Flush Club," writes most lively text for it. But despite all these sidelines, our admiration remains for the powerful draughtsmanship of H. T. Webster, the star performer. Webster has made himself the Thomas Nast of Poker. He has created Poker characters as humanly rich and impressive as are many of the literary characters of Dickens. He has made forever familiar to one the face of the man who received "the thrill that comes once in a lifetime," the type who desired above all things to play stud, the attitude toward feminine participation in the great game, the various kinds of men that call upon their imaginations for the various kinds of excuses to their wives. He strikingly portrays the legendary atmosphere of poker, contrasts with a rare satiric touch the big winner trying to cheer the big loser, graphically outlines the progress of the game where everybody simply had to get home early. And through every aspect of the game that he treats—and he thoroughly covers the field—we are confronted with the human visage facily expressive of every shadow of mood, with various wholly recognizable average types of men displaying every natural emotion to which human flesh is heir.

Such knowledge can only be gained after many sessions at the table, green baize or otherwise. We believe in our hearts that H. T. Webster must be an accomplished poker veteran, he interprets so surely, so keenly, every changing moment of the game. He is certainly playing on his home grounds. And he has "put poker over" to one non-pokerite at least.

Not that we have any real intention of beginning to sit in soon. We still dread that hungry procession so vividly depicted on his "I. O. U.'s," "Breadline forms on right." And we have pondered the wisdom of the man who was so extremely careful, by a deft interchange of cheques, and so on, as to get his winnings in cash. Not that—we are convinced—we would ever have any

winnings. And that, in itself, is another reason for our remaining out of the game. You either win or you lose. And if we had any losings we know we should be headed for bankruptcy.

Poker is a game, it seems, especially adapted to the combination of shrewdness, innocence and fellowship in common failings that makes the average American temperament. It has the spice of adventure in it combined with a bluff babbitttry. And, contrary to a certain myth, as Webster points out, it tends to make great minds merely monosyllabic instead of inspiring them to a constant flow of wit and story. Sundry shafts are aimed in the pages of the Poker Book at self-appointed raconteurs. They are not wholly popular.

Poker has a grimness about it, evidently, that appeals to "he-men" who want something to bite on. Baseball joy is from the bleachers, the joy of poker is from the very centre of activity, the poker enthusiast is a participator. Then, too, his actual personal fortunes hang upon the issue, as, in many cases, they do not on the part of the "baseball fan." And the particular kind of athleticism poker demands, the agility of the mind, the stoicism of the spirit, throw it open to all sorts and conditions of men. You do not need to have the build of an athlete to participate, but your spirit must be strong!

Thus one beyond the pale ventures to comment upon America's greatest indoor sport. But whether you can be won to poker or not as an absorbing avocation, anyone with the least recognition of deftness of line and mastery of human expression in contemporary draughtsmanship must delight in Webster's poker cartoons. Years ago A. B. Frost almost made himself the delineator par excellence of American golf in its early stages. Webster has done no less in achieving laureateship, with the pencil, of Poker.

It is strange that a game that goes so far back into American history should not till this present year of grace have been fitly celebrated in black and white. But we can be thankful, at any rate, that now the job has been done to a turn. Our chapeau is, therefore, deeply doffed to Mr. Webster, and we expect our copy of his book promptly to disappear from our table just as soon as it is "lamped" by any one of the few poker fiends of our acquaintance!

W. R. B.

The Salad Bowl

So many people—is it only when they are young?—cannot gain a fresh appreciation without losing their old appreciations. —Havelock Ellis, *Impressions and Comments*.

1st Printing (Shakespeare and Company, Paris): February, 1922. (1,000 numbered copies.)

2nd Printing (Egoist Press, London): October, 1922. (2,000 numbered copies, of which 500 copies burned by New York Post Office authorities.)

3rd Printing (Egoist Press, London): January, 1923. (500 numbered copies, of which 499 seized by customs' authorities, Folkestone.)

4th Printing (Shakespeare and Company, Paris): January, 1924.

5th Printing (Shakespeare and Company, Paris): September, 1924.

—Publisher's notation in "Ulysses," by James Joyce.

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