

ingly fierce, nor what he had to say about Mrs. Gaskell in his letters to Blackwood. Yet all this, and more, is available in the same collection (but nowhere else) that her own letters to Blackwood are taken from.

Dallas, at least, raises such questions as whether women novelists like Mrs. Gaskell are of genuine interest with their “babble about the nursery,” “weary detail of pap and primers” and “Sairey Gamp scandal.” Of course they are. But the fine plain text before us in the *Letters* does partly fail fully to provide us with a sense of what life involved her in at the time, how she had to contend with male prejudice, unhelpful editors, the realities of city life and so on. How much editors ought to help is disputable. Yet she, herself, now appears from these letters to have been even more like one of her own heroines than we thought; and to appreciate her as she was we need the other characters of her story in outline—we need to understand her situation. She herself once advised that in fiction we need to be “the spectator & auditor of every event!”—“Work hard at this,” she exhorted a would-be novelist. To get the best from this edition it is the reader who needs to work hard, but it is the editors who have seen to it that the effort is worth it.

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THOMAS A. GULLASON, ed., *The Complete Novels
of Stephen Crane*

THOMAS GULLASON'S FULLY PACKED *The Complete Novels of Stephen Crane* (Doubleday: \$5.95) in 820 pages of text includes a 93 page introduction and an 11 page secondary bibliography and provides the first edition texts of Crane's six novels. Gullason prints the final 1896 version of *Maggie* and includes “the most important variant readings” from the privately printed 1893 edition; the 1895 text of *The Red Badge of Courage* with “uncancelled variant readings,” as well as the 1894 Philadelphia *Press* shorter version. Crane's four less well-known but interesting novels follow: *George's Mother*, *The Third Violet*, *Active Service*, and *The O'Ruddy*. The editor chose to consider Crane's marvelously wrought novella *The Monster* a short story and printed it in the earlier companion volume that collects Crane's short fiction.

Although textual scholars may cavil about some of Gullason's choices, such as not using the MS version of *Active Service*, and al-

though the definitive Stephen Crane edition now being prepared by Fredson Bowers and others will undoubtedly become the Crane scholar's chief tool, Gullason has done a yeoman job of making substantially all of Crane's fiction immediately available. With Crane's poetry newly reprinted in Joseph Katz's edition, readers can attain nearly the entire canon while awaiting the Virginia Edition. In addition to the plethora of paperback and anthology reprintings of Crane's major works, the oddly arranged Knopf edition of the 1920's is back in print; R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann have brought out two volumes of war dispatches and New York sketches, as well as the *Letters*; Olov Fryckstedt's large volume of uncollected writings brings together these materials and others; and the *Stephen Crane Newsletter* busily turns up new letters.

In his lengthy introduction that is really a biographical-critical monograph, Gullason caps a decade of thoughtful articles on Crane's achievement. He is usually careful to avoid the excesses of the overzealous critics who seek to turn Crane into an earlier version of Kafka and qualifies the work as that of a clever writer who was a superb storyteller. Still, Gullason brings out Crane's variety of themes such as war, the city, manners, and the many modes in which he worked, from naturalism and impressionism to satire, comedy, and symbolism.

The nineteenth-century specialist will be grateful for the clarity of the critical terminology when Gullason describes Crane's special uses of color or cinematic foreshadowing, for example (although here I think a comparison with early Joyce *would* be fitting). Gullason well relates the varied facets of Crane's flexible technique to his vision, his "original and intense writing, the strikingly and curiously fresh impressionistic images, the understated effects, the subtlety, and the compression."

Further, unlike many recent studies of Crane, this introduction is excellent on his reading and the influence and importance of his family history—military, religious, and social. Gullason builds from biography to criticism by showing how and why images of war and slum horrors become meaningful to the young author as ways of writing about the pain of death and isolation, matters more clear to readers of Crane's poetry than of his fiction. Gullason handles previous Crane scholarship carefully and smoothly, attends selectively to the masses of attributed sources, and catches the way Crane combines playfulness and utter seriousness—although I

would tend to disagree that he *unconsciously* parodies his own frantic language and style in *Maggie*.

Despite his objectivity, however, as in most studies of an author like Stephen Crane who has produced one major novel among his six, Gullason does fall into the trap of overenthusiasm. There are some solidly advanced claims for *The Red Badge* attaining superiority of pattern, pictorial images, and universalizing of character, but Gullason seems carried away by his claims for the novel. Particularly after having granted that Crane works in miniature, the editor obscures the critical picture by rather grandiose claims that come dangerously near to equating Crane to James and Conrad. To speak of "epic, poetic, and tragic terms," "the cosmic view," "the awesome presence of foreshadowing and inevitability," to find Henry Fleming fitting "in some ways, the nature of the tragic hero," because he has a flaw, moves from happiness to misery and back, undergoes catharsis, recognition, and suffering—all this is to do the violence of overevaluating, even though Gullason admits that Henry "is no Achilles."

The introductory study interestingly views *Maggie*, *The Red Badge*, and *George's Mother* as a trilogy that treats seduction, war, and alcoholism in a doomed aura of defeat. He has little to say about the last three novels, which seems to me a bit unfortunate in the cases of *The Third Violet* and *Active Service*, weak romantic novels assuredly, but books that are very important from the biographical viewpoint. Here, I think, Crane was caught in his art as in his life between a formal (traditional) desire for the romantic love of a good woman and his deep ("anti-Victorian") need for alliance with an earthy, bad woman. Both these novels become a battlefield where Crane, alas, loses the struggle of unacceptable, cloying love stories with the hidden, passionate relations of artists and models, reporters and ladies of easy virtue. In his last novels the basic plots were too covert, while in his last years Crane's own life fulfilled the pattern of his desires. The historian of nineteenth-century fiction, then, can regret Stephen Crane's death at twenty-eight all the more, for in these final two completed novels he seems to have been moving towards his major theme. He might have reached what Leslie Fiedler has fixed as the terrifying position for American novelists of overtly confronting in their fiction mature relations between the sexes.

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