

Second Novel Published By Bernice Kelly Harris, Resident Of Northampton

Following is a review of "Portulaca", latest novel by Bernice Kelly Harris, resident of Seaboard in Northampton County:

"Portulaca", Bernice Kelly Harris' second novel is "Purslane" come to town, to a small country town that might be as readily identifiable in Virginia or Georgia as in North Carolina. The book, distinctly Southern in its setting, characters and attitudes manages nevertheless to achieve a consistent even if occasionally ironical touch with the universally human.

Second novels face a sterner handicap of criticism than first efforts. "Portulaca", however, will not suffer by comparison. With the same "Purslane" aptitude for a clear-sighted detachment even toward things intimate and habitual, the North Carolina writer has recorded in "Portulaca" vivid, candid, and understanding pictures of a small town neighborhood with all its bright virtues, its small meannesses, its strivings, its friendliness, its triumphs and its complacencies.

Possibly, the hardest thing that may be said in criticism of Mrs. Harris' new book grows out of the label the publishers affixed when they called it a novel. By virtue of a thin, slow-moving plot it does qualify as a novel; but it is vastly more. To call it merely a novel elevates the continuity to an importance it does not hold in the completed picture. The plight of Nancy Huntington, as she struggles petulantly against the town, her neighbors, her husband, her sister-in-law, and herself isn't anything like so convincing or vital as the leisurely revelations of a community that can be cruel with the hateful cruelty of intimate acquaintances and generous in a warm sharing of common destiny. Here may be found humor, pathos, tragedy and all the implications of the sturdy virtues that cling to the simpler ways.

Nancy's secret romance with a New York literary adviser, a refuge from an unsympathetic husband and a conniving sister-in-law, a romance from which she herself flees in panic whenever it threatens reality, in much less interesting as a central theme than the snatches of town life whose vigor and gusto threaten continuously to obscure it. In the end you get the impression that Nancy, for all her yearning for escape, yields to the Town both weakly and happily. Possibly that, too, is one of

*the implications of intimate living that Mrs. Harris sought to convey.

Portulaca, botanically, is the town cousin of Purslane, commonly called pusley. The difference between them, as between the books for which the author sought kindred titles, is that Purslane looks to its roots in simple contentment in their sturdiness while Portulaca looks to its garden neighbors with all the small satisfaction, the pains, the jealousies of keeping up with the Joneses whether the Joneses be vegetables or vegetarians.

The whole book, more mature in concept and in construction than "Purslane," flashes with the author's sense of the dramatic practiced over a long period in preoccupation with play writing. But its chief and most revealing virtue is that it seizes upon the essentials of life—the life of real, flesh and blood people—in the small town, holds it up to the light where what ordinarily passes for drabness becomes articulate in humanness, full of happiness and heartache and a vigorous sense of the importance of being or of becoming important.

Mrs. Harris' contribution to the literature of the South and about the South is here as in "Purslane", the fixing of a perspective too often and too long ignored in the translation of life and truth about that life on the printed page.

FRANK SMETHURST.

Draper - Bobbitt

The marriage of Miss Vera P. Bobbitt, daughter of Mrs. Mattie Cutchin Bobbitt of Seaboard and Paul C. Draper of Weldon took place on May 9 at 12 o'clock in Grace Baptist Church in Durham in the presence of the immediate families and friends. Rev. H. B. Anderson, pastor of Durham, officiated. Mrs. E. B. Clark of Weldon sang "At Dawning" and "Because", accompanied by Mrs. Chas. Boykin of Halifax. The bride wore a Mexican Tan suit fur trimmed, with brown accessories and carried a bouquet of talisman roses and forget-me-nots. Immediately after the ceremony the bridal party was entertained at a wedding breakfast in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Burchett.

Mr. Early Norman Cox has returned back to Nashville, after spending the week-end with his mother, Mrs. Early W. Cox.

15 Cases At Recorder's This Week

Fifteen cases were disposed of this week at the Halifax County Recorder's Court. They were as follows:

Leslie Garner, white of Roanoke Rapids, charged with reckless driving and assault. Nol pros with leave.

John Mills and Helen Epps, col. of Weldon, were found guilty of fornication and adultery. Judgment suspended as to Helen Epps upon good behavior. John Mills was sentenced to 6 months roads, suspended upon payment of a fine of \$10.00 and costs.

Herman N. Capps, white of Townsville, charged with reckless driving. Prayer for judgment continued on payment of the costs and on condition the defendant voluntarily surrenders his operator's license and refrains from operating a motor vehicle for 12 months.

John Moore, col. of Tillery, charged with possession of liquor. Not guilty.

Willie Joyner, col. of Weldon, larceny. Thirty days jail to be worked around jail and courthouse.

Everett Flagg, col. of Weldon, was found guilty of assault and given 6 months roads, suspended on payment of the costs and on condition he remain of good behavior for two years.

Roosevelt Powell, col. of Enfield, charged with reckless driving. Prayer for judgment continued on payment of the costs and \$37.42 for Henderson Halliday and \$10.00 for Maco Jones.

Augustus King, col. of Enfield, was given 4 months roads for carrying a concealed weapon.

Dan Thompson, col. of Littleton, was sentenced to 8 months roads for carrying a concealed weapon. Sentence was suspended on payment of costs and good behavior for 12 months.

Aulander Lyon and Joe Perkins, charged with using improper license. Prayer for judgment continued on payment costs.

Leslie Lee, white of Hollister, charged with trespass. Judgment suspended on payment of costs.

Stephen A. Robinson, col. of Weldon, drunk and disorderly. Sentenced to 60 days roads.

Lynn Mangum, col. of Weldon, larceny. Prayer for judgment continued on payment costs, \$1.00* for use of Henry Alston, and good behavior for 12 months.

Leslie Garner, Louis Felts, Johnny Long, Willie Long, and Joe Bateman, charged with gambling and affray. Garner was given 3 months roads to run concurrently with sentence in No. 6308. Prayer for judgment continued as to each of the others upon payment of ¼ the costs each.

Leslie Garner committed to roads for 6 months on suspended sentence.

Program Held At Enfield Sunday

Memorial Day exercises, conducted by the Frank M. Chapter, U. D. C., were held in Elmwood Cemetery Sunday afternoon at four-thirty o'clock. Mrs. Waverly White, president of the chapter, presided, and after song and prayer, Mrs. Egbert Barnhill, past president of the chapter, made a talk on Memorial Day. Roll call of deceased daughters was read by Miss Katie Riddick. Mrs. White then introduced Joseph Branch, local attorney, who made the address of the afternoon. He eulogized veterans, world war boys, and this being Mothers' Day, he paid tribute to Mothers of all times.

The summer house in the cemetery was decorated in confederate battle flags, and a large North Carolina flag. Boy scouts and the girls' Chapter Enfield Blues C. of C. Chapter placed these flowers on the graves that were previously marked by flags.

In conclusion "America" was sung and Rev. Ross Cadle pronounced the benediction after which taps were sounded by James Reives.

Pvt. Willie S. Deaton of Fort Moultrie, S. C., has returned to his post after spending a few days here visiting Mrs. Early W. Cox and relatives.

Mrs. H. W. Tucker of Durham, Mrs. A. C. Williams of Henderson, and Sarah Ann Williams spent Sunday with Mrs. Early W. Cox.

Pvt. Francis W. Cox and Hubert Nicholas of Fort Bragg spent the week-end with Mrs. Early W. Cox.



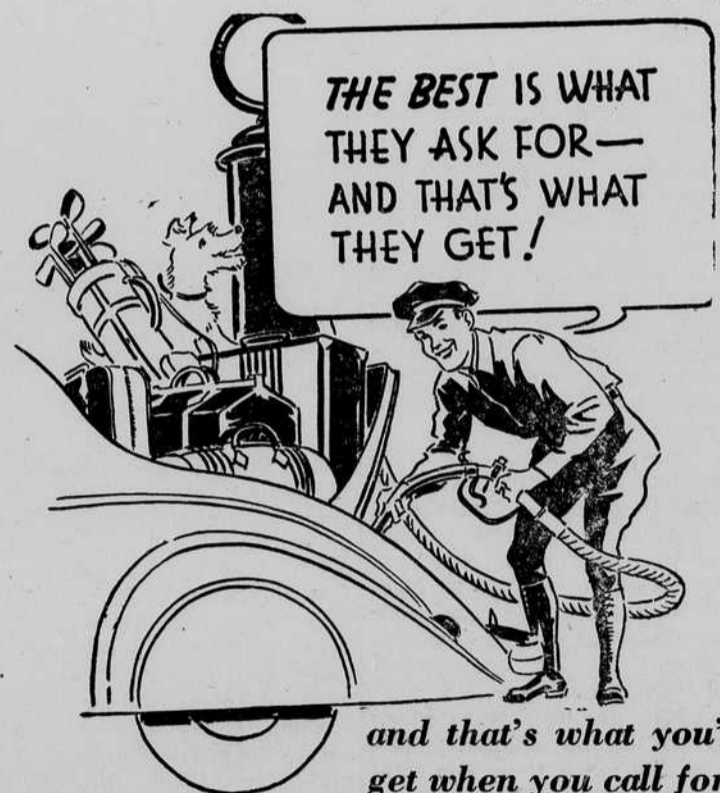
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