

TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN BEST SELLERS



OWEN WISTER

THE VIRGINIAN 弗吉尼亚人

[美] 欧文·威斯特 著



世界图书出版公司

THE VIRGINIAN

弗吉尼亚人

Owen Wister

[美] 欧文·威斯特 著

世界图书出版公司

上海·西安·北京·广州

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

弗吉尼亚人: 英文/(美)威斯特著. —上海: 上海世界图书
出版公司, 2010.9

ISBN 978-7-5100-2778-9

I. ①弗… II. ①威… III. ①英语—语言读物 ②长篇小说—
美国—现代 IV. ①H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2010)第 179728 号

弗吉尼亚人

[美] 欧文·威斯特 著

上海世界图书出版公司 出版发行

上海市广中路 88 号

邮政编码 200086

北京华宝装订有限公司印刷

如发现印刷质量问题, 请与印刷厂联系

(质检科电话: 010-84897777)

各地新华书店经销

开本: 850×1168 1/32 印张: 12.25 字数: 341 000

2010 年 9 月第 1 版 2010 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-5100-2778-9/H · 1058

定价: 19.80 元

<http://www.wpcsh.com.cn>

<http://www.wpcsh.com>

序

从 1895 年美国《书商》杂志开启“按销量排序的图书目录”，美国的“畅销书”至今已有百年发展史，其间荣登年度榜的图书达上千册。阅读这些畅销书，可以学习各时代美国最畅销图书中的语言，了解当时的阅读旨趣，领略当时的社会习俗和风土人情，何乐而不为？

不过，阅读畅销书也需精选。畅销书只是显现读者的阅读旨趣，并不区分它的高下，读者真实的阅读旨趣是雅俗共存的；登上畅销书排行榜的并不总经得起时间的冲刷，许多名噪一时的畅销书早已销声匿迹，尘封在历史的沟壑中。

然而畅销书中自然也有大量经典得以长久流传。我们今天重读美国百年畅销图书，有着以往不曾有的优势。一是，时间的冲刷保证了今日重读之畅销书的经典。能留存至今的多是能够让人细细品读出些许感悟的，而不仅是出于猎奇心理、名人效应。二是，时空的距离感让我们能更好地反思畅销书中所折射出的社会现象。多了一分思考的冷峻，少了一分身处当局的迷惑，我们能以一个旁观者的角色更加清醒地审视。

鉴于以上宗旨，本系列所选的畅销书都历经淘洗，至今光彩斐然，甚具代表性。成功类的书籍诸如《白手起家的商人给儿子的信》、《罗斯福总统给子女的信》和《如何度过一天的 24 小时》；文学类的书籍众多，包括赫赫有名的《马克·吐温自传》，开创了美国西部牛仔小说先河的《弗吉尼亚人》，反映纽约上层社会生活的《纯真年代》，表现女性自我探索的《满溢之杯》，讲述一战之后生死与重建的《贫穷的聪明人》，扣人心弦、探求正义的《公平与不公平》，文字优美、充满真挚情感的爱情小说《百分之一的机会》和表现纽约曼哈顿贫民区生活的《明确的目标：纽约爱情故事》等；此外还有文化类书籍——世界史研究界几乎无人不知的 H. G. 威尔斯的《历史的概要（世界史纲）》。每本读来都会有不一样的收获，可以满足读者对不同类型书籍的偏好。

阅读美国百年畅销图书，浸润美国最地道的语言，了解美国原汁原味的文化。

Contents

To Theodore Roosevelt	1
To the Reader	2
1. Enter the Man.....	5
2. "When You Call Me That, <i>Smile!</i> "	10
3. Steve Treats	27
4. Deep into Cattle Land	36
5. Enter the Woman	48
6. Em'ly	52
7. Through Two Snows	67
8. The Sincere Spinster	70
9. The Spinster Meets the Unknown	74
10. Where Fancy Was Bred.....	82
11. "You Re Going to Love Me Before We Get Through"	95
12. Quality and Equality	105
13. The Game and the Nation – Act First	113
14. Between the Acts.....	121
15. The Game and the Nation – Act Second	127
16. The Game and the Nation – Last Act	134
17. Scipio Moralizes.....	156
18. "Would You Be a Parson?"	161
19. Dr. Macbride Begs Pardon	170
20. The Judge Ignores Particulars.....	175
21. In a State of Sin.....	180
22. "What Is a Rustler?"	193
23. Various Points.....	201
24. A Letter with a Moral	210

25. Progress of the Lost Dog	214
26. Balaam and Pedro	227
27. Grandmother Stark	243
28. No Dream to Wake From.....	271
29. Word to Bennington	273
30. A Stable on the Flat	285
31. The Cottonwoods.....	297
32. Superstition Trail.....	306
33. The Spinster Loses Some Sleep	322
34. To Fit Her Finger.....	333
35. With Malice Aforethought.....	339
36. At Dunbarton.....	369

To Theodore Roosevelt

*Some of these pages you have seen, some you
have praised, one stands new-written because
you blamed it; and all, my dear critic, beg leave
to remind you of their author's changeless admiration.*

To the Reader

CERTAIN OF the newspapers, when this book was first announced, made a mistake most natural upon seeing the sub-title as it then stood, *A Tale of Sundry Adventures*. "This sounds like a historical novel," said one of them, meaning (I take it) a colonial romance. As it now stands, the title will scarce lead to such interpretation; yet none the less is this book historical – quite as much so as any colonial romance. Indeed, when you look at the root of the matter, it is a colonial romance. For Wyoming between 1874 and 1890 was a colony as wild as was Virginia one hundred years earlier. As wild, with a scantier population, and the same primitive joys and dangers. There were, to be sure, not so many Chippendale settees.

We know quite well the common understanding of the term "historical novel." *Hugh Wynne* exactly fits it. But *Silas Lapham* is a novel as perfectly historical as is *Hugh Wynne*, for it pictures an era and personifies a type. It matters not that in the one we find George Washington and in the other none save imaginary figures; else *The Scarlet Letter* were not historical. Nor does it matter that Dr. Mitchell did not live in the time of which he wrote, while Mr. Howells saw many Silas Laphams with his own eyes; else *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were not historical. Any narrative which presents faithfully a day and a generation is of necessity historical; and this one presents Wyoming between 1874 and 1890.

Had you left New York or San Francisco at ten o'clock this morning, by noon the day after to-morrow you could step out at Cheyenne. There you would stand at the heart of the world that is the subject of my picture, yet you would look around you in vain for the reality. It is a vanished

world. No journeys, save those which memory can take, will bring you to it now. The mountains are there, far and shining, and the sunlight, and the infinite earth, and the air that seems forever the true fountain of youth, – but where is the buffalo, and the wild antelope, and where the horseman with his pasturing thousands? So like its old self does the sage-brush seem when revisited, that you wait for the horseman to appear.

But he will never come again. He rides in his historic yesterday. You will no more see him gallop out of the unchanging silence than you will see Columbus on the unchanging sea come sailing from Palos with his caravels.

And yet the horseman is still so near our day that in some chapters of this book, which were published separate at the close of the nineteenth century, the present tense was used. It is true no longer. In those chapters it has been changed, and verbs like “is” and “have” now read “was” and “had.” Time has flowed faster than my ink.

What is become of the horseman, the cow-puncher, the last romantic figure upon our soil? For he was romantic. Whatever he did, he did with his might. The bread that he earned was earned hard, the wages that he squandered were squandered hard, – half a year’s pay sometimes gone in a night, – “blown in,” as he expressed it, or “blowed in,” to be perfectly accurate. Well, he will be here among us always, invisible, waiting his chance to live and play as he would like. His wild kind has been among us always, since the beginning: a young man with his temptations, a hero without wings.

The cow-puncher’s ungoverned hours did not unman him. If he gave his word, he kept it; Wall Street would have found him behind the times. Nor did he talk lewdly to women; Newport would have thought him old-fashioned. He and his brief epoch make a complete picture, for in themselves they were as complete as the pioneers of the land or the explorers of the sea. A transition has followed the horseman of the plains; a shapeless state, a condition of men and manners as unlovely as is that

moment in the year when winter is gone and spring not come, and the face of Nature is ugly. I shall not dwell upon it here. Those who have seen it know well what I mean. Such transition was inevitable. Let us give thanks that it is but a transition, and not a finality.

Sometimes readers inquire, did I know the Virginian? As well, I hope, as a father should know his son. And sometimes it is asked, was such and such a thing true? Now to this I have the best answer in the world. Once a cow-puncher listened patiently while I read him a manuscript. It concerned an event upon an Indian reservation. "Was that the Crow reservation?" he inquired at the finish. I told him that it was no real reservation and no real event; and his face expressed displeasure. "Why," he demanded, "do you waste your time writing what never happened, when you know so many things that did happen?"

And I could no more help telling him that this was the highest compliment ever paid me than I have been able to help telling you about it here!

CHARLESTON, S.C.,

March 31st, 1902

1. Enter the Man

SOME NOTABLE sight was drawing the passengers, both men and women, to the window; and therefore I rose and crossed the car to see what it was. I saw near the track an enclosure, and round it some laughing men, and inside it some whirling dust, and amid the dust some horses, plunging, huddling, and dodging. They were cow ponies in a corral, and one of them would not be caught, no matter who threw the rope. We had plenty of time to watch this sport, for our train had stopped that the engine might take water at the tank before it pulled us up beside the station platform of Medicine Bow. We were also six hours late, and starving for entertainment. The pony in the corral was wise, and rapid of limb. Have you seen a skilful boxer watch his antagonist with a quiet, incessant eye? Such an eye as this did the pony keep upon whatever man took the rope. The man might pretend to look at the weather, which was fine; or he might affect earnest conversation with a bystander: it was bootless. The pony saw through it. No feint hoodwinked him. This animal was thoroughly a man of the world. His undistracted eye stayed fixed upon the dissembling foe, and the gravity of his horse-expression made the matter one of high comedy. Then the rope would sail out at him, but he was already elsewhere; and if horses laugh, gayety must have abounded in that corral. Sometimes the pony took a turn alone; next he had slid in a flash among his brothers, and the whole of them like a school of playful fish whipped round the corral, kicking up the fine dust, and (I take it) roaring with laughter. Through the window-glass of our Pullman the thud of their mischievous hoofs reached us, and the strong, humorous curses of the cow-boys. Then for the first time I noticed a man who sat on the high gate of the corral, looking on. For he now climbed down with the undulations of a tiger, smooth and easy, as if his muscles

flowed beneath his skin. The others had all visibly whirled the rope, some of them even shoulder high. I did not see his arm lift or move. He appeared to hold the rope down low, by his leg. But like a sudden snake I saw the noose go out its length and fall true; and the thing was done. As the captured pony walked in with a sweet, church-door expression, our train moved slowly on to the station, and a passenger remarked, "That man knows his business."

But the passenger's dissertation upon roping I was obliged to lose, for Medicine Bow was my station. I bade my fellow-travellers good-by, and descended, a stranger, into the great cattle land. And here in less than ten minutes I learned news which made me feel a stranger indeed.

My baggage was lost; it had not come on my train; it was adrift somewhere back in the two thousand miles that lay behind me. And by way of comfort, the baggage-man remarked that passengers often got astray from their trunks, but the trunks mostly found them after a while. Having offered me this encouragement, he turned whistling to his affairs and left me planted in the baggage-room at Medicine Bow. I stood deserted among crates and boxes, blankly holding my check, hungry and forlorn. I stared out through the door at the sky and the plains; but I did not see the antelope shining among the sage-brush, nor the great sunset light of Wyoming. Annoyance blinded my eyes to all things save my grievance: I saw only a lost trunk. And I was muttering half-aloud, "What a forsaken hole this is!" when suddenly from outside on the platform came a slow voice —

"Off to get married *again*? Oh, don't!"

The voice was Southern and gentle and drawling; and a second voice came in immediate answer, cracked and querulous: —

"It ain't again. Who says it's again? Who told you, anyway?"

And the first voice responded caressingly: —

"Why, your Sunday clothes told me, Uncle Hughey. They are speakin' mighty loud o' nuptials."

"You don't worry me!" snapped Uncle Hughey, with shrill heat.

And the other gently continued, "Ain't them gloves the same yu' wore to your last weddin'?"

"You don't worry me! You don't worry me!" now screamed Uncle Hughey.

Already I had forgotten my trunk; care had left me; I was aware of the sunset, and had no desire but for more of this conversation. For it resembled none that I had heard in my life so far. I stepped to the door and looked out upon the station platform.

Lounging there at ease against the wall was a slim young giant, more beautiful than pictures. His broad, soft hat was pushed back; a loose-knotted, dull-scarlet handkerchief sagged from his throat; and one casual thumb was hooked in the cartridge-belt that slanted across his hips. He had plainly come many miles from somewhere across the vast horizon, as the dust upon him showed. His boots were white with it. His overalls were gray with it. The weather-beaten bloom of his face shone through it duskily, as the ripe peaches look upon their trees in a dry season. But no dinginess of travel or shabbiness of attire could tarnish the splendor that radiated from his youth and strength. The old man upon whose temper his remarks were doing such deadly work was combed and curried to a finish, a bridegroom swept and garnished; but alas for age! Had I been the bride, I should have taken the giant, dust and all.

He had by no means done with the old man.

"Why, yu've hung weddin' gyarments on every limb!" he now drawled, with admiration. "Who is the lucky lady this trip?"

The old man seemed to vibrate. "Tell you there ain't been no other! Call me a Mormon, would you?"

"Why, that –"

"Call me a Mormon? Then name some of my wives. Name two. Name one. Dare you!"

"– that Laramie wido' promised you –"

"Shucks!"

"— only her doctor suddenly ordered Southern climate and —"

"Shucks! You're a false alarm."

"— so nothing but her lungs came between you. And next you'd most got united with Cattle Kate, only —"

"Tell you you're a false alarm!"

"— only she got hung."

"Where's the wives in all this? Show the wives! Come now!"

"That corn-fed biscuit-shooter at Rawlins yu' gave the canary —"

"Never married her. Never did marry —"

"But yu' come so near, uncle! She was the one left yu' that letter explaining how she'd got married to a young cyard-player the very day before her ceremony with you was due, and —"

"Oh, you're nothing; you're a kid; you don't amount to —"

"— and how she'd never, never forgot to feed the canary."

"This country's getting full of kids," stated the old man, witheringly. "It's doomed." This crushing assertion plainly satisfied him. And he blinked his eyes with renewed anticipation. His tall tormentor continued with a face of unchanging gravity, and a voice of gentle solicitude: — "How is the health of that unfortunate —"

"That's right! Pour your insults! Pour 'em on a sick, afflicted woman!" The eyes blinked with combative relish.

"Insults? Oh, no, Uncle Hughey!"

"That's all right! Insults goes!"

"Why, I was mighty relieved when she began to recover her mem'ry. Las' time I heard, they told me she'd got it pretty near all back. Remembered her father, and her mother, and her sisters and brothers, and her friends, and her happy childhood, and all her doin's except only your face. The boys was bettin' she'd get that far too, give her time. But I reckon afteh such a turrable sickness as she had, that would be expectin' most too much."

At this Uncle Hughey jerked out a small parcel. "Shows how much you know!" he cackled. "There! See that! That's my ring she sent me back, being too unstrung for marriage. So she don't remember me, don't she? Ha-ha! Always said you were a false alarm."

The Southerner put more anxiety into his tone. "And so you're a-takin' the ring right on to the next one!" he exclaimed. "Oh, don't go to get married again, Uncle Hughey! What's the use o' being married?"

"What's the use?" echoed the bridegroom, with scorn. "Hm! When you grow up you'll think different."

"Course I expect to think different when my age is different. I'm havin' the thoughts proper to twenty-four, and you're havin' the thoughts proper to sixty."

"Fifty!" shrieked Uncle Hughey, jumping in the air.

The Southerner took a tone of self-reproach. "Now, how could I forget you was fifty," he murmured, "when you have been telling it to the boys so careful for the last ten years!"

Have you ever seen a cockatoo – the white kind with the top-knot – enraged by insult? The bird erects every available feather upon its person. So did Uncle Hughey seem to swell, clothes, mustache, and woolly white beard; and without further speech he took himself on board the East-bound train, which now arrived from its siding in time to deliver him.

Yet this was not why he had not gone away before. At any time he could have escaped into the baggage-room or withdrawn to a dignified distance until his train should come up. But the old man had evidently got a sort of joy from this teasing. He had reached that inevitable age when we are tickled to be linked with affairs of gallantry, no matter how.

With him now the East-bound departed slowly into that distance whence I had come. I stared after it as it went its way to the far shores of civilization. It grew small in the unending gulf of space, until all sign of its presence was gone save a faint skein of smoke against the evening sky.

And now my lost trunk came back into my thoughts, and Medicine Bow seemed a lonely spot. A sort of ship had left me marooned in a foreign ocean; the Pullman was comfortably steaming home to port, while I – how was I to find Judge Henry’s ranch? Where in this unfeatured wilderness was Sunk Creek? No creek or any water at all flowed here that I could perceive. My host had written he should meet me at the station and drive me to his ranch. This was all that I knew. He was not here. The baggage-man had not seen him lately. The ranch was almost certain to be too far to walk to, to-night. My trunk – I discovered myself still staring dolefully after the vanished East-bound; and at the same instant I became aware that the tall man was looking gravely at me, – as gravely as he had looked at Uncle Hughey throughout their remarkable conversation.

To see his eye thus fixing me and his thumb still hooked in his cartridge-belt, certain tales of travellers from these parts forced themselves disquietingly into my recollection. Now that Uncle Hughey was gone, was I to take his place and be, for instance, invited to dance on the platform to the music of shots nicely aimed?

“I reckon I am looking for you, seh,” the tall man now observed.

2. “When You Call Me That, *Smile!*”

WE CANNOT see ourselves as other see us, or I should know what appearance I cut at hearing this from the tall man. I said nothing, feeling uncertain.

“I reckon I am looking for you, seh,” he repeated politely.

“I am looking for Judge Henry,” I now replied.

He walked toward me, and I saw that in inches he was not a giant. He was not more than six feet. It was Uncle Hughey that had made him seem

to tower. But in his eye, in his face, in his step, in the whole man, there dominated a something potent to be felt, I should think, by man or woman.

"The Judge sent me afteh you, seh," he now explained, in his civil Southern voice; and he handed me a letter from my host. Had I not witnessed his facetious performances with Uncle Hughey, I should have judged him wholly ungifted with such powers. There was nothing external about him but what seemed the signs of a nature as grave as you could meet. But I had witnessed; and therefore supposing that I knew him in spite of his appearance, that I was, so to speak, in his secret and could give him a sort of wink, I adopted at once a method of easiness. It was so pleasant to be easy with a large stranger, who instead of shooting at your heels had very civilly handed you a letter.

"You're from old Virginia, I take it?" I began.

He answered slowly, "Then you have taken it correct, seh."

A slight chill passed over my easiness, but I went cheerily on with a further inquiry. "Find many oddities out here like Uncle Hughey?"

"Yes, seh, there is a right smart of oddities around. They come in on every train."

At this point I dropped my method of easiness.

"I wish that trunks came on the train," said I. And I told him my predicament.

It was not to be expected that he would be greatly moved at my loss; but he took it with no comment whatever. "We'll wait in town for it," said he, always perfectly civil.

Now, what I had seen of "town" was, to my newly arrived eyes, altogether horrible. If I could possibly sleep at the Judge's ranch, I preferred to do so.

"Is it too far to drive there to-night?" I inquired.

He looked at me in a puzzled manner.

"For this valise," I explained, "contains all that I immediately need; in