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Trumpet in the Dust: In Search of Constance Holme

Two decades ago, in May 1973, I visited the Humanities Research Centre at Austin and spent several weeks engrossed in its uniquely large collection of manuscripts by the English regional novelist Constance Holme, who had died in 1955 when I was still an undergraduate and quite unaware of either her name or her work. She had first been brought to my attention in the mid 1960s by my Department Head at Memorial University, E. R. Seary, whose earliest research had been devoted to the nineteenth-century Sheffield poet Ebenezer Elliott, known as the "Corn Law Rhymer." Constance Holme's once widely-read but largely unexamined fiction might, Seary thought, be a suitable topic for the doctoral dissertation on which I had not yet embarked. Instead, having known and admired his poetry for at least a decade, and being also personally acquainted with him, I wrote my dissertation on the life and work of another comparatively neglected North of England writer, Norman Nicholson. This, completed in 1969, was revised and abridged into my first book, published after some delay early in 1974.

Once aroused, however, my interest in Constance Holme was quick to increase. The novel of hers to which I was first directed, *The Lonely Plough* (1914), held my attention by the force of its narrative, the distinction of its style, and the evocativeness of its landscape descriptions. That landscape rang a bell: it was the part of Westmorland (a county now absorbed into Cumbria) in which my father had been born, as well as Constance Holme twenty-seven years before him, and I had been evacuated to it for a year in wartime, at the age of five. To literary admiration and a sense of *déjà-vu* was added a fortuitous link from my

concurrent work on Norman Nicholson. Nicholson's paternal great-grandfather, during the 1850s, had served as gamekeeper on the very estate (Dallam Tower outside Milnthorpe) of which from 1851 to 1880 Constance Holme's father was land agent.

On all counts, then, it seemed only appropriate that I should move a generation or so backwards and turn my attention from Norman Nicholson of Millom to Constance Holme of Milnthorpe: they were only three decades and thirty miles apart. In fact, the major focus of my research between 1970 and 1972 was the collecting and selecting of material for a volume on E. M. Forster in the *Critical Heritage* series; but its publishers, Routledge & Kegan Paul, also viewed with favor the possibility of a critical biography of Constance Holme, and in the intervals of work on the one book I steadily accumulated the material—literary, geographical, and biographical—that would be necessary for the other.

Little by Constance Holme was currently in print. During her lifetime all her novels, seven published by Mills and Boon between 1913 and 1925, the eighth and last (*He-Who-Came?*) by Chapman and Hall in 1930, had been reissued in the 1930s in the Oxford World's Classics series, largely because of the enthusiasm of Sir Humphrey Milford. This had also extended, in 1937, to the publication in the same series of Constance Holme's last book, a group of short stories and prose poems collectively entitled *The Wisdom of the Simple*. It was the only time a book had first been issued as a World's Classic, yet Milford's *hubris* went sufficiently unpunished to permit reprints in 1939 and 1950. By the end of the 1960s, however, the only World's Classics volume still on first-hand bookshop shelves was the 1962 reprint of *The Lonely Plough*, its status as its author's best-known book affirmed by the illustration, on its hard cover, of the sea wall crucial to the novel's tragic denouement. But at that time it proved not too difficult to unearth second-hand copies of all Constance Holme's fiction, and to discover in the process how widely, during her lifetime, much of it had been disseminated, whether in the World's Classics, in the "Oxford Bookshelf" series, in editions illustrated by Madge Fuller and Claire Leighton, and in the early days of Penguin Books. And since, as late as 1963, *The Lonely Plough* had even appeared in a French translation (*La Charrue Solitaire*),¹ there seemed good reason to suppose that Constance Holme had not been totally

forgotten, even though she had written little, and published less, after World War II.

She had certainly not been forgotten by the host of people, none under 60, the oldest of them 87, who either responded to requests for information which I placed in *The Guardian* and the *Westmorland Gazette* in 1970, or whom, over the next three years, I was able to meet on summer visits to Milnthorpe and the surrounding district. My local informants, many of them suggested to me by the then vicar of Milnthorpe, Eric Walsh, included the former headmaster of the local primary school, who had known Constance Holme after 1930; a local businessman who had bought her family home, a Georgian house called Owlet Ash, and turned it into apartments; an old school friend who had collaborated with her in the production of the dialect plays by which Constance Holme first became known as an author to local audiences; one of the two last remaining makers of traditional "swills," or baskets, who had known Constance Holme all his life; and the former blacksmith at Kirkby Lonsdale, a long-time friend who had lived opposite "The Gables," the house there where she spent the years from 1916 to 1937. From these, whom I met, and others who wrote to me (including an old servant of the Holme family, and the neighbor who was with Constance Holme when she died at Arnside in 1955), I received a richly-detailed, and sometimes teasingly inconsistent, picture of a woman perhaps better known locally as a member of an important Milnthorpe family, and latterly as something of a recluse, than as the celebrated author once described by the *Birmingham Post* as "indubitably the most important living woman writer of prose fiction."² The information was no less vital for this, however, since it helped to fill in much of the local background from which Constance Holme's novels directly derived.

If my Westmorland informants concentrated, naturally enough, on the Constance Holme they had seen and known as a "local inhabitant" who also happened to be a writer, two from outside the area gave me a sense of Constance Holme as a literary figure, whose writings connected her with a wider and more cosmopolitan world. One was the Yorkshire novelist Phyllis Bentley, who allowed me to see and copy the many letters she had received from Constance Holme, at irregular intervals, between 1929 and 1948. Aged about 35 in 1929, and beginning to make a name for herself as a regional novelist, Phyllis Bentley felt great admiration for the older, established practitioner, who in turn praised and

encouraged her, proposing her for membership of the English P.E.N. Club (founded in 1921) to which she herself belonged. When, in her later years, Constance Holme's ability to write declined due to illness, bereavement, and the practical difficulties of running a sizable house with little outside help, she took considerable, if sometimes rueful, vicarious pleasure in the increasing success which attended the work of the younger writer, who by then was the age Constance Holme had been when she and Phyllis Bentley met for the first and only time in June, 1929. When, twenty-six years later, Constance Holme died, Phyllis Bentley was almost the only person from outside the Milnthorpe area, and the only literary figure, to attend her funeral.

Even greater illumination of Constance Holme as a writer—and as a human being—resulted from the goodwill of my other non-Westmorland informant of the early 1970s, Winifred Elton. Mrs. Elton was the second wife (and by then three decades the widow) of the once-prominent character actor George Elton, an approximate contemporary of Constance Holme's who had first appeared in the West End in 1905, and who regularly acted on the London stage—alongside such better-remembered figures as Marie Löhr, Edith Evans and Gerald du Maurier—between 1909 and 1939. Constance Holme had first met him in February, 1919, when he took the leading part in a performance by Edith Craig's Pioneer Players, at the King's Hall in London, of her one-act play "The Home of Vision."³

Though her public reputation rested on her novels, Constance Holme retained throughout her life a devotion to the theatre and an unfulfilled ambition to succeed as a playwright. *The Trumpet in the Dust* (1921), arguably her best novel, was originally written in the form of a play, dated 12 April 1917; and "The Home of Vision" anticipated its fictional embodiment, *Beautiful End* (1918), by two years.⁴ The meeting with George Elton—with whom, it is fairly clear, Constance Holme was in love for some considerable time—led to a voluminous correspondence, her side of which (some sixty letters written between 1919 and George Elton's death in 1942) I was generously allowed to copy, together with letters to his widow that continued to chart Constance Holme's life and feelings up to 1948. Her letters to George Elton—the letters of an artist immured in rural remoteness to a fellow-artist (soul-mate, even) active in the more exciting world of the metropolis—provided an invaluable gloss on her aspirations as a writer, and on the hopes and disappointments

which accompanied her literary career from its heyday in the 1920s to its penultimate flickerings during the early years of World War II.

By the end of 1972 my "Constance Holme dossier," as I had come to think of it, was growing substantial, both biographically and critically. All her novels had been reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and some of them also in *The Athenaeum*, *The Westminster Gazette*, *The London Mercury* and the *Spectator*. I had collected these reviews whose almost unvarying note of respect and admiration chimed with my own sense, five decades later, of Constance Holme's unusual distinction as a writer. I had been able, also, to fill in some of the details of Constance Holme's last, reclusive years through the kindness of a retired Liverpool schoolmaster, Bryan Blades, who had first met Constance Holme in 1940, attended her funeral in 1955, and in between received many letters from her of which he sent me carefully annotated copies, together with detailed descriptions of his three meetings with her, the last in 1954, shortly after she had sold her large house in Milnthorpe and moved to a much smaller one in Arnside a few miles away. The lucky proximity of a sabbatical year for me, in 1973-74, suggested that I might at last have an unbroken opportunity to begin work on the writing of a critical biography.

The invaluable final stop before this was access to the large quantity of manuscripts by Constance Holme held by the University of Texas at Austin as part of its collection of work by twentieth-century British authors. A more comprehensive gathering of material by a single writer it would be difficult to imagine: it lacked only the manuscript of her fourth novel, *Beautiful End* (held by Kent State University), and extended well beyond manuscripts of novels already published to fiction never completed or only serialized, poems which had never seen print, and plays which had never reached a stage; as well as to a great many letters, including Constance Holme's entire correspondence with her literary agents, the well-known firm of J. B. Pinker.

I had first heard of this treasure-house from Professor William B. Todd (briefly visiting England from Texas in 1968); but I also knew that I would not be able to consult it, far less carry anything away from it, unless I had permission from Constance Holme's executors and/or next of kin to do so. This I was able to obtain early in 1973 from Constance Holme's surviving nephew and niece (who in addition gave me a miniature containing a photograph of Constance Holme at 18, and photographs of her parents—including one of her Byronically-handsome

father, John Holme, on the original Victorian glass plate); and from Donald Hopewell, well-known as a former President of the Brontë Society, who had first met Constance Holme when he was a solicitor in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1929, and whom, after a lifelong friendship, she had appointed her executor three months before she died. It was from Donald Hopewell, eventually, that I received what his permission to consult and copy material at Austin could not bring me: the complete text of *The Jasper Sea*, the novel on which Constance Holme spent portions of the last two decades of her life, but sadly—since it was her personal *summa* as well as her last work of fiction—failed to finish.⁵

By then, however, I had discovered the difference between knowing that an important writer lay submerged fathoms deep in time (but not too deep, I thought, for recovery) and actually bringing her up again to the surface of the present, where no anxious telescopes were trained on her reappearance. The weeks I spent in Austin, in the spring of 1973, were a period of total immersion in the manuscripts of poems, plays, short stories, letters, novels in (or out of) print, novels only serialized in magazines, one early novel finished but never published, and at least six novels, including her last, abandoned in various stages of incompleteness. What I had here, I thought, was not only a writer whose work deserved, posthumously, the critical analysis it had lacked in her lifetime, but a whole literary career, indeed a whole life, which had followed the long, declining curve of British history from the golden afternoon of the Edwardian age through two world wars and into the grey rationality of the postwar Welfare State.

The very fact that Constance Holme's manuscripts formed part of the modern literature holdings of a major research library was itself, I felt, an indication of their lasting significance. This significance was also suggested by the prehistory of their ownership. The manuscript of *The Lonely Plough* had originally been bought, for £105, by Sir Humphrey Milford; most of the rest of the material acquired by Texas had been, for a couple of decades or so after 1937, the property of George Lazarus, a London stockbroker who had built up at his home in Amersham one of the finest private collections in Britain of modern first editions and literary manuscripts. Nor did Lazarus merely acquire; he selected. His library was made up exclusively of work which seemed to him likely to endure.⁶ Among male writers who figured largely in his collection were Forster, Huxley, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Galsworthy and D. H. Lawrence;

of women writers, he acquired on a substantial scale only the work of Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Mary Webb and Constance Holme. Clearly enough, it was not simply in order to provide the latter with much-needed money to renovate Owlet Ash, the family home she moved back to in April, 1937, that such a discriminating collector had bought so many of her manuscripts.

Nearly forty years on, however, the case had altered. Assembling and ordering my materials in the Fall of 1973, I was encouraged to read, in the foreword to Donald Davie's *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry*, published that year, the statement of what had by then become my own critical imperative: "The most obviously useful and valuable thing that criticism can do is demand attention for neglected talent."⁷ And since the publishers of Davie's book were Routledge & Kegan Paul, who had expressed interest in my own possible attempt to write with this purpose about Constance Holme, 1974 seemed a good year to begin my salvage operation in earnest. Alas, it was not. I took the precaution of checking with them, only to find that they felt no market currently existed for a critical biography, when the works of the writer it proposed to treat had virtually all gone out of print.

I was obliged to agree that, in the absence from bookstores of the primary texts, a secondary text was hardly viable: if the old audience for Constance Holme no longer existed, how could a large enough new one be created from the scattered few who might seek out, or accidentally encounter, her novels in libraries? The best proposition, Routledge suggested, was to persuade Oxford University Press to reissue some of her work, and thus perhaps produce, gradually, a climate in which a book about it, and her, would meet a need. Politely but firmly, Oxford indicated that there was no possibility of this in the foreseeable future;⁸ and indeed, though in the last few years they have started to reprint books from the World's Classics in a new, paperback format, there is no sign that there will be a place in its much reduced list for the author who for two decades featured there so largely. Nor does Constance Holme, despite recent suggestions from myself and others, yet figure among the many women authors—such as Antonia White, Winifred Holtby and Rosamond Lehmann—who have been deservedly reprinted by Virago Press.

Whether any kind of socio-literary engineering is involved in this unwillingness to reprint a writer once well-thought-of, I do not know. I do know what Constance Holme's executor, Donald Hopewell, told me

in 1973: that "it was her firm belief that most, if not all, of our modern difficulties were due to the growth of feminism."⁹ But I see no sign of this view in her work; nor, if there were any, would it invalidate that work as literature. In fact, Constance Holme's presentation of women in her novels—notably Deborah Lyndesay, the land agent's daughter in *Crumpholt Folk Going Home* (1913), Ann Clapham, the widowed charwoman heroine of *The Trumpet in the Dust* (1921), and Mattie, the head gardener's wife in *The Things Which Belong* — (1925)—is such as to emphasize their intelligence, independence and courage, and the strength of their wish for self-fulfilment, all of which were characteristics of Constance Holme herself.

But, for all the strength and individuality of so many of her female characters, I doubt whether Constance Holme would have relished, as the price of literary resurrection, being labelled a "woman writer." She was a woman who wrote, and she thought of herself as a creator, as an artist; as she put it to J. B. Pinker in 1916, resisting suggestions that her third novel, *The Old Road from Spain*, be shortened for publication in America:

I write every sentence with the utmost care, weighing each in relation to the rest, so that not one of them can be cut off without destroying the general balance; and in this case the book is too short as it is. I write because writing is everything in the world to me, and all the money in the world couldn't compensate me for producing work that was not as nearly perfect in my eyes as I could make it.¹⁰

She was certainly as admiring of male as of female writers: if one of her literary idols was Jane Austen, "who makes the rest of us seem so crude and unfinished," another—and perhaps her greatest—was Joseph Conrad, whom she called "a living wonder and miracle."¹¹ Her novels—which in their luminous inwardness sometimes resemble his—represent the feelings and occupations of men as much as those of women. The conscientious land agent Lancelot Lancaster is the key character of *The Lonely Plough*; the longings of Christopher Sill, failed farmer but inspired player of tunes on his violin, dominate *Beautiful End*; husbands weigh equal with wives in *The Splendid Fairing* (1919) and *The Things Which Belong* — (1925). And if it was through a female surrogate, Deborah Lyndesay, that Constance Holme expressed in her first published novel, *Crumpholt Folk Going Home*, her passionate sense of belonging to her local area (as a

land agent's daughter unable to carry on her father's work), it was the strivings of a village handyman to bring his many practical "gifts" to a final perfection before death which represented, in her unfinished last novel *The Jasper Sea*, the intensity of her own commitment to the vocation of writing.

Constance Holme was, of course, a "regional" writer, in so much as—apart from the central section of her unpublished early novel *The Grooves of Launching* (1911), which describes a trip to Italy—all her fiction is set in one particular area and presents characters most of whom are rooted there. That area covers little more than ten square miles of south Westmorland (as it used to be), bounded to the west by the narrowing tidal estuary of the River Kent and by the small market town of Milnthorpe where Constance Holme was born in 1880; to the north by the prosperous town of Kendal (the "Witham" of some of her novels); and to the east by the small town of Kirkby Lonsdale, outside which she lived from 1916, the date of her marriage, to 1937, when her husband, Frederick Burt Punchard, retired from his job as land agent of Underley Hall, the estate of Lord and Lady Henry Cavendish-Bentinck. The intensity of Constance Holme's attachment to the area of her birth ensured that, despite schooldays in Birkenhead on Merseyside and in Blackheath outside London, her literary imagination never ranged widely beyond it: six of her eight published novels centre on Milnthorpe, the Dallam Tower estate adjacent to it, and the farms set on either side of the Kent estuary just beyond. One of them, *Beautiful End*, was written out of homesickness—felt no further than ten miles off—for that marshy estuary; and despite possessing a beauty celebrated by Ruskin, the area around Kirkby Lonsdale only once became the setting of a novel, and that a novel (*The Things Which Belong* —) in which a wife's wish to rejoin her children (now in Canada) and her about-to-retire husband's wish to remain close to his lifetime place of work seem to enact, by indirection, Constance Holme's longing to return to her very local native roots.¹²

Though she dedicated *The Trumpet in the Dust* to her husband's employer, Lord Henry Bentinck—referring to it, with absurdly respectful modesty, as "this weed from an uncultivated garden"—Constance Holme does not seem, to judge from her available correspondence and the lack of reference to her in literary memoirs, to have made any great use of a potentially influential connection of Lord Henry's: his sister Lady Ottoline Morrell, whose house at Garsington near Oxford was frequented

by so many of the most significant writers of the period. At the time of her marriage, Constance Holme had already published three novels, as well as a number of poems in the *Westminster Gazette*, and might thus have seemed not unfit to be mildly lionized. Certainly she and her husband visited Garsington at least once: in a letter of 1932 she referred to having "stayed in the same house as T. S. Eliot and his wife,"¹³ and in mid 1921 she uncharacteristically anticipated D. H. Lawrence by beginning a novel (of which no manuscript traces remain) about a great lady and a gamekeeper. What she thought of the Garsington milieu, however, and what it thought of her, remain tantalizingly unknown; but one suspects that she may have been too class-conscious, and too old-fashioned in her literary tastes (she admired Kipling, but little of Virginia Woolf), to fit in with the metropolitan avant-garde. They, in their turn, might have felt for her exclusively northern fiction what Luis Huddleston, the co-protagonist of her third novel *The Old Road from Spain* (1916), is described as feeling for the area it so lovingly presents—"nothing but a bored dislike for this corner of the hills, so remote from the central pulses of the world."¹⁴ If so, it seems a pity: had Constance Holme become even a minor footnote to Bloomsbury reminiscences, her work might now seem more "bankable" to publishers.

But, regional as her novels are in their setting, they are not "remote from the central pulses of the world." Born of a long-established North of England professional family, the daughter of one land agent and the wife of another, Constance Holme felt no lack of importance in her own area and was especially well-placed to observe and record traditional patterns of life at all levels of a stratified rural society, together with the relationships and aspirations which held that society together. It would be foolishly evasive, and impoverishing, not to admit the strong attachment to her local area and its ways which gives Constance Holme's novels, and short stories, their essential *raison d'être*. She wrote of what she knew—the lives of landowners, land agents, tenant farmers and working class people in a particularly beautiful part of the northwest of England—and to the expression of that knowledge she brought an eloquent mixture of sober realism and lyrical longing whose claim to permanent critical esteem transcends the evanescence, during her later years and after her death, of much of the lifestyle that gave rise to it.

That this depiction of one area and its people was also a depiction of emotions not merely regional, or even merely national, but recognizably

universal and essentially human, should have been made sufficiently clear by the award to Constance Holme, in 1921, of a then very prestigious literary award, the Femina-Vie Heureuse Prize, which had been set up by two French women's magazines to honor a writer hitherto insufficiently recognized. Constance Holme won it for her fifth novel, *The Splendid Fairing*, which, broadly in common with its predecessor *Beautiful End* and its successors *The Trumpet in the Dust* and *The Things Which Belong* —, dealt with a single, crucially important day in the life of an ageing protagonist. Constance Holme's first three published novels (*Crump Folk Going Home*, *The Lonely Plough* and *The Old Road from Spain*), together with their three unpublished or only-serialized forerunners—*Staggie Three* (1905), *Hugh of Hughsdale* (1906) and *The Grooves of Launching* (1911)—had in the main concerned themselves with the upper levels of rural society, and in traditional novel fashion spread themselves over a large cast of characters and a substantial period of time. But from 1917 onwards, for reasons which only a full-scale study could hope to make clear, Constance Holme's focus had at once moved socially downwards and contracted in temporal scope, to concentrate with remarkable psychological penetration on the response of a less privileged character, or characters, to the challenges posed by loss, disappointment and reduced expectations. In their intermeshing of character, fate and accident—Constance Holme referred to them as her "Greek" novels—*The Splendid Fairing* and its siblings may be said, with no denigration of their individuality, to share a broad family likeness with the best work of Thomas Hardy, perhaps the only British regional novelist whose chosen subject matter has not prevented him from attaining a major position in the literary canon.

It is time that the canon widened to include, or opened again to re-include, the novels of Constance Holme. Perhaps becoming uncertain of her powers, she prefaced her last novel, *He-Who-Came?* (1930)—a deceptively slight tale masterfully told—with this two-sentence "Prologue": "I like this story. I hope you will." At the end she repeated it, slightly changed, as an Epilogue: "I like this story. I hope you do." It is a pity that few but readers in a university library can now have the opportunity to put this story, and her others, to the test; even more a pity that, with Constance Holme's published novels out of print, there seems little chance of publication for her not-quite-completed last one, *The Jasper Sea*, which despite recurrent illness and increasing disillusion with

a changing world she worked at during her last two decades, and whose level of execution does not betray its implicit belief that the ordinary, if it can be lit from within, is proper matter for art. It seems to me not merely a happenstance of time, but a serendipity of literary judgment, that the prize awarded to Constance Holme in 1921 should in 1924 have been won by Mary Webb, and in 1928 by Virginia Woolf,¹⁵ the first a regional writer of uncommon stylistic distinction and considerable emotional power, who still retains some of her reputation, the second a cosmopolitan, a technical innovator and an illuminator of consciousness, whose reputation seems unlikely to diminish. Only the non-availability of Constance Holme's fiction deprives her of her rightful place beside these two contemporaries; or rather, if more precision is called for, below Virginia Woolf but above Mary Webb. Were her novels republished, their manuscripts would again become what they once were—not the bound, dry relics of an obscured career, but the prototypes of living books. The writing of my long-deferred critical biography might then take on relevance; though not, alas, for those many informants, by now all dead, whose admiration for Constance Holme, and whose generosity to me, made such a notion possible.

NOTES

1. Trans. Sophie Lautan, Paris, Editions du Scorpion. I am indebted for this information to Professor Walter Redfern of the University of Reading.
2. Quoted in Bertram Rota, "Some Uncollected Authors XI: Constance Holme." *The Book Collector*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1956) 251. Rota does not give the date, which I have not yet traced.
3. This was eventually published in *The Best One-Act Plays of 1931*, selected by J. W. Marriott (London: Harrap, 1933) 93-105.
4. The mss. of both plays are found in a group, "Ten Plays," in the possession of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin.
5. Its ms. text at Austin runs to only six chapters; but Constance Holme completed ten, and began Chapter 11.
6. For a description, see Bertram Rota, "Contemporary Collectors VII: The George Lazarus Library," *The Book Collector*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1955) 279-84. Of more recent women writers, Lazarus had wished to collect only Elizabeth Bowen.
7. Donald Davie, *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1973) 2.

8. There must, however, still have been some demand for Constance Holme's work, since in 1974 the firm of Cedric Chivers (Portway, Bath) reprinted *The Old Road from Spain* and *The Splendid Fairing*. These reprints, as indicated on the versos of each title page, were "by arrangement with the copyright holder [Oxford University Press] at the request of the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association."
9. Donald Hopewell, letter to the present writer, 14 May 1973.
10. Letter to J. B. Pinker, 20 January 1916. *The Old Road from Spain* was published in the U.S.A. in 1916 by Robert McBride, under the title *The Home Coming*.
11. Quoted in "Westmorland Wizardry: Constance Holme and Regional Fiction," *T. P.'s Weekly*, 15 Jan. 1916.
12. It is significant, in this connection, that the first edition of *The Things Which Belong* — (London: Mills and Boon, 1925) bore the following "Author's Note": "The author wishes to say that, in spite of the 'local colour' in this book, the situation between the characters is purely imaginary."
13. Letter to R. N. Greene-Armytage, 5 Jan. 1932. (Her letters to him form part of the Constance Holme holdings at Austin).
14. *The Old Road from Spain* (1916), ch. 1. World's Classics Edition (1932) 7.
15. For, respectively, *Precious Bane* (1924) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927).