

CliffsNotes on

GREEN MANSIONS

HUDSON'S GREEN MANSIONS

Notes

including

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LIFE AND BACKGROUND OF THE AUTHOR

William H. Hudson was born on August 4, 1841, near Buenos Aires, Argentina, and died on August 18, 1922, at Bayswater, England. His tomb is at Sussex Downs, and a statue of Rima, the heroine of *Green Mansions*, carved by Sir Jacob Epstein, is found in the bird sanctuary at Hyde Park in London. Although Hudson lived most of his life in England and many of his works deal with English subjects, he is still in several ways a South American writer. Even his naturalization as a British citizen at the beginning of the twentieth century does not contradict that classification.

The parents of William H. Hudson were originally from New England, but they had decided to settle in Argentina because of the milder climate. His father had moderate success as a sheep rancher, and young William spent the first fifteen years of his life in the romantic and rural surroundings of the pampas, or wild grasslands, of the Argentine Republic. He received his education through the efforts of his mother, and he developed a love for books and reading at an early age. Until 1856, then, he lived on two ranches where the observation of nature stimulated him toward the career of a naturalist and where he likewise formed many of his literary and philosophical ideas. For example, the young Hudson early sensed in his strong imagination the appeal of trees--the "green mansions" of his novel.

Hudson, however, was suddenly and rudely awakened to the realities of life when his family suffered financial reverses which required moving to a more modest home. Shortly thereafter, the boy of fifteen was attacked by typhus, and before he recovered, he was stricken with rheumatic fever. His mother slowly nursed him back to health, but her constant devotion probably contributed to her own decline in physical strength and her death in 1859. The illnesses which Hudson had faced caused in the youth a severe psychological and philosophical shock. His heart was permanently damaged, and he would never be able to lead a strenuous life. Hudson came to grips with the evil and apparently senseless aspect of nature; and like Abel, the hero of *Green Mansions*, Hudson saw the high hopes for a happy future shattered quickly by blind fate. The return of his brother, Edwin, from the United States gave Hudson the chance to discover the works of Charles Darwin, the English naturalist, whose ideas about natural selection and evolution were disturbing the intellectual circles of the nineteenth century. Hudson started to reject the teachings of orthodox religion and to place his faith in nature even though he could not explain and justify the force--and fury--of destiny.

After his father's death in 1868, Hudson was compelled to devote himself completely to his chosen career as a naturalist. He had already tried his hand at various jobs, such as the management of estates, and he had worked at times with the gauchos, or cowboys, of Argentina. Hudson's growing reputation as a naturalist attracted the attention of the director of the National Museum in Buenos Aires and the representative in Argentina of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. His investigations also became recognized in England, and Hudson now devoted his time to the study of the Stone Age Indians.

In 1874, Hudson decided to leave Argentina and to reside permanently in England. His reports had won him some fame among scientists in his field, and he probably felt that he could achieve more success abroad. Moreover, his temperament and training had really been more British than South American so that he consequently regarded England as his spiritual home. Two years after arriving in England, he married Emily Wingrave, a former concert singer. The marriage, not particularly happy because of the couple's incompatibility, nevertheless helped Hudson financially and gave him a stable social life. Hudson was never a very gregarious individual, and his brother echoed the thoughts of other friends when he said of him: "Of all the people I have ever known, you are the only one I don't know."

Until 1901, when he received a small pension for his nature studies, Hudson lived a life of relative hardship. Little general acclaim and even less money came to him despite his solid contributions as a

naturalist. For example, he had published scholarly volumes, such as *The Naturalist in La Plata*, *Idle Days in Patagonia*, and *Birds in a Village*; and he made important contributions to *Argentine Ornithology* in 1888. During these years, Hudson had also written poetry and essays which inspired him to continue with creative literature. Two initial works, *Ralph Herne* and *The History of the House of Lamb*, were romances based upon the exotic and thrilling adventures of a young hero in Argentina.

In 1885, Hudson published his first important novel, *The Purple Land*, essentially an improved revision of *The History of the House of Lamb*. There was some encouraging praise from the critics, but again popular acceptance of his works proved elusive. The novel deals with the exploits of Richard Lamb as he battles nature and thieves in South America. The tone is romantic, the situation melodramatic, and the language sentimental, but the book is clearly redeemed by masterly descriptions of the South American continent. When the novel began to sell profitably much later, Hudson commented rather bitterly on the problems of writers and publishers.

Finally, in 1904, Hudson published his masterpiece, *Green Mansions*, which won him critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic and secured his reputation as a serious writer. In 1906, he revised and reissued the third of his three important romances, *A Crystal Age* (first published in 1887), which basked in the continuing glow of its recent predecessor, *Green Mansions*. *A Crystal Age*, a "romance of the future," is Hudson's vision of a Utopia that reflects much of the scientific spirit of his age as well as his own ideas and expectations about the coming centuries. Hudson, for example, explains that dogs and horses have developed through evolution to do menial tasks on farms. Smith, the hero, finds himself in the future where a peaceful, pastoral society shapes all decisions; and life is unmarred by the stresses and strains of an industrialized, urban civilization, which Hudson detested. Perhaps the most shocking aspect of the novel for Victorian readers of the early twentieth century was that of procreation. Yoletta, the heroine, intends to choose Smith for her husband, but the latter drinks the wrong potion and loses Yoletta and his chance to live in "the crystal age."

Hudson also wrote short stories, and two of them, *El Ombú* and *Marta Riquelme*, are considered outstanding examples of their genre. *El Ombú* is the history of the decline and fall of a family as told by Nicandro, who is sitting in the shade of an ombu-tree. The realistic story reflects the whole atmosphere of Hudson's early years in Argentina. For instance, he tells of the fate of General Barboza, who allows himself to be bathed in the blood of a recently killed bull in order to recover from an illness and emerges insane from the ordeal. At the end, the descendants of the ruined family find some measure of peace in nature. *Marta Riquelme* traces the misfortunes of the heroine, as a Jesuit priest narrates a legend. The kakué bird came into existence when Marta, after escaping from captivity among the Indians, returned to her husband; and he rejected her because of her emaciated condition. The distraught woman was changed into the form of the kakué and fled into the forest. Marta Riquelme, being changed from a woman to a bird, is somewhat reminiscent of Rima, the bird-girl in *Green Mansions*.

In addition, Hudson showed another side to the coin of his artistry in the composition of country essays, such as *The Land's End*, *Afoot in England*, and *A Shepherd's Life*, which extolled the bucolic environment of the English countryside. The mood, in contrast to the delight of the wild hinterlands of South America in *Green Mansions*, is nostalgic and placid. During World War I, Hudson retreated to the security of his books as he saw promising young men, such as the poet Rupert Brooke, killed in action. He resigned his pension now that his finances were securely established by the continued acceptance of his works among the readers of England and America. As his life neared an end, Hudson realized that his major achievement was *Green Mansions*, especially because of the attention he had devoted to the South American continent in that romance. When Hudson died, Morley Roberts, who witnessed his death, wrote: "I wished to take him out upon the open pampa, with a long wide view beyond the sight of man even on horseback, with the great clear sky above. So I would have dugged a grave and put him there to rest in his blanket just as he had fallen asleep, without disturbing his attitude of quiet peace."

INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL

The success of *Green Mansions* in 1904 assured Hudson's place in English literature, provided him with continuing royalties as a steady income, and won him a market for all his writings. The critics helped in this acceptance by their generally unanimous praise. For example, Hilaire Belloc, the influential British writer, praised *Green Mansions* as one of the best books he had ever read. In 1915, John Galsworthy wrote a foreword for a new edition of *Green Mansions*; and these preliminary pages definitely established Hudson's romance as a classic of the early twentieth century. Galsworthy's comments were penetrating and laudatory, and he concluded that Hudson was the "most valuable writer of the time."

The "Foreword" of Galsworthy is often included in editions of *Green Mansions* and is always mentioned by critics of the romance. According to Galsworthy, Hudson not only depicts nature in finely sketched poetic prose, but he transcends his descriptions with a vision. Never the admirer of cities, Hudson shows what the modern world has missed in nature, and he urges contemporary man to review his misguided aspirations toward perfection and beauty. However, this vision of Hudson regarding the appreciation of nature is always seen through civilized eyes; there is never any praise for the illusory theme of the "noble savage." But Hudson is an idealist, doomed to failure, according to the English poet.

Death and the inexplicable vagaries of destiny destroy hopes and dreams. In addition, the chasm created by contemporary civilization has widened the distance between man and nature; man no longer understands the gigantic forces at work in natural settings, as he tried to do in the past. In *The Purple Land*, Hudson says, "We had only to conquer Nature, find out her secrets, make her our obedient slave, then the Earth would be Eden, and every man Adam and every woman Eve. We are still marching bravely on, conquering Nature, but how weary and sad we are getting!"

There are for Galsworthy three important characteristics to *Green Mansions*: the story itself, the style, and the philosophy of Hudson. The story is so unique in its plot that Galsworthy calls it, probably for that reason, "a pure romance." It is true that critics, such as Carlos Baker, have traced influences and sources for Hudson's creation in *Green Mansions*; but all the scholars admit that Hudson fashioned anew and improved whatever readings he may have used. Stylistically, *Green Mansions* is for Galsworthy "a prose poem"; and Hudson has dedicated himself to the expression of the beautiful in the background, characterization, description, and language. Hudson's religious philosophy is noted in his espousal of the beauty of nature as a reflection of God; but this vision is also straightforward and honest, and the view is not always optimistic about a benevolent God.

Hudson, in short, was a rebel in the twentieth century against the standards of the present age. Hudson's faith lies in a simpler time when people respected and lived by the laws of nature, when life was less hectic, and when progress was not deified for humanity. He is, almost a century after Wordsworth, close to the English poet's rejection of the Industrial Revolution, then beginning to destroy the rural fabric of British society. Several critics have indicated the similarities of Hudson with the ideas of Wordsworth and even Thoreau.

Ironically, Galsworthy wrote his incisive "Foreword" during World War I, when the values of the "pale mechanician" were being put to the test in a crisis of Western civilization. Galsworthy curiously makes no mention in his famous essay of the important historical events occurring in Europe. In fact, it would be impossible from internal evidence to date Galsworthy's "Foreword." Hudson's world of nature and ideal beauty are far removed from the bloodshed then taking place on the battlefields of the Continent. The impossibility of accepting Hudson's vision of the "green mansions" was grasped by the generation coming to literary power in the 1920s. Hudson himself, by the time of his death in 1922, could see that World

War I had destroyed his poetic dream of a happy existence in a natural habitat

It is also ironic that Hudson attained financial and critical success and that *Green Mansions* became a modern classic at the time when the ideas and themes of the writer were about to be challenged by the "lost generation" after 1918. The traumatic effects of the 1914-18 conflict upon European youth have deservedly received much attention from historians. The young men and women of that era lost faith in the values of the past, belief in romanticism and idealism, and hope for the progressive improvement of humanity. The escapist qualities of Hudson's world in *Green Mansions* evoked cynical responses from a generation that insisted upon seeing the social system and life realistically. Hudson's writings, then, were not in tune with the new era, and his reading public vanished quickly during the 1920s. Esthetically, of course, the romance emerges unscathed, but the historical situation had changed so that the qualities of the book were not looked upon as valuable in the postwar period.

Hudson is, therefore, not a widely read author at the present time, but he has certainly achieved a lasting place with his masterpiece, *Green Mansions*. Yet it is too easy to dismiss him as an anachronism in the twentieth century. Hudson revived the romantic heritage of nature as a source of inspiration, but he endeavored to avoid the melodramatic and melancholy attitudes of the romantic. He looked upon nature as a trained naturalist as well as a poet; he brought discipline, intelligence, and personal research into his conception of the primitive environment. However, Hudson is not a realist about his subject because he contributed emotional, imaginative, and poetical feelings to *Green Mansions*.

Hudson is, above all, sincere in his vision of earth. One might well wonder what he would have thought of the mounting problems of water and air pollution. He constantly called attention to people's failure to live in harmony with nature, and *Green Mansions* is his ideal of a harmonious relationship. It is true that the dream is destroyed, but for Hudson the issue of a vision for humanity was raised. If not his view, then at least some ideal of the future, stimulated and inspired by the study of his book, should be forthcoming. "Nevertheless we cannot suppress all curiosity," Hudson wrote in the prologue to *A Crystal Age*, "or help asking one another, What is *your* dream--your ideal?"

Green Mansions is often called a romance rather than a novel, and Hudson uses the subheading of "a romance of the tropical forest" in order to describe his book initially. The critics, however, are not in agreement about a precise classification. The romance is characterized by certain features, the most prominent ones being the use of fantasy and imagination. In short, the unreal is a permeating element of a romance. In *Green Mansions*, the entire story fits this definition. Abel plays the role of an average South American youth who crosses the border from a credible situation into an exotic, unusual dimension of time and space. Rima is almost like a "god" or "ghost" who appears to Abel. Hudson utilizes his poetic talent to heighten the imaginative and romantic effects of the setting in the hinterlands of South America and the tragic love affair between the young man and the bird-girl.

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

A British official in Georgetown, British Guiana, after the death of "Mr. Abel," feels compelled to publish the story of his friend's adventures. He is, therefore, the narrator in the prologue of *Green Mansions*. The Englishman explains how he finally won Abel Guevez de Argensola's friendship so that the latter revealed the secret of his mysterious past, of the darkened chamber in his home, and of the urn containing ashes.

Throughout the twenty-two chapters of *Green Mansions*, Abel himself narrates his story chronologically, and the government official disappears completely from the plot. Abel was twenty-three years old when he was about to flee from Venezuela after the failure of a conspiracy to overthrow the government. Abel,

implicated in the abortive coup, changed his mind about leaving the country and decided instead to fulfill a boyhood dream of exploring the untamed hinterlands south of the Orinoco river. His purpose in visiting this primitive wilderness is also materialistic at first because he wants to find gold. Suffering greatly from the hardships of the terrain, Abel is further discouraged by his realization that the natives have no golden objects in their possession and that he is unable to discover any gold deposits.

Reaching an Indian village in the Parahuari mountains, Abel is met by the natives and makes a favorable impression on Runi, the chief, by a gift of a tinder-box, his only remaining valuable trinket. Abel's welcome is then made more generous by the Indians invitation to join in drinking *casserie*, an alcoholic beverage. After this initiation, Abel is hospitably accepted by all the Parahuaris, especially Cla-cla, Runi's mother, and Kua-kó, a young brave of the tribe. Abel gradually accepts his new way of life and begins to appreciate the beauties of this wild paradise of nature.

After three weeks, Abel begins to explore the forests alone. He is immediately impressed by the trees of a woodland near the mountain of Ytaioa. The trees become for Abel the "green mansions," where he is very happy in the solitary natural surroundings. The Indians, however, are not pleased by Abel's report of his visit to the woodland; Runi, the chief, warns him not to go there again. Abel is surprised that they never enter that particular area to hunt or to roam. Fascinated by the unknown and mysterious, Abel eagerly pays more visits to the "green mansions" and is particularly delighted by the melody of a bird whose sound somewhat resembles a human voice.

Kua-kó warns Abel that an evil spirit dwells in the woodland, and the crafty savage begins to teach Abel the use of the *zabatana*, the weapon through which the Parahuaris blow poisoned arrows at game--and at their enemies. Abel, after a short time, becomes aware of two related factors shaping his future: An intelligent being lives in the woodland, and the Parahuaris want him to kill the "daughter of the Didi" with the blowpipe. During one of his frequent excursions to the forest, Abel is about to kill a snake when a beautiful young girl appears to protect the serpent. Abel is astonished to observe the manner in which the snake provides protection for the girl by curling itself around one of her ankles. However, Abel forgets the snake as he tries to approach the girl and is bitten by the serpent. Fearing that he will soon die, Abel runs toward the Indian village as a storm breaks. He loses his way, falls, and loses consciousness.

When he revives, Abel finds himself in the hut of Nuflo, an old man, who says that Rima, the bird-girl, is his granddaughter. The girl is shy indoors, and Abel cannot associate his previous ecstatic impression of her with the present surroundings. Although Rima is more talkative in the woodland, she continues to be shy with Abel as he endeavors to express his love to her. Nuflo and Abel, though they do not quarrel openly, nevertheless challenge each other in their constant discussions: The old man is reluctant to talk about his background and that of Rima, and Abel is constantly asking questions about the pair's past. Abel also discovers that Nuflo, contrary to Rima's wishes, kills animals in order to enjoy the taste of meat. Irrked by Rima's avoidance of his presence, Abel leaves the woodland to spend a few days with the Parahuaris. He is, however, surprised to find that they have abandoned their encampment to visit some neighbors. Only Cla-cla, too feeble for the rigors of the trip, remains behind, and she and Abel enjoy an evening by the fire singing and talking.

Abel's anger at Rima's strange rebuffs disappears soon, and he hastens back to the "green mansions" to see Rima despite Cla-cla's pleas to stay at the Parahuari village. Caught again in a storm after going in the wrong direction, Abel is saved by Rima, who has been faithfully waiting in the woodland for him to return. Rima, though she is still unable to declare her obvious love for Abel, is more communicative with the young man, and they spend a day on top of Ytaioa mountain. Abel tries to tell the girl about the vast territories of the outside world, and he stresses the inner peace existing in the isolated "green mansions." Rima, however, is curious to know at first hand the sights beyond the woodland. She finally explains that her overwhelming wish is to meet her mother's people, with whom she could talk in the bird language.

Despite his effort to explain gently the truth about the probable annihilation of her tribe, Abel by chance mentions the mountains of Riolama, which Rima recognizes as the place where her mother belonged. She goes down Ytaioa quickly to upbraid Nuflo for concealing the location of Riolama and to make plans for a journey there. Abel sorrowfully follows Rima because he fears that the idyll of the "green mansions" is ending or, at least, is facing a crisis.

Nuflo is furious at Abel's mention of Riolama, but the old man, through fear of Rima's prayers about his future salvation, is forced to undertake the trip. In return for his part in the expedition, Abel demands that Nuflo tell the truth about his and Rima's background. Visiting the Parahuaris to divert any possible suspicion from the savages about the planned absence from the woodland, Abel is treated as a prisoner, and he has to escape from the village to rejoin his two companions.

During the trip to Riolama, Nuflo gradually reveals to Abel the story of his relationship with Rima. Nuflo, a member of a band of outlaws, by chance met an injured woman who was pregnant. He took her to the settlement of Voa where her daughter, Rima, was born. The child, like the mother, spoke a mysterious language of the birds which Nuflo was unable to understand. When the mother died, Nuflo took Rima to the "green mansions," and the girl, sickly because of the climate at Voa, became healthy as she lived close to nature. Rima, protecting the forest life, is hated by the Indians because she prevents them from killing the birds and animals.

When the party reaches Riolama, Abel tries to explain to Rima that the girl's tribe was probably killed by warring natives and that her mother was the only survivor. Rima, overcome emotionally by the explanation of the tragedy, faints. She turns to Abel for love and protection when she revives. Instead of going back to the "green mansions" with Nuflo and Abel, the girl determines to return alone in order to prepare clothes for herself and a more suitable welcome for Abel. Stunned by this sudden decision, Abel reacts too slowly to stop the girl's departure.

Abel and Nuflo start back on the difficult trip, and they immediately suspect disaster when Nuflo's hut is found burned to the ground. Searching for Rima in the woodland, Abel is more apprehensive when one of the Indians, who have never dared to enter the "green mansions," appears and confidently leads him to the Parahuari village. After Runi berates Abel before the other savages, the young man explains convincingly that he had only left the encampment to search for gold. Abel eventually persuades Kua-kó to explain what happened to Rima. The Parahuaris, realizing that the woodland was no longer protected by Rima, began to hunt in the territory. One day they trapped the returning Rima in a tree. They built a fire around the tree, and Rima plunged to her death in the flames, calling to Abel as she fell.

Unable to sleep after hearing the tragic story, Abel tries to run away from the natives; but Kua-kó pursues him, and Abel kills the savage. Abel goes to the camp of Managa, Runi's enemy, and leads these Indians on a massacre of the Parahuaris. The sight of the dead Cla-cla revives Abel's better instincts, and he escapes to Nuflo's hideaway, where he finds the old man slain by the marauding savages. Abel endeavors to live alone, but he realizes that he will go insane because of the memories of Rima associated with the "green mansions." He searches for and finds the remains of Rima, determined to return to civilization where he can do silent homage to Rima for the rest of his life.

Although Abel is weak and the trip is long, he finally reaches Georgetown, where he recovers and establishes himself as a respectable figure, but one of mysterious, unexplained origins.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Abel Guevez de Argensola

A young man from Caracas, Venezuela, who meets Rima in the forests of South America, falls in love with her, and loses her in a tragic fire.

Rima

The mysterious girl of the "green mansions," named for the mountains of Rioluma, who speaks a bird language and communicates with the creatures of the woodlands.

Nuflo

An old man who lives in the "green mansions" with Rima as her guardian; he had rescued the girl's mother shortly before Rima's birth.

Runi

The chief of the Parahuari tribe where Abel first finds shelter and protection.

Kua-kó

A young Parahuari whom Abel eventually kills because of the savage's involvement in Rima's fate.

Cla-cla

An old Parahuari woman whom Abel finds entertaining and sympathetic.

Managa

Chief of a tribe near the Parahuari, a sworn enemy of Runi.

British Official

The unnamed narrator in the prologue of *Green Mansions*, who explains the source of the story.

CRITICAL COMMENTARIES

PROLOGUE

Summary

An English official in Georgetown, British Guiana, describes his friendship with a mysterious Venezuelan, Abel Guevez de Argensola, known generally in the colony as Mr. Abel. When the Englishman arrived at his post in 1887, Mr. Abel had been living in Georgetown about twelve years, and he enjoyed the respect of the British residents. The narrator, however, is the only person who has established a close relationship with Mr. Abel as a result of their mutual interest in poetry; but the British official still did not learn from his friend's own lips the explanation of his hidden past. After a minor quarrel between the two friends, Mr. Abel, stung by the other's accusation that his life was "a closed and clasped volume," invites the English official to dinner and explains the true story of his youth. Later, presumably after Mr. Abel's death, the narrator prepares to repeat his friend's story in print.

Commentary

The principal purpose of this brief prologue is to create a mood of mystery and wonderment, and to arouse some curiosity in the reader. Some clues, interesting pieces of information but apparently

unconnected in any logical pattern, are provided about Mr. Abel: the reticent, though not antisocial, behavior of the Venezuelan exile, and the darkened room in his house, the urn containing ashes, and his refusal to supply details of his early life.

The two friends represent two different worlds and the contrast is sharply noted. Mr. Abel is "the nervous olive skinned Hispano-American of the tropics"; and the British official is "the phlegmatic blue-eyed Saxon of the cold north." *Green Mansions* is, in several ways, a novel belonging to South American literature; Hudson pioneered in interpreting Latin America for English-speaking audiences. Perhaps the most important observation of the English friend of Mr. Abel is that the latter's world consists of "the world of nature and of the spirit."

The device used in the prologue by Hudson is a familiar literary technique: a story within a story, or the entire history narrated by a character other than the main protagonist. The British official disappears from the plot after this prologue, and Mr. Abel becomes the teller of the tale. In short, the prologue serves as a useful frame of reference for Hudson to proceed more quickly and to develop his story chronologically without the necessity of some explanations or digressions about Mr. Abel's background in the following chapters.

CHAPTERS 1 & 2

Summary

Abel starts the story of his travels and adventures when, at the age of twenty-three, he takes part in an unsuccessful plot against the corrupt Venezuelan government. Instead of going into exile abroad, Abel decides to satisfy a boyhood ambition by exploring the interior of his country, south of the Orinoco river. The young man, well prepared for the dangerous excursion because of his mastery of several Indian dialects, penetrates deep into the jungles and visits isolated communities. Don Panta, an old Venezuelan trader, befriends Abel and teaches him some valuable lessons about survival in the dense forests. Rumors about gold spur Abel to undertake further explorations, and he reaches the Parahuari mountains, where his search for gold proves futile.

Arriving at an Indian village, Abel is greeted sullenly by Runi, the chief, because he had suffered at the hands of the one white man whom he once met. After drinking *casserie*, an Indian "home brew," with his hosts, Abel makes a favorable impression on the Indians by his promise to help them defeat another tribe in battle. The Parahuari Indians, also under the influence of *casserie*, allow Abel to rest and to enjoy their hospitality for three weeks.

During that period of idle time, Abel tries to make the acquaintance of these Indians and to understand their psychology and way of life. Unable to sympathize generally with their savage natures, Abel nevertheless enjoys the story-telling of Cla-cla, Runi's mother, and the fencing lessons he starts with Kua-kó, a young brave about nineteen or twenty years old. Restless and tired of the monotonous existence of the Parahuari village, Abel goes one day into the forest in order to get a better view of the solitary mountain of Ytaioa. When he returns, his host warns Abel not to visit the forest any more because "something bad" will happen to the person who trespasses in the forest. Although Abel is impressed by the fact that these Indians never go near "this wild paradise," he is personally encouraged rather than disheartened by the challenge of the jungle mystery.

On the following day, Abel sets out for "the forest of evil report" because he is completely charmed by "the fascination of the unknown and the mysterious." Wandering through the "green mansions" of trees, Abel is entranced by the melodious strains of one particular bird because of its resemblance to the human voice. Abel, in fact, is almost convinced that a "being" is the source of the delightful song; he is

determined to keep on returning to the woodland until he solves the mystery.

Commentary

The main outlines of the plot and the important themes are introduced in these two chapters, and Hudson prepares the reader for Abel's encounter with Rima, the bird-girl. Nevertheless, the author very skillfully utilizes suspense and mystery in building up to the fateful meeting of the two main characters. Abel, almost sure that a human creature is the enchanting singer of the forbidden forest, is firmly committed to the quest of the ethereal voice.

After abandoning civilization, Abel realizes very soon that he is approaching a confrontation with two powerful forces: nature and destiny. He is a romantic in his love of the "green mansions" and other aspects of unspoiled natural surroundings; he senses intuitively that he is coming into intimate contact through the solitary and overwhelming scenes of nature with a great crisis in his life. There are many poetical passages, especially in the second chapter, as Abel enters the forest for the first time; the lengthy, detailed paragraph beginning with the words "I spent several hours in this wild paradise . . ." is an excellent example of Hudson's lyrical descriptions of humanity facing nature.

Abel, however, is very realistic about the savages who dwell in the jungles; he certainly does not accept Rousseau's theory that these inhabitants of an uncivilized environment are innocent and trusting people. In fact, Abel expresses an immediate and abiding lack of sympathy with the manners, psychology, and ethics of the Indians on the South American continent. He also takes a very dim view of any future improvement of the natives, and he places them on a level with "beasts of prey." Hudson, in short, seems to imply that these "savage inhabitants" represent a distasteful and unfortunate element of the awesomely beautiful South American landscape. But Hudson comprehends that the Indians are unfortunate because of the corrupting influence of the white man's ways and that the natives may therefore be "the last act in the great American tragedy."

Likewise, Hudson views the political and social background of South America realistically and honestly. His comments on the unstable governments and the constant reliance upon rebellion, revolution, and violence as a solution for needed reform provide cogent criticisms of contemporary problems. Abel is, as Hudson also indicates, an idealistic representative of the youth of these countries. Abel's failure in the conspiracy leads to flight from his native city because there is no room for opposition within the governmental system.

The air of the Parahuari village is oppressive, but Abel's reaction to Cla-cla's antics--the only Indian whom he finds amusing--provides another change in mood from the seriousness of his dealings with the other natives. His sympathetic attitude toward Runi's mother should be kept in mind to understand the tragic finale of *Green Mansions*. Abel's initial thoughts, when he first hears the strange song during his forest adventure, show a touching trait because the hero's reactions are almost those of a child--so simple, direct, and trusting in probing an unknown facet of life.

CHAPTERS 3 & 4

Summary

Returning several times to the forest, Abel is gradually convinced that "the bird or being" follows him during each of the visits. He concludes that the Indians may know more about this mystery than they have revealed. Offering Kua-kó his metal match-box in return for the native's services as a guide through the woodland, Abel is at first spurned by the frightened Indian. Kua-kó, however, cannot resist the offer for long and so he accompanies Abel to the forest. Although Kua-kó takes along his *zabatana*, a long tube from which the Indians blow poisoned arrows, the young brave refuses to kill any game within the

boundaries of the forbidden forest. He explains accidentally to Abel that "the daughter of the Didi," who dwells among the trees, would throw the poisoned dart back at him. Abel, although he laughs at this explanation, understands that he has become involved in a greater mystery. Kua-kó's alarmed behavior and abrupt silence confirm Abel's impression. Overcome by his fears, Kua-kó suddenly bolts from Abel's side and flees as fast as he can in the direction of the Indian village.

Alone, Abel suddenly hears the mysterious creature nearby; he is completely bewildered by the apparently human emotions conveyed by the beautiful melodies of what he now calls "being, not bird." There is anger or resentment in the voice although Abel also feels that the creature is kindly disposed toward the young man's presence in the woodland. But Abel, like Kua-kó, begins to be overwhelmed by the imaginary terrors of the vast forest and by his own isolated situation. The suspense is broken when Abel finds himself in the surroundings of *araguatos*, or howling monkeys, who terrify him at first and then amuse him later with their antics and "unparalleled vocal powers." When the woodland voice becomes silent, Abel goes back calmly to the Parahuari village.

After reflecting on his latest adventures, Abel enters the encampment of his hosts more confidently because he is now sure that the creature in the woods is friendly toward him and unfriendly toward the Indians. Runi and Kua-kó, obviously curious about their guest's impressions and experiences, conceal their desire to find out the truth. Nevertheless, they question Abel as slyly as possible; his report about the tame *araguatos* amaze the Indians who have never observed the howling monkeys at such close range. Runi, in fact, admits that the Indians never go to the forest to hunt despite the abundant game there. Abel impresses Kua-kó by giving the savage the match-box despite the fact that the Indian did not earn his prize. Kua-kó, in turn, surprises Abel by starting to teach the white man the use of the *zabatana*. When Abel becomes somewhat proficient in the use of the deadly weapon, Kua-kó eagerly agrees with his pupil that the latter might be able to shoot within twenty yards "a bird not smaller than a small man." Kua-kó, laughing heartily, puzzles Abel by inquiring "whether a small woman was not the same as a small man."

Becoming curious once again about the "mysterious melody," Abel prepares to pay another visit to the forest, but he is determined to go alone from now on. While Abel is out with Kua-kó for further practice with the *zabatana*, he makes an excuse and returns to the village to ward off any suspicion before going into the woodland.

Commentary

Abel is committed without question to the mystery of the forest, as he has already realized. He is now more cognizant of his own personal involvement not only in the world of "green mansions" but in the fact that "in this wild and solitary retreat some tremendous adventure was about to befall me." The woodland is intimately associated for Abel with the owner of the voice which constantly draws him into the "green mansions." Hudson, however, slowly and skillfully leads his readers to the solution of the mystery; his explanations present a very penetrating psychological study of human emotions through the portrait of Abel.

Abel learns, or deduces, a great deal about the source of the mysterious, delightful melodies. Principally, he comes to the conclusions through his own reactions that the voice belongs not to a "bird," as he thought previously, but to a "being" who is an unusual--and unique--resident of the woodland. It is of course true that Hudson already hinted at this solution, but the confirmation is firmly conveyed in these two chapters. Also, through the inadvertent remark of Kua-kó to Abel during the *zabatana* practice, it is implied that the inhabitant of the forest is "a small woman." Abel, of course, does not grasp fully Kua-kó's meaning at this time. Other facts about the "being" are brought out: Abel is in no danger and on the contrary is welcomed into the area; the Indians are enemies of the creature because they fear to go into the forest; and the birds and animals feel an affinity for "the daughter of the Didi." The episode with the howling monkeys is revelatory for Abel--and for the Indians--of this strange bond of unity.

While Abel is approaching closer to this evidently friendly environment of the "green mansions" and the elusive creature, the conflict between Abel and the Parahuari tribe has been intensified. Abel is unaware that Kua-kó and Runi's interest in the forest is far from being innocent curiosity. They see in Abel the agent by whom they can eliminate the "small woman," who frightens them from hunting in the woodland. Although Abel is as yet unaware of the sinister plans of the Parahuaris, the reader can immediately and surely comprehend Runi and Kau-kó's interest in Abel--and his mastery of the *zabatana*. Abel is very pleased at their discomfiture at his success in coming and going at will without any hindrance from the "daughter of the Didi."

Hudson uses suspense, fear, and mystery as Abel and Kua-kó explore the forest. Nothing really happens to cause the Indian to react in such an abnormal manner--except his own imagination--and Kua-kó's cowardly, hasty flight is somewhat humorously described. But Abel, though disapproving of his guide's behavior, follows the savage; the two fugitives offer a memorable picture of human beings caught in the trap of their fears. When Abel stumbles and luckily loses Kua-kó, the hero's plight ironically improves instead of worsening as he initially thinks Hudson sketches an impressive scene of one individual surrounded by the immensity of an unknown natural setting. His descriptions, precise and striking, can be appreciated in this moment when Abel looks up at the trees and observes for the first time an *araguato*: "High up, where a pale gleam of tempered sunlight fell through the leaves, a grotesque human like face black as ebony and adorned with a great red beard, appeared staring down upon me." Hudson succeeds in evoking a startling image through familiar items, such as the colors, and he relates these features to his hero's past experiences--before identifying the howling monkey.

Nevertheless, the adventures, emotions, and reactions of Abel are within the realm of the possible; there is nothing bordering on the fantastic or improbable--as yet--in these chapters. The reader, all in all, can accept Abel's excursion into the forest as an event that could happen to him. The explanations of the Indians, though necessarily an exotic feature for an American or English audience, are valid and understandable, and Hudson's psychological portrayals of the Parahuari savages are logically drawn. Abel's relations with the natives offer no objections and might be the expected reactions to a wanderer in his particular situation. Hudson is especially believable in his extensive analysis of Abel's thoughts in the woodland. Every fear and deduction are logically explained, and the varying moods of Abel from his terror at the screeching of the howling monkeys to his later laughter at the comical behavior of the *araguatos* allow the reader to follow, sympathize, and imagine himself in the exact predicament. Hudson's appeal is, of course, centered on the romantic, adventurous spirit of his readers; this attraction will be more strongly expressed in the coming chapters.

Throughout the book, Hudson inserts his love of nature by means of the descriptive passages. Even at a critical moment, the author insists upon a poetic rendition of the scenery which, instead of detracting from Abel's mood, contributes to a deeper understanding of the situation. "The sun was sinking behind the forest, its broad red disc still showing through the topmost leaves," writes Hudson, "and the higher part of the foliage was of a luminous green, like green flame, throwing off flakes of quivering, fiery light, but lower down the trees were in profound shadow." The passage adds not only to the beauty of the scene, but Hudson also repeats his theme of the "green mansions"--the principal theme of the novel.

CHAPTERS 5 & 6

Summary

On the way to the forest, Abel is very happy at the thought of leaving the Indians for the "green mansions" where he had found "so great happiness." He is amused by watching a spider chase an imaginary fly, caused by a moving shadow. A sound of laughter from someone, equally enjoying the spider's motions, suggests again to Abel that the elusive singer is an intelligent being like himself. The next day, Abel's search is rewarded because he surprises a beautiful young girl near a stream. The girl vanishes so quickly that Abel doubts for a time whether or not he has been deceived by an illusion. Determined to meet the girl of the forest, Abel visits the same haunts for the next two days without success. He then decides to stay away for a while to feign indifference and thereby coax her into an appearance upon his return.

For two days Abel goes with Kua-kó and tries to improve his marksmanship with the *zabatana*. He astonishes the Indian by revealing his accidental and brief meeting with the girl of the forest. Elated by the success of his plan, Kua-kó explains to Abel that the white man, able to approach the girl, can kill her with the *zabatana*. He further shocks Abel by promising to let him marry Oalava, his sister, as a reward for killing "the daughter of the Didi." Knowing instinctively that the girl is no daughter of an evil spirit, Abel almost strikes Kua-kó in rage and ends by refusing to speak to the savage about the matter.

Abel, anxious to revisit the forest, ignores signs of an approaching storm and immediately enters his "beloved green mansions." He sees a coral snake on his path and starts to throw a rock at the serpent to protect himself. He misses and picks up another rock, but the forest girl suddenly appears and stops Abel. The young man is stunned to see the snake rest protectively beside her naked feet; he realizes that the girl is probably a wild solitary inhabitant of the woods and no fantastic vision or superstitious creation. Enraptured by her beauty, Abel tries to touch her but is bitten by the snake, which he has accidentally touched. Abel, sure that he will die within a short time unless help is obtained, runs in the direction of the Parahuari village. But he takes a wrong turn. Confused by the new scenery and drenched by the rain from the storm, he stumbles helplessly until he reaches a precipice. He falls to the bottom unconscious after endeavoring vainly to lower himself carefully to the top of a tree.

Commentary

Abel's love of the "green mansions" and his meeting with the girl of the forest are the two themes carried to new heights by the author in these two chapters. By now, Abel is completely dedicated to the overpowering grandeur of untrampled nature, the love of solitude, disgust with civilization, and respect toward "the Author of my being for the gift of that wild forest." He is, in fact, carried away to the point that he weeps upon looking at the wild, virgin woodland. Morally and psychologically, then, Abel is prepared for his encounter with the "forest nymph," as he now describes the girl.

This devotion to nature is evident in the long passages about Abel's observation of the spider's fruitless pursuit of the shadow of a dead leaf, the motions and outlines of the coral snake, the effects of a storm upon the forest, and the tropical foliage, in addition to the birds, encircling the mysterious young woman. Hudson's style is the rich poetry already noted in other chapters, but he adds to the brilliant range of vocabulary his intimate knowledge as a naturalist. Only a writer long acquainted with the life of birds, animals, and insects could have rendered so vividly the natural life of the tropical forest. There is, then, the union of the writer, or poet, and the scientist; these accounts of the South American fauna and flora are integral parts of Hudson's fame in his works.

The author likewise maintains a high level of reader interest by dramatic, almost melodramatic, efforts which are very successful. Suspense always remains high whenever Abel enters the woodland, and his

accidental sight of the girl when she flees hastily answers the question about the identity of the forest dweller but stimulates the reader to inquire more about her. Hudson, however, builds up suspense slowly during the incident when Abel finally finds the girl and she remains. Abel had intended to kill the snake at the beginning, is amazed at the mutually protective reactions of girl and reptile, forgets the snake, and, ironically, is bitten by the creature he originally challenged. The scene then increases in excitement as Abel fears an immediate, horrible death from the snakebite, the girl runs away, the thunder and rain cause additional suffering, and the hero falls in a faint. When the chapter ends, there is no hint as to how he will survive the ordeal.

The theme of nature, so stressed in these chapters, is subordinated to Abel's meeting with the forest girl. Again, Hudson has slowly led up to the moment, and Abel's first sight of the "forest nymph" is characterized by some very human understandable reactions. The trips of Abel to the forest are almost in the tradition of the usual boy-meets-girl formula: Abel hastens to catch a glimpse of the elusive young woman; returns daily to see her; stays away to try to make her jealous; and, of prime importance, idealizes her evident beauty. The girl of the forest is the personification of the "green mansions," and Abel significantly associates the color of green with the girl. The two themes of natural and human beauty are blended in this important imagery: "This tint I presently attributed to the effect of the sunlight falling on her through the green foliage." Soon, however, Abel will personify this mysterious dweller of his "beloved green mansions" by noting the "pearly whiteness" of the girl's skin. In short, the forest girl is the amalgam of human perfection according to Abel's romantic interpretation and the most noble and beautiful aspects of untamed nature.

Hudson provides his readers with a major clue to the explanation of the girl's presence in the woodland; this conclusion of Abel about the strange young woman is a key to future developments in the plot. Abel realizes suddenly and correctly that she is an intelligent, beautiful person; she is unique in that she is probably the sole survivor of a lost race on the South American continent. There is consequently a realistic basis for the romanticism of Abel regarding the "exquisite being," who now befriends him. It is within these chapters that Hudson's story takes a clearly marked and different direction. He is creating a romance, and one can recall the subtitle of *Green Mansions* as "a romance of the tropical forest." Fantasy enters the narrative as the plot makes use of the exceptional, the unusual--and the improbable.

Abel, nonetheless, is also very understandable in his thoughts upon seeing the strange and silent girl. He is a young man, falling in love with "a bright, beautiful soul," who, unlike his previously mentioned, rather amusing behavior, now evokes a serious response from Abel. Hudson rationalizes Abel's lofty flights of poetic imagination by writing that the girl of the forest is the expression of "this union in her of two opposite qualities, which, with us, cannot or do not exist together." Her exceptional appearance, combining the best of the two worlds of human beings and natural environment, supplies the reply to humanity's quest for earthly perfection.

The descriptions of the girl are extensive, lyrical, and idealistic; Hudson is sketching not only a new leading character in his story but also a memorable ideal for readers isolated in their daily routines. Abel can never return to the Parahuari village after this experience, and his failure to find the right path is perhaps a symbol of an ultimate rejection of the civilization, meager as it is, of the Indians. Likewise, Abel bared his enmity toward the savages, especially toward Kua-kó, when the proposal was made to him to slay the "daughter of the Didi" and to receive in turn Oalava as a wife. Abel made two mistakes in this confrontation with his Indian hosts: He told them that he had seen the forest girl, and he allowed the mask of his real feelings to fall by almost striking Kua-kó and also by constantly leaving the Parahuari encampment.

Nevertheless, the Indians recede in importance during these chapters because Abel is more engrossed in the "green mansions" and with the search for the girl of the forest. Therefore, perhaps, Hudson can add

significantly to the poetic prose which is by now an increasing, important element of this book. There are several striking examples of Hudson's art, and two instances may be cited to illustrate his use of alliteration: "I had passed through the first strip of wood, and was in the succeeding stony sterile space, when a gleam of brilliant colour close by on the ground caught my sight" and "I could now only feel astonishment and admiration at the brilliant being." These stylistic features are not only ornamental devices on the structure of *Green Mansions*; they emphasize the narrative at two important moments, Abel's first sight of the coral snake and his first close view of the mysterious girl.

CHAPTERS 7 & 8

Summary

When Abel regains consciousness, he finds himself in the hut of an old man, Nuflo. The forest girl is also in the shack and watches Abel very carefully although she remains in the background. Nuflo identifies the girl as Rima, his granddaughter, but Abel is not convinced by his explanation. According to Nuflo, Rima is seventeen years old, has been baptized a Christian, and has received a rudimentary education--principally through the efforts of Nuflo. Abel supposes that he was saved from death from the snakebite because of the lack of sufficient venom in the reptile's fangs. Nuflo and Rima speak Spanish, but Abel observes that she is reluctant to express herself in that language. Abel, weak and bruised from his ordeal, rests comfortably in his new home.

As Abel regains his strength, his curiosity is aroused by the facts of Rima's life and the reason for Nuflo's isolated existence in the hinterland. Although the old man is very talkative, he is still reticent about certain details of the past, and Abel secures with difficulty an indirect admission from Nuflo that Rima is not really his granddaughter. Rima is downcast because Abel cannot communicate in the bird language she prefers to use instead of Spanish. She is elusive and mysterious, and her silence tantalizes Abel. Abel tries to make her understand that she must talk to him in Spanish despite her preference for the language of the birds. Rima, remaining distant most of the time, is questioned further by Abel; slowly she tells him about the past and about her present anguish. Rima's mother died when she was very young, and she was given some religious instruction by the priest at Voa where they lived. Her obvious anguish at the loss of her mother hides also "some secret trouble," but Abel treats her gently in hope of winning her full confidence--and her love.

Commentary

The plot revolves in these chapters around Abel's growing love--and curiosity--about Rima and her nascent affection for him. Many of the mysteries slowly developed in the preceding chapters have been clarified: the identity of the forest girl, some elucidation as to her presence in the woodland, and the causes for her exceptional ways with birds and animals. Principally, of course, a new, important character, Nuflo, has been introduced; the old man serves as an amusing counterpoint to the serious love affair, now budding, between Abel and Rima. But new mysteries have arisen to disturb Abel, and his dissatisfaction with some of Nuflo's--and Rima's--facts leads him to query the two hosts persistently. There is, ironically for Abel, a spur for further information each time he succeeds in extracting some fact from Nuflo and Rima.

It is clear within these chapters that Abel is completely in love with Rima; Hudson has painted glowingly the portrait of romanticized, sentimental emotions in his hero, as he starts to do very gradually in his heroine. Abel, for example, muses ecstatically about Rima in the paragraph beginning "Have you ever observed a humming-bird moving about in an aerial dance among the flowers . . ." But Abel, despite this poignant series of repeated rhetorical questions, is astonished at the realization that there are two Rimas. His mounting passion for Rima, the bird-girl, faces a challenge from Rima, the human being. Rima, inside the hut, presents an inconspicuous, humble figure with little or no attraction for Abel. The contrast for

Abel is very disconcerting, and the problem is first noted by him in Rima's mood when he urges her to use Spanish during their conversations. The situation for Abel is of course ironic: He prefers to listen to Rima's bird language although he is then only a silent partner in any dialogue, but Rima is a different person for Abel when she communicates in Spanish.

Another illustration of this dichotomy in Rima for Abel is the change he observes in her when the girl is in the hut and in the forest. The hut is obviously a symbol of civilization, an artificial environment with no connection to the "green mansions" now preferred by Abel. But Abel dominates the situation within the hut because he is, after all, a product of civilized life. He can talk at length with Nuflo, and he can control the dialogue. Although he wants to commune with nature, Abel is always at a disadvantage in the woodland because Rima can elude him easily, and she can revert to the language of the birds. Abel, crippled psychologically when Rima is at her best, has to plead with the young girl to help him.

Rima, nonetheless, is a very insecure person in her unique world because she carries within herself the inheritance of Abel's world, or at least some semblance of a civilized environment. Rima, beginning to fall in love with Abel, needs the protection of the young man because of her unexpressed fears and hopes. Abel is, after all, the first youth she has met in her life, and she is constrained in her intuitive impulses to love him openly. Living many years with Nuflo and seeing only the hostile Parahuaris, Rima has developed into a shy introspective girl who is approaching womanhood--and is in love for the first time. Despite the influence of her withdrawn unusual life until the meetings with Abel, Rima becomes more open in her attitude by the end of the eighth chapter; she is struggling successfully against past memories in favor of love for Abel.

Despite the problems both lovers face, Abel and Rima understand each other better at this stage in the story; they have succeeded in breaking down the barriers which separate them or at least in hurdling the psychological obstacles to their love. The outside world has been completely eliminated as a factor in the lives of the two young people, and they stand alone in "that immense aerial palace hung with dim drapery of green." Nuflo and the Indians--and Abel's Venezuela--have no role in the dialogue between Rima and her lover. Rima's recurring secretive and sorrowful moods have as yet no meaning for Abel; the idyll is almost perfect.

This idyllic mood is intensified by Hudson's use of language because he writes appealingly to the emotions of his readers. Both the speech and behavior of Abel and Rima are romantic, and there are no realistic descriptions of the scenes. Hudson, then, returns in his narration of the love between Abel and Rima to the tradition of the early nineteenth century rather than to the realism and naturalism of his own age. Romanticism is the primary characteristic of the language, feelings, and reactions of the hero and heroine; and Hudson employs several techniques of the Romantic doctrine, especially during "that afternoon with Rima in the forest under the mora tree." One should observe these devices, particularly: an argument to the emotions rather than to reason; a poetical, flowery idiom to describe the conversation, setting, and feelings; and a basic, melodramatic ring to the action.

Hudson, although he has been criticized for his reliance upon the stock devices of the nineteenth-century Romantics, is, however, slowly developing a philosophical ideal. He is striving to depict the search for innocence and perfection against the background of pure or untamed nature. The afternoon that Abel spends with Rima by the mora tree in the forest emerges as one of the emotional highlights of *Green Mansions*. The poignant memory of that day will haunt Abel for the rest of his life. Hudson seeks to uplift his audience by showing them, in the distance, peaks of happiness and of sorrow; he must omit discussions of social, political, and everyday problems to achieve this evolving philosophy toward life.

There is, nevertheless, the character of Nuflo, introduced in these chapters, who provides a balance of realism to the idealism of the two lovers. With the addition of this new character to the plot, Hudson is

able to use more dialogue which, up to this point, has not been a marked feature of the novel. Although Nuflo has nothing of the intellectual that characterizes Abel, the two native speakers of Spanish contrast favorably. Nuflo gives the impression of an average human being who has tried to accept life and to adjust to circumstances after long years of suffering and effort. Nuflo possesses a peasant's native intelligence, bolstered by alert reactions and some poetic feeling; he is sometimes humorous as he fends off Abel's inquisitive remarks. For example, Nuflo is witty and philosophical in his replies to Abel about his real relationship to Rima, especially when he calmly answers that one is never sure of anything in this world. The old man also has some pungent comments about social and political conditions in South America, the Indians, and the way of life in general, which recall Abel's reflections on similar topics in the first chapter. Certainly a sympathetic character in these two chapters, Nuflo is mysterious and ambivalent in his manners, however, and Abel is not prepared as yet to fathom the old man's secrets. The old man's talkativeness, probably the result of his isolation from other human beings and his inability to communicate effectively and at will with Rima, does not irritate Abel, who has not had the chance to speak so freely for a long time. Clearly both men seem to enjoy and to like each other despite certain points of friction regarding Nuflo's and Rima's earlier lives

This new development in the plot--Abel's residence in Nuflo's hut--is characterized by less attention to the "green mansions" because of Rima's presence and by the temporary disappearance of the Parahuari tribe from the action. Also, the style is less poetic because of the omission of nature as Abel's paramount interest and the common setting of Nuflo's hut with the old man's conversation requiring ordinary speech. But there is still a very lyrical quality to the language when Abel speaks to Rima or thinks of her; then, he idealizes the girl and the surroundings. A typical example of Hudson's art in this regard is the simile used by Abel to describe Rima: "her eyes . . . now looked dark as wine when we lift the glass to see the ruby gleam of light within the purple." Hudson, however, has been criticized for allowing stylistic qualities to create an exaggerated impression of Rima, and the comment of the hero upon looking at Rima is perhaps a proof of this fault in Hudson's writing: "The exquisite fragrance of her breath was more to me than the most delicious viands could have been."

CHAPTERS 9 & 10

Summary

Abel, certain that the old man has been less than honest with him, determines to learn about Rima's history from Nuflo because he knows now that the girl will not willingly reveal the whole truth. Rima, moreover, has become very aloof after their meeting at the mora tree. Nuflo disappears with his dogs for long hours during the day, and Abel is suspicious because Rima's guardian seldom returns with any sizable quantity of nuts and fruits from his expeditions. After scrambling through the woods and then falling asleep for a time, Abel finally spies Nuflo cooking an animal. One mystery, then, is easily solved: Rima, refusing to eat meat and not allowing Nuflo to kill any of the forest animals, has thereby deprived the old man of his pleasure in enjoying the taste of meat. But Nuflo, with his dogs, hunts animals and eats the meat without her knowledge. Abel suspects that Rima's sensitivity to odors and her domination of the woodland have betrayed Nuflo in his secret, but the old man is convinced that he is safe.

Realizing that he can "blackmail" Nuflo into telling him about Rima's past, Abel prods the old man with questions about the girl, but the wily peasant lies his way out of the trap. He insists that Rima is not a surviving member of a lost race but that her senses have been acutely developed because of living outdoors almost all the time; he denies that the bird language is really so different. Abel does not believe Nuflo and is less sympathetic toward him as a result of the latter's evasive behavior; he is, in fact, increasingly angry as he starts back. On the way to the hut, Abel hears Rima, but she again avoids him when he starts forward to meet her. He cannot understand her changed attitude and her continual avoidance of him. Abel is depressed when Rima finally makes her appearance inside the hut, "silent and

constrained as ever."

Hurt by Rima's neglect, Abel once more decides to play the same game: He will leave for a while to see if she misses him. Abel returns to the village of the Parahuari Indians but is surprised to find the site abandoned. He soon surmises from the evidence of orderly decampment that the Indians are visiting some neighbors, a usual procedure among the tribes. Abel is happy to be alone and reflects contentedly about his adventures so far, but he shortly starts to miss Rima and to regret his abrupt departure. He is disturbed in his tranquility by the appearance of Cla-cla, the old woman, who has been compelled to leave the other Indians on their trip because of her ill health. Despite her suspicions of Abel, which in turn arouse his fears about the Indians' hostility, Cla-cla accepts Abel as a companion for her miserable solitude. They sing and chat gaily, and the evening turns into a festive occasion for both to forget their sorrows. The next morning, however, Abel is so lonesome for the sight of Rima that he determines to go back to the forest without delay. Cla-cla's pleadings and the threat of an oncoming storm do not deter Abel from his decision. Escaping from the old woman, Abel hastens into the woodland, but he loses his sense of direction when the storm lessens visibility. Drenched by the driving rain, Abel is rescued by Rima, who had been waiting faithfully for him. But Rima reverts to her withdrawn attitude as soon as they come safely in sight of Nuflo's place

Commentary

These two chapters represent an emotional retreat from the tryst between Abel and Rima at the mora tree. Abel, piqued at Rima's inexplicable change and avoidance of his loving advances, concentrates on the mystery surrounding Nuflo, and, after exploiting this avenue of solution as much as possible, returns for a surprisingly pleasant interlude with Cla-cla at the deserted Parahuari site. In short, the love affair diminishes in terms of advancement, if not in importance, during the action of these chapters. Even at the end, when Abel is brought back by the attentive Rima, no progress has been made in further communication between the lovers.

Abel, nevertheless, has learned a few additional facts from the reluctant Nuflo that help him to piece together some conclusions about Rima. He is, for example, very positive that she is not of the same race as Nuflo. Although the episode between Abel and Nuflo offers some relief to the emotionally charged scene at the mora tree, tension arises between the two men because each one is dissatisfied at the other's questions and answers. Abel, in fact, is angry at the old man; his curiosity about Nuflo changes into antipathy after the confrontation.

Abel's return to the Parahuari village is, of course, motivated by his hurt at Rima's attitude; because he has previously expressed such an evident--and increasingly bitter--revulsion against the Indians, his ability to reside once more among his previous hosts is very surprising. The surprise is greatly augmented by his enjoyable visit with Cla-cla, although she was the only Indian with whom Abel felt any sympathy during his first days among the tribe. Indeed, one should keep in mind Abel's happy visit with Cla-cla when the tragic circumstances occur at the book's conclusion. This amusing and warm vignette of Abel with Cla-cla in the empty Parahuari camp provides one of the lighter moments of the entire romance of Hudson. Seemingly, Abel has for the moment forgotten, or at least put aside, his preoccupations about Rima's history as well as his love for her.

However, Abel is not the same individual he was before knowing Rima; his brief excursion back to the village has allowed him to take stock of his changed vision. He reminisces that he never would have believed in the possibility of such an easy and felicitous adjustment to a life of solitude in the jungle. For Abel, a man of Caracas--"that little Paris in America"--the change has been completely beneficial. "I was changed, and this change--so great, so complete--was proof" thinks Abel, "that the old artificial life had not been and could not be the real one, in harmony with my deeper and truer nature." In short, Abel has now accepted the primitive life; for Hudson's hero, these thoughts denote a profound and sincere

outpouring of feeling. So enamored of nature is Abel that he is almost disposed to forget Rima as he gladly forgets his friends and his past. This momentary sentiment is naturally the reaction of a youth who has been spurned by a girl; the fleeting rejection is repaid by an eagerness to see her again--and quickly.

There are notable poetical passages about birds, an integral part of Hudson's world of nature, and the following selection is one of the most significant in *Green Mansions*: "O mystic bell-bird of the heavenly race of the swallow and dove, the quetzal and the nightingale! When the brutish savage and the brutish white man that slay thee, one for food, the other for the benefit of science, shall have passed away, live still, live to tell thy message to the blameless spiritualized race that shall come after us to possess the earth, not for a thousand years, but for ever; for how much shall thy voice be our clarified successors when even to my dull, unpurged soul, thou canst speak such high things, and bring it a sense of an impersonal all-compromising One who is in me and I in him, flesh of his flesh and soul of his soul." In this paragraph, which stands out in the text like a soliloquy in a drama, Abel has moved from lyrical stirring reactions to the "green mansions" to the expression of a philosophical position and a religious creed. Nature, victimized by the extremes of a primitive people and the degradations of civilized explorers, is in danger of disappearing. The loss of nature would be for Hudson the loss of proof of a divine presence. Hudson, though he avoids in the book the use of the word God, nevertheless speaks of the "One" embodied in nature. This pantheistic belief of Hudson becomes for Abel the source of a higher or religious spirit.

Despite these lofty thoughts regarding nature, Abel does not see only the favorable aspects of the "green mansions." There is once more the description of a jungle storm, and the fury of the two tempests almost destroys Abel. On both occasions, he loses his way and is saved by Rima, who knows how to meet these natural phenomena. Abel, although he feels an overpowering affinity with nature, lacks the experience and common sense of Rima in dealing with these unpleasant manifestations of the jungle. Life, then, can be difficult--and perilous--in the "green mansions." There are more compensations than demerits in Hudson's whole view, and the beauty of nature outweighs disadvantages in the vastness of the South American continent.

If, as the surface action of these two chapters indicates, the love between Abel and Rima is at a crucial stage where neither seems capable of communicating with the other, their true sentiments are clearly delineated. Rima's loyalty in waiting for Abel during his jaunt to the village is like her previous faithfulness when he stayed away. Her problem is, then, an inability to express the new emotion of love. Abel, on the other hand, is frustrated because he cannot conceal his love for Rima. "And I could no longer thrust it back, or hide its shining face with the dull, leaden mask of mere intellectual curiosity," muses Abel poignantly, "*because I loved her*; loved her as I had never loved before, never could love any other being, with a passion which had caught something of her own brilliance and intensity, making a former passion look dim and commonplace in comparison--a feeling known to everyone, something old and worn out, a weariness even to think of." Clearly, then, Abel and Rima are to meet, discuss, and resolve the crisis of their mutual love.

CHAPTERS 11 & 12

Summary

On the following morning, Rima continues to avoid Abel, and his hope that she will confide in him seems futile now. Later, however, Rima approaches Abel as he is sitting listlessly and leads him to the foot of the mountain of Ytaioa. She wants the two of them to climb to the top, and Abel is now convinced that Rima is about to break her silence. When they reach the summit, Rima is curious to know what lies beyond the mountain. Abel starts to explain painstakingly that the view in sight is only a small portion of the entire country--and that in turn is but a fraction of South America.

He then attempts to make her realize the vastness of the whole earth. Rima's voice is tremulous because of her excitement, and she questions Abel about the inhabitants of all those distant regions. Rima especially wishes to know if people such as she exist outside the "green mansions." Abel endeavors to explain to Rima that she is probably the sole survivor of some lost nation and that it is not feasible to undertake a long journey on a fruitless mission, such as finding her vanished race. Mentioning by chance the name of the mountains of Riolama, Abel immediately notices the startling change in Rima. The word has touched her memory. Greatly excited, she says that Riolama is the place she is seeking because her mother was found there and Riolama is her real name. Nothing will now deter her from setting out for Riolama to find the bird people who will welcome her. Rima is infuriated at the realization that Nuflo has known all this time about Riolama and has said nothing. Abel, deeply disturbed by Rima's excited enthusiasm about a trip to Riolama, is unable to convince her that her hopes are unattainable and that she will be heartbroken. Abel can only sum up his reactions by saying, "then I sat down to think."

Finally, when Abel goes reluctantly to Nuflo's hut, he discovers the old man hiding in the bushes to escape Rima's wrath. Nuflo curses Abel for his interference in Rima's life, and he likewise blames the young man for disturbing the tranquility of his own isolated existence. The two men begin to argue loudly, and Rima easily finds them. When the girl berates her guardian for concealing the facts about Riolama, Nuflo pleads for mercy because of his advanced age and his past kindness to Rima and her mother. Nuflo seizes a knife and threatens to kill himself when all his entreaties to Rima come to no avail. Although Abel knows that the old man is bluffing, Rima takes him seriously. She prays to her mother, and Abel, for the first time, comprehends Rima's naive spirit and innocence. Rima, begging her dead mother in a simple prayer to punish Nuflo after his death, sways her guardian; he repents out of a credulous fear of Rima's power. Nuflo will, in fact, take Rima to Riolama--so frightened is he of her influence with her deceased mother's spirit.

Now calling upon her mother in another touching prayer to protect Nuflo in his afterlife should anything fatal happen to him on the journey, Rima eagerly makes plans for the trip to Riolama. But Nuflo, wily as always, demands more time for the necessary preparations required for such a long undertaking. Abel, learning through Rima's prayers of her love for him, also realizes that he can exercise some control over the situation because Rima, after all, does rely upon his advice. A compromise agreement to start for Riolama in seven or eight days is accepted by everyone as a logical plan. Abel, however, now sets a price for Nuflo to pay if Abel is to accompany the group: the complete story of Rima's origin, the reasons why Nuflo and she are living such a solitary existence, and the facts about the bird people whom Rima longs to see. Again a compromise is reached. Nuflo agrees to answer Abel's questions, but the old man, in order to relieve the monotony and fatigue of the difficult days ahead, will relate the history in sections as they travel.

Commentary

The scene between Abel and Rima on the mountaintop of Ytaioa is a turning point for the romance. Rima has now expressed her innermost thoughts about the cause for her constant sorrow; she has become determined--almost obsessed--to pursue the impossible goal of reaching her people at Riolama; and she has set in motion a series of events, the outcome of which cannot be anything but tragic. This moving interview between the lovers results in an ironic twist of fate for Abel. He has found peace and love in the vastness of the isolated jungle, and he has accepted nature as a worthwhile substitute for civilization. Rima, however, who has come to represent for Abel the best of two possible worlds, those of humanity and of nature, and who has led Abel to a fuller appreciation of the "green mansions," now wants to expand her vision to embrace the civilization rejected by Abel. Their roles, in short, have become reversed; Abel senses his coming loss by his inability to restrain Rima as she dashes off to upbraid Nuflo. The happiness, then, which Abel has supposedly found in his "beloved green mansions" has proved short-lived.

Rima, too, has changed a great deal as a result of the fateful conversation with Abel on the summit of Ytaioa. She is talkative, desires to know details about the rest of the world, wants to meet people, and is eager to abandon the solitude of her home in the woodland. The transformation of Rima is sudden and complete. One might ask if her conduct is justified by the way she has been presented to the reader. One must remember, in justification of Hudson's presentation of his heroine, that Rima is a girl who has lived under the burden of the past which she has wanted desperately to know. She has never been able to express herself and to develop within some regular framework of a family life. Now, she reacts enthusiastically in the other direction toward an exuberance as a balance to her restrained life in the woodland. This sudden swing in the young girl's outlook toward life is understandable in the light of her unusual childhood and adolescence.

Also, Rima has never had to test her life against the outside world of hard reality and cold disillusionment. Her innocence is her weak point in any confrontation with adversity, and Abel prophetically sees the unfortunate conclusion. Rima's two prayers, which are admittedly lengthy, melodramatic, and ingenuous, are nonetheless very important because the speeches reveal to Abel her vulnerability against the harsh truth. Of course, Abel comprehends why she avoided him previously, and he senses her innocence in trying to probe the strange emotion of love. He also understands that he can help her because she is very dependent upon his strength. But irony again characterizes these revelations. The lovers are closer to one another, and they have apparently pierced the psychological barriers that had been creating a crisis. However, new obstacles have arisen in the path of their love at these revelatory remarks of Rima. Although Abel is obviously as much--if not more--in love with Rima as before the mountain visit, he sees also one immediate trait as a result of Rima's involvement in the outside world. She is so determined to visit Riolama that she can be harsh toward Nuflo and concerned only with the expedition, even to the exclusion of tender demonstrations of love toward Abel.

Abel's love for Rima is, however, a passion which has evolved into a spiritual attraction. There is little throughout *Green Mansions* of the sexual or naturalistic in Hudson's portrayal of the lovers. A romantic delicacy always characterizes the physical descriptions of the nascent love affair. "Still, in some mysterious way, Rima had become to me, even as to superstitious old Nuflo," thinks Abel, "a being apart and sacred, and this feeling seemed to mix with my passion, to purify and exalt it and make it infinitely sweet and precious." Rima, then, is the idealization of perfection in womanhood and in love; she is more than the physical representation of the love between man and woman. Rima is converted by Hudson into a symbol of religion, as can be observed in Abel's thought that she is "apart and sacred." Her prayers, Nuflo's belief that Rima enjoys some favor with heaven, and Abel's increasing sanctification of the girl lend a religious glow to Hudson's outline of her.

Also, Hudson, in love with the land of his youth, strives to convey in *Green Mansions* a realization and appreciation of the vast panorama of the South American continent. Abel's eulogistic commentary during his visit with Rima to Ytaioa is another sparkling facet of Hudson's concept of South America, particularly in the future. Previously, Abel and Nuflo have bitterly remarked about the present injustices and ills of South American life; but, for the first time, a visionary analysis is included that is very laudatory. Abel, carried away "by so sublime a theme," seems to forget his primary aim of dissuading Rima from leaving the security of the forest, known intimately by her. Abel ironically stimulates further her curiosity to become acquainted with the vast reaches of the South American territories. Abel, in fact, begins to give Rima a lesson in geography and history regarding South America; he insists that the continent, far from being inferior to the European past, has a wealth and tradition of glory that has been neglected by myopic historians. If, however, the past and present offer sweeping vistas and inspiring models, the future is even more promising for South America. Hudson, indeed, comes close to a proclamation that the Latin American lands will be the center of human activity. "From this vast stage, to be occupied in the distant future by millions and myriads of beings, like us of upright form," writes

Hudson in a memorable passage, "the nations that will be born when all the existing dominant races on the globe and the civilizations they represent have perished as utterly as those who sculptured the stones of old Tiahuanaco--from this theatre of palms prepared for a drama unlike any which the Immortals have yet witnessed.

Of course, one may quarrel with Hudson's prophecies, but his accuracy on details of the continent and his sincerity about his hopes require respect. And, in an age when South America was certainly neglected socially and politically, his writings, such as *Green Mansions*, called attention to the beauties--and the problems--of this important part of the world. He is, of course, following the earlier lead of the Romantics, such as the American novelist James Fenimore Cooper, who wrote glowingly of nature in an untamed continent. Hudson's poetic prose is now enlisted to greater extent and increasingly on philosophical interpretations of nature. The naturalist, in brief, has evolved clearly into the thinker, and Hudson's efforts to formulate some religious philosophy, generally pantheistic, has emerged likewise in the progress of these chapters.

Structurally, of course, the story has taken a very sharp and unhappy turn away from the "green mansions" because Abel, though he will soon learn about Rima's and Nuflo's past, intuitively feels that the idyll has been interrupted. There are ominous hints that a disaster is in the making.

CHAPTERS 13-15

Summary

Rima, though still shy with Abel, has changed noticeably, however, and enjoys an evening by the fire when the two men talk and sing happily. Next morning, unable to reason with Rima about the trip to Riolama, Abel tells her that their love may suffer if she is disappointed by the failure of the quest for the bird people. Rima is adamant in her plans for the journey; Abel, "sick with desire," turns away, "infected with this new sadness when everything promised well for me."

In order to allay any suspicions from the Indians, Abel decides to spend a few days with them, but he notices a change in their manner toward him, and their actions cause him to think seriously of the risk he is now running. Abel is certain that the Parahuaris have suspected the truth about their guest's friendship with the "evil spirit" in the forest, but during the evening he sings to the savages a plaintive Spanish ballad which wins their admiration. Although he finds his revolver missing in the morning, Abel concludes--and subsequent events confirm--that Runi had originally planned to kill him but had been impressed by the song and had only "borrowed" the weapon. Upon Abel's complaint, Runi lies, saying that he has lost the revolver, but he promises to help Abel find it in the woods. Runi's procrastinations convince Abel that it would be wise to escape immediately. Constantly watched by one or more Indians, Abel finally gets away by pretending to go off to bathe in a nearby stream. Exhausted by his flight from the village, Abel at last reaches "that glad green forest" where he can seek refuge with nature--and Rima.

Abel returns to Nuflo's hut, and he recounts his close call with death at the hands of the hostile Parahuaris. Although Abel is upset by the loss of his revolver, Nuflo now has such superstitious faith in the magical powers of Rima that he does not fear any attack from the savages. Rima, of course, is oblivious to any concern with this problem because she is thinking only of her reunion with her mother's people in Riolama. During Abel's absence, all preparations for the expedition have been completed; she and Nuflo have been awaiting his return in order to start on the journey.

Nuflo takes charge as the group leaves the woodland retreat. His years of experience and his natural caution prove invaluable. Nuflo leaves the forest after dark and makes the party walk at night on many occasions to avoid meeting any other travelers; he bypasses any villages where Indians may attack or

betray them to other savages, and he carries a heavier load of supplies than the inexperienced Abel. The trip for Abel, in fact, becomes very arduous because of the rugged terrain and the unusually inclement weather. The compensation for the young man is Nuflo's gradual revelation of the truth about himself and Rima during the evenings after the day's march.

Nuflo was one of a small band of outlaws who terrorized all the settlements, but their numbers were reduced from nine to five. They then took refuge in an uninhabited place on Riolama where they were frightened by the almost ghostly appearance and disappearance of a very attractive woman. Superstitious, and also repentant for his past crimes, Nuflo prevented the others from pursuing and capturing her. So embittered were his comrades that Nuflo was forced to run away from them. His conscience led him back to where he thought the mysterious woman had escaped. Nuflo found her injured by a fall and slowly nursed her back to health. They were able to communicate somewhat by an improvised sign language, but Nuflo was unable to understand the melodious sounds she made in her own speech. Observing that she was permanently crippled and that she was also pregnant, Nuflo took her to the nearest Christian settlement at Voa. He was safe from the police there, and the priest sheltered them.

For seven years, this existence continued: Rima's mother was melancholy and sickly, and Rima was likewise in delicate health. When the mother died, Nuflo, fulfilling a deathbed promise to the woman, took Rima to the healthier climate of Parahuari. There she recovered, and he was more tranquil away from civilization--and the authorities. The Parahuari Indians, however, became hostile toward Rima because she frustrated their hunting expeditions into the forest by warning the birds and animals in the melodious language of her lost race. Determined to kill Rima, the Indians on one occasion sent out a party to shoot her with the poisoned arrows of the *zabatana*, but one savage mistakenly fired at and fatally wounded one of his comrades. In the confusion of this disaster, the superstitious and bewildered Indians believed that Rima, an evil spirit, had seized the arrow in flight and had hurled it back at her assailant. Since then, the natives have avoided the woodland but have never given up their determination to destroy Rima. Abel, deeply impressed by the unusual story, is pleased to learn all the facts he has sought about Rima.

Commentary

Nuflo's story and the journey to Riolama occupy the action of these three chapters, and this middle part of *Green Mansions* is slowly unfolded as a preparation for the climax and as an explanation of the many questions raised in Abel's mind by Rima and Nuflo. Indeed, there is little action or suspense except for Abel's short visit to the Parahuari village. Some critics, therefore, have been harsh about Hudson's construction of the middle of his romance.

There are, however, compensatory features in Hudson's technique and procedure. The long narrative, by means of which Hudson clearly wants to unify the story, serves as an appealing episode as well as the way Abel threads together the missing strands of Rima's and Nuflo's pasts and succeeds in analyzing her anguish. Also, Abel begins to recover his initial sympathy for Nuflo; he likewise appreciates the old man's merits during the fatiguing trip to Riolama. Nuflo's gruff behavior and cunning manners had irritated Abel on several occasions during his stay at the hut, and Abel had even spoken angrily at the old man. The story is a skillful blend of realistic detail and romantic theme, and to these ingredients Hudson adds a strong emotional flavor. Another important feature of the tale resides in the direct, straightforward idiom in which it is narrated. Hudson resists any temptation to substitute for Nuflo's peasant speech the poetic quality, so marked as a major stylistic feature of this romance.

Hudson's preference, nevertheless, for beauty of style appears in the fourteenth chapter, the shortest chapter in the entire work, when Abel comes back safely to the "green mansions" after his escape from the savage village. Symbolically, perhaps, the time of day is sunset since Abel has really reached the apex of his idyll in the woodland and is about to leave the forest retreat on the unfortunate trip to Riolama.

Those few pages, before Abel rejoins Nuflo and Rima, belong to the Romantic tradition with such uplifting thoughts about the declining day: "the red flame of the sinking sun"; "the red evening flame"; and "how every object it touched took from it a new wonderful glory!" Abel's ecstatic joy at the trees and birds, the two favorite aspects of the "green mansions" for the young man, leads him to a neo-mystical flight of the imagination, expressed in increasingly poetical language: "tall palms balancing their feathery foliage on slender stems." Abel also feels a bond linking him with the birds and animals so that he almost personifies these creatures. Likewise, he feels himself carried away to distant heights by all this surrounding beauty: "The faint, floating clouds, the blue infinite heaven itself," muses Abel, "seemed not more ethereal and free than I, or the ground I walked on." These panegyric exhortations of Abel call attention once more to the unique contributions of the South American hinterlands.

As a naturalist, Hudson gives his readers loving accounts of the forest life which are unusual sights for the city dweller. For instance, he describes the flight of two birds as they almost collide by chance in the air and then scuffle briefly before departing together, "screaming shrilly." By this point, however, Hudson has very positively advanced toward his philosophical position; this creed of his is merged with the romantic, poetical, and naturalist aspects of the writer. These departures of Hudson, although they do not advance the plot, cannot be omitted or separated from the total effect he wishes to impart to his audience.

An enlightening discussion takes place between Nuflo and Abel about Rima which the girl fails to grasp because of her innocent state of mind about human behavior. Lacking insight and vision, the old man does not agree with Abel's interpretation and defense of Rima's qualities. Nuflo can see little practical value in Rima's ability to communicate with animals and birds; he, instead, would prefer to have her send a fever by this magic to destroy Runi and the other Indians. Abel believes that, as a result of his contact with Rima, a spiritual bond may be forged for him with nature, but Nuflo only scoffs at this idea. Hudson depicts in this confrontation the division between the realist and the idealist. Nuflo, basically insensitive toward nature, may possibly be a symbol of the skeptic to Hudson's evocation of the dreamy world of the "green mansions."

Hudson's use of ballads, which he must have heard many times during his youth on the pampas of Argentina among the gauchos, is a touch of local color, effectively made a part of the plot. On the first occasion, Abel sings happily beside the campfire; on the second occasion, Abel utilizes a ballad to lull the Indians--or, more accurately, to save his life. In fact, Abel relies on the songs throughout *Green Mansions* for relaxation and help during several crises.

Rima and Abel, surprisingly for the latter, do not draw closer to one another during the tiresome journey as might be expected from their mutually improved understanding. Rima is so preoccupied with her ambition to reach Riolama that she seemingly forgets Abel, or at least this neglect is a constant fear and worry for the young man. What he has sorrowfully predicted--the loss of their love--appears to come true during the many days of travel. Abel is sadder as he realizes the end of his joyful days in the woodland has brought the beginning of tragedy. Ironically, then, Abel is more depressed and Rima is more exhilarated as they approach Riolama.

In addition, there are three clues in these chapters which should be kept in mind for a keener comprehension of the coming tragedy. The most important event during the trip to Riolama is the accidental meeting with three Indians, traveling in the opposite direction. Nuflo is afraid because the strangers have seen Rima. Knowing that Indians have the reputation of telling their fellow natives everything that has occurred to them during their journeys, Nuflo warns his companions that the Parahuaris soon may learn of Rima's absence from the forest. Nuflo's precautions before leaving the "green mansions" also show his fear of possible trouble: He removed all the valuables from the hut so that any wandering natives would not be rewarded for their intrusions, and he concealed provisions in a cave for use upon their return since "our fates were now linked together." If, as Nuflo explains to Abel later,

the Parahuaris realize that Rima is not an evil spirit but a human being, they will lose their fear of her and will return to the hunting grounds.

CHAPTERS 16 & 17

Summary

After eighteen days, the three travelers arrive at the cave where Nuflo had first seen Rima's mother. No one is in the vicinity, of course, but Rima, still hopeful, climbs a nearby mountain to try to see some signs of human life. Abel follows her and endeavors again to convince Rima that the bird people no longer exist. Although Rima becomes angry and resentful at Abel's logical arguments, she finally listens to his frank, honest analysis of what probably happened to her mother's people. Abel's deduction that they were destroyed by hostile Indians so upsets the sensitive and overwrought girl that she falls unconscious, and Abel, alarmed, carries her back to the cave.

Nuflo, believing that Rima is dying, begs her not to forget her promise to pray for his salvation in the afterlife; and Abel is annoyed by the old man's selfishness during this crisis. Watching over Rima, Abel observes that she is gradually regaining consciousness. He kisses her, and she awakens fully. They declare their love for one another although Rima still regrets the loss of any of her own people with whom she could speak more intimately in their mysterious language. Abel and Rima make plans to live together in the forest, but Rima suddenly insists that she must go back immediately to the woodland in order to make new clothes for herself. She wants to welcome Abel when he and Nuflo come back to the "green mansions" as Nuflo first saw her mother, "standing before him, all in white--a dress that was like snow on the mountain-tops, when the sun is setting and gives it rose and purple colour." Stunned by this surprising decision and fearing for her safety, Abel is too dismayed at the thought of their separation to argue rationally with Rima. By the time he can run after her, Rima has already vanished "on that long journey alone."

Commentary

Rima dominates the action of these two chapters because she comes to the moment of truth about her dreams regarding any survivors of her race, passes through the inevitable crisis when her hopes are shattered by reality, accepts the truth, and turns to Abel for his love. Ironically, at the moment when both lovers are happy, Rima shatters the joy of Abel by leaving for the "green mansions" alone. Indeed, Rima now disappears from the action--and does not reappear in the remaining chapters. Thus, the idyll between Abel and Rima has gone from one extreme to another, from the heights of ecstasy of a newly found love to the depths of depression over their separation. And Rima, of course, is the one responsible for this unfortunate decision--not Abel.

Rima's character has certainly unfolded during these two chapters. Again, as at Ytaioa, a dramatic encounter takes place between the two lovers on a mountain where the panorama of the natural setting lends a majesty and beauty to their emotional speeches; and again, the time of day is significantly indicated to augment the romantic mood of the meeting. On the first occasion, Hudson writes that "the day was windless and bright, with only a few white clouds floating at a great height above and casting travelling shadows over that wild, broken country"; on the second occasion, Abel begins "to feel a dry, bracing wind in my face and to see the desert spread out for leagues before me in the brilliant white light of a full moon." The bright light of the sun and the white light of the moon provide two different backgrounds for Hudson's canvases, but the scene is ironically illuminated greatly by these contrasting natural phenomena. One should, in fact, compare and contrast carefully the two trysts of the lovers at the peaks of Ytaioa and Riolama.

The former is lengthy, descriptive, and digressive; the latter is set in a more emotional atmosphere,

moving inexorably toward a major change in the lovers' fortunes. Rima, again, occupies the front of the stage, but she is no longer the exuberant and carefree creature of the "green mansions" after her disappointment at the cave where she must come to terms with fate. Rima betrays her emotional tension by the angry outbursts with which she greets Abel's gentle admonitions and remarks. He sees in Rima a wild and savage aspect, "a beautiful human wasp, and every word a sting." Twice previously, when she prevented him from killing the snake and when she berated Nuflo for his concealment of her past, Abel has witnessed an irate Rima. Nevertheless, she is a very insecure, lonely, and frightened young girl, and her love compels Rima to listen to Abel's words. He has already grasped that his influence with Rima, after their discussion on Ytaioa, weighed heavily in her decisions; and now, at this most important crisis, Abel has again influenced her. Rima is so crushed, however, that Abel is frightened by this extreme--and dangerous--change in her, when "all that bright life seemed gone out of her." The deathlike swoon of Rima, so melodramatic and romantic, almost as in a play, brings down the curtain quickly on this chapter of *Green Mansions*.

Rima continues to run the gamut of emotions in the following chapter, which presents the culmination of the love between the two young people. Abel's kisses not only help to revive the despondent Rima but, more important, overcome her reluctance to confide completely in Abel. Abel now understands why Rima has avoided him on so many occasions, and he can explain forthrightly to her the reason: She has wanted to talk in her own language to her own people who will aid her to solve the mystery of this strange, new emotion--love. This answer, simple in explanation and not illogical in view of Rima's isolated life, provides the answers to what has happened in other chapters. Striving to erase past memories, and hoping to speak to Abel despite the language barrier, Rima remarks very maturely, "Oh, why do we cry for what is lost? Why do we not quickly forget it and feel glad again?" Love, on the verge of bringing happiness, trust, and understanding to Rima and Abel, is interrupted by the girl's announcement that she must return alone to the forest.

Rima's final change of emotional mood is, then, not unmotivated, especially as Hudson has depicted her in these two chapters. After all, Rima is essentially a romantic heroine who has reacted throughout the book as a character living an exotic existence and behaving intuitively. Rima does display a very realistic attitude at times, particularly in her initial hopes for the future with Abel, but she is fundamentally also an idea, or even an ideal, in Hudson's romance. For these reasons, therefore, Rima ignores the feelings of Abel about her departure, says innocently that she must weave for herself a new gossamer dress in which to greet him, and leaves so suddenly that she does not say farewell to Nuflo, or even take provisions.

Like Rima, Abel, despite his steadfast reliance upon reason and logic in winning Rima's love, is basically a romantic hero. All his speeches to Rima are expressions of his profound emotional involvement in her destiny, and he is lyrical in his several declarations of love for the girl. For example, Abel follows a pattern familiar by now in *Green Mansions*. Thoughts about Rima, now unconscious in the cave, lead Abel to remember something observed in nature; then comes a detailed description in poetic prose about the natural phenomenon and finally appears the moral or at least the practical application of this episode to life. In this particular passage, Abel has been gazing at "the mysterious loveliness of the still face" when he, "in that profound silence and solitude," senses "a strange feeling in me, hard, perhaps impossible, to describe." Drifting into a reverie, Abel recalls a time in the mountains when the sight of a single, white flower compelled him to come back repeatedly to view it. This *Hata* flower, as the Indians call it, is also the source of a beautiful legend: The flower appears for a month and vanishes at will, is unique, and brings good fortune to the discoverer. This combination of a local color sketch, peculiarly South American, and a scientific description is then expanded into a didactic conclusion. Why, thinks Abel, does life survive and bloom for one but is destroyed without reason for another? Applying his observation and thought to the immediate situation, Abel again moralizes: Why is not Rima another *Hata*--unique, immortal, and the bearer of happiness?

While Hudson has been advancing toward a profounder artistic expression in *Green Mansions*, the episode of the *Hata* flower, included in one of the most important chapters of the book, illustrates clearly and forcefully four aspects of the writer: his utilization of poetic prose as a basic feature of style; the employment of regionalism or indigenous elements as a background; his experience and reputation as a naturalist to provide accuracy and authority for the settings; and his moralistic or philosophical ambitions for the story. While little is directly added to the plot by such digressions, the value of *Green Mansions* would be diminished by the omission of vignettes such as the tale of the *Hata*.

Abel, then, in these chapters emerges as a tragic hero, doomed by his romanticism. He has idealized Rima to such an extent that he is almost unaware of the real setting and of Rima's personality. Abel dominated the situation and mastered the crisis when he conducted himself realistically without any neglect of his love for Rima. Now, at the apparent time of his success, Abel throws aside all thought of practical considerations--and loses Rima. For example, he is so immersed in his romantic idyll that he fails to prevent Rima from abandoning him for her impractical scheme of making the return trip alone. When Abel does finally respond to the demands of the real world and the practical issue at hand--Rima's flight--the girl has reached the lower plateau. Abel, "recovering my faculties" as he correctly analyzes his error, can only sink into a state of mental depression. Nevertheless, Abel's speeches to Rima, in addition to the obvious poetic qualities of the lines, reflect his deep passion, sincerity, and devotion to the girl.

These two chapters, therefore, are the high point of Hudson's idealization of Abel and Rima; this section is also the apex of their mutual love. The story's trajectory starts downward very definitely when Rima says to the young man: "I must go back alone, Abel."

CHAPTERS 18 & 19

Summary

Unlike Abel, Nuflo is not worried about Rima's return alone to the woodland because he has great confidence in her ability to survive in the jungle. Exhausted physically by the trip to Riolama and reassured by Nuflo, Abel rests for two days, but he then presses Nuflo to start back despite the latter's desire to relax longer here. The journey homeward requires twenty-three days because the weather is worse than the previous heavy period of rain. Food is short, and both men are already fatigued from the first trek.

When they at last come to Nuflo's hut, the two men are very upset because the house has been burned to the ground. Nuflo, sure that Runi's people have committed this destruction, is fearful of the future; Abel, on the other hand, is concerned only about Rima. He enters the "green mansions" but senses that "a strange melancholy rested on the forest." Abel goes to familiar places such as the mora tree and soon, in desperation, softly calls for Rima. False notes of birds alert him to the presence of Indians, and he is startled to see Piaké, the brother of Kua-kó, who takes him back as a prisoner to the village. Abel is very certain that something has happened to Rima because the Parahuaris have never dared to penetrate the forest due to their fear of her. Abel's inquiries, cautious and shrewd, produce no information about Rima except Piaké's statement that the evil spirit is no longer in the woodland. Abel decides to try an escape after he has uncovered the facts about Rima's fate. Nuflo, consequently, will have to remain alone and take his chances against the marauding savages. He already vows vengeance against the Parahuaris if Rima has perished because of them.

Abel's arrival in the village excites all the Indians, but they no longer look upon him as a friend. When Runi comes home, a trial takes place, and the chief bitterly accuses Abel of betraying the Indians who have sheltered him. Runi is especially afraid that Abel has visited the neighboring Managa and his tribe, who are enemies of the Parahuaris. These foes could use any information which Abel might give them to

destroy Runi's people. Abel's defense is a mixture of truth and omission, and he carefully leaves out Rima's name in his arguments. He explains that he met an old man who claimed that there was gold at Riolama. Since he had lost all his fortune in a war, the only way to recoup his position in the civilized world is by gold. However, no gold was located at Riolama, so he returned trustingly to his friends, the Parahuaris. Abel asserts boldly that he will go elsewhere to look for better friends if the Indians do not believe him. Although Runi is not firmly convinced by Abel's speech, he is at least persuaded to allow the young man to remain without being harmed.

The tribe slowly seems to forget the incident, but Abel only increases his bitterness and hatred toward the savages. Three days later, Kua-kó enters the encampment with important news which the Indians discuss in secret; Abel guesses from their preparations that a war party is in the making. He offers to accompany them and notices that Runi, with a bulge at his waist, is hiding the revolver. Abel hopes that the weapon will be returned to him during the expedition. When the war party camps at night, Abel determines to question Kua-kó about Rima. He traps the Indian by praising the courage the tribe shows in being willing to hunt in the woodland. Kua-kó narrates the whole story: The travelers met by Abel and the others on the way to Riolama reported the fact to Runi; thus the Parahuaris knew that the forest was safe for them to use for hunting. Admitting that Rima accompanied him to Riolama, Abel lies about her return by saying that she was frightened and stayed there. Kua-kó gleefully gives the response that Abel has been wanting when he brags that Rima did come back.

The Indians saw Rima in the woodland and trapped her in a tree. They were, however, afraid to shoot arrows at her because of the past incident when she supposedly threw back an arrow at them. Fire was the only solution, so the whole tribe prepared a large fire around the tree. As the flames reached the top of the tree, Rima cried out like a bird, "Abel! Abel!" then plunged into the fire. Abel can barely restrain himself from killing Kua-kó because of his emotional anguish at the confirmation of Rima's horrible death. Pretending to go to sleep, Abel later escapes from the war party and heads for Managa's camp so that he can warn him about the planned attack. For further vengeance, Abel wants Managa to destroy all the Parahuaris. But Kua-kó is suspicious of Abel and stalks him on the trail. Abel, with only a knife for a weapon, is wounded by a spear thrown by Kua-kó, but he ferociously turns on the Indian and kills him. Although Abel fears that the other savages have also pursued him, he happily realizes that he is mistaken. He heads for Managa's village.

Commentary

It is apparent in these two chapters that Abel is quickly approaching an emotional, psychological, and physical crisis; his mood, as he admits, is close to "a new nature, black and implacable." The pace of *Green Mansions* is very swift in these two chapters; Hudson, showing forceful narrative powers, compresses a considerable span of time within a few pages. Like the third act in a play, all the movement is quickly aimed at the resolution of the conflict and, in this particular case, at the explanation of tragedy for the lovers.

At the beginning, Abel is demoralized by Rima's departure, and Nuflo's words of trust in her skill do not restore Abel's peace of mind. Abel is also suffering from physical exhaustion which saps his remaining strength. He is, after all, a city dweller who is unable to match the rugged efforts of Nuflo even though the latter is much older than he is. The very difficult journey from Riolama to the forest causes a further deterioration in Abel's physical resources. His mental stamina is of course reduced by anxiety and a growing depression about Rima. Nuflo and Abel are equally alarmed at finding the hut destroyed, and all hope for Rima's safety vanishes at this moment. Abel's capture by the Parahuaris, their hostile attitude, their presence in the "green mansions," and the casual way in which the Indians dismiss any fear about Rima's magic powers complete the full cycle of his belief in a tragic death for the girl. Indeed, only one question needs to be answered for Abel: How exactly did Rima perish?

In this crisis, Abel's pitiful state and his mounting agony have nevertheless stimulated him to one supreme effort--even if the endeavor costs him his life. He insists upon learning the precise facts about Rima's end, and he promises to wreak violence and death upon all the savages, no matter what the individual guilt may be. The harshness and cruelty of men are dramatically portrayed as Abel finally learns the horrible truth about Rima's murder. The story, though told at second hand by Kua-kó, still is vividly related. All the action is well motivated, and the tension is heightened by the keen narrative prowess of Hudson. The pursuit of Abel by Kua-kó is probably the most thrilling and melodramatic scene in the book. It is easy to comprehend Abel's emotions, his desperate gesture of defiance as Kua-kó approaches, and perhaps the experience of "a feeling of savage joy" at the outcome.

However, Abel, the civilized representative of the city, has demonstrated a violent nature which certainly imitates and rivals that of his Indian opponents. If one considers the condition of the savages, which breeds fear, prejudice, and superstition, their reactions to Rima's entrapment in the tree are not so startling. And, also, their treatment of Abel has been incredibly trustworthy. Hudson, by criticizing the savages through the eyes of Abel, may be expressing his own puzzled attitude about the violence and destruction of nature--just as inexplicable as the beauty and grandeur of untamed life. The forest in these chapters is no longer seen as a refuge but as a dungeon. The colors selected for the descriptions of the "green mansions" are dark instead of the former bright hues. In fact, nature is pushed to the background as the tragic deeds occur. It has lost its prominent place within the framework of the romance because of the frightful actions of the dwellers in the forest. Only in a brooding manner does the woodland reign supreme; gone, for instance, are the joyous sunsets of past chapters. In these dramatic episodes, then, there is logically no room for concern about the beauties of nature.

Although Rima disappears in the narration and her death concludes her active role in the story, she is the motive for Abel's actions and his complete change of personality. Rima was raised to the level of an ideal, and this personification of a dream so enriched Abel's thoughts that he could not conceive of her disappearance. Hudson, by making Rima a member of an exotic tribe of bird people, called attention to her unique status. She is, however, the creature of nature. Until her return to the woodland, only the favorable side of nature has been observed, but nature has an aspect of violence. The ferocity and force of nature, when the evil is unleashed, overwhelms everyone in its path. Rima, so enamored of the trees, is symbolically--and ironically--killed while seeking safety in one of the green mansions.

Abel, nevertheless, emerges in *Green Mansions* once more as the principal character. Temporarily, Rima dominated the action; the character development of the girl provided the main interest. But Abel has changed so greatly that he is unrecognizable as the romantic young man of the "green mansions" and the mountaintops of Ytaioa and Riolama. If, however, irony and a profound, puzzling philosophy about the vagaries of nature characterize Hudson's portrait of Abel, the result is also the beginning of a serious psychological study. The question to be answered in the two chapters and in succeeding ones is very direct: How will Abel face life without Rima?

CHAPTERS 20-22

Summary

When Abel reaches Managa's village, he immediately starts to incite the chief to annihilate Runi's tribe. He is very successful in causing a massacre of the Parahuaris, but the sight of old Cla-cla, covered with blood, shocks Abel into a reaction of horror against the evil he has wrought in his revenge. Seeking isolation deep in the jungle, Abel undergoes many privations because he cannot trap enough animals for food and has difficulty in building an adequate fire to keep warm. Approaching Nuflo's hut almost compulsively, Abel is horrified to discover the skeleton of the old man, who has been murdered by the savages. After burying the remains of his dead companion, Abel recovers the cache of provisions which

he and Nuflo hid before they set out for Riolama. These supplies save Abel from possible death, and he sets to work in a new mood. Erecting a shelter on the spot where Rima had lived, Abel rests and gradually recovers. He is, however, disturbed by the shocking memories of the past; in this solitude, Abel begins again to deteriorate in mind and body. He grows thin and weak because of the agonies of recent events. He begins to act irrationally, as when he hurls a stone into the water in order to destroy the reflection of himself.

Abel endeavors to convince himself that Rima may be alive. He hopes that the Indians lied or that Rima survived in some miraculous way. Searching through the woodland for Rima, Abel of course has no luck; he then looks for the site of the fire. When he locates the place where all signs indicate that Rima perished exactly as the Indians related, Abel carefully gathers the bones of Rima. He takes them back to his shelter, where he spends many hours decorating a clay jar for them. On the urn, Abel inscribes the words: "Sin vos y sin dios y mi (Having lost you, I have lost both God and myself.)"

Another crisis, however, overcomes Abel: He is unable to sleep because nightmares destroy the pleasure of the loving task that had comforted him during the daytime. Abel is in a dilemma: He reasons with himself that he will die if he does not leave the woodland, yet the thought of abandoning the place of his happiest days in life is unbearable. After catching a sloth, which reminds him of another incident with Rima, Abel has some meat which will feed him during the trip to a settlement. His mood is inclined to laughter for the first time in months, but in the cold light of morning he is sadly reflective as he bids farewell to Rima's homeland. He weeps upon setting out on the trail to civilization.

After a difficult time in the jungle, beset by many natural obstacles and victimized by an overwrought imagination, Abel reaches the coast. But his full recovery is slow. When the sufferings of the body are forgotten, Abel must still live--forever--with the memory of Rima. He slowly tries to apply all his experiences to his life and to be worthy of Rima.

Commentary

There is very little action in the long, introspective chapter twenty, but the chapter is one of the most important in *Green Mansions* for an explanation of Hudson's philosophy. Abel's foray into Managa's camp that results in the attack upon Runi's people is described in very muted fashion, and there is little dialogue in the chapter except for Abel's combative speeches to himself. Here, nevertheless, is where Hudson, speaking through Abel, argues with fate and seeks to comprehend the turns and twists of destiny. It is impossible to struggle against the pitfalls of life, Hudson concludes, and one must accept tragedies, though sadly. Nature is cruel, but the one at fault is God. Yet everything comes from "the Author of my being," as Abel has called God. Abel then concludes that both good and evil, love and hate come from God; prayers and defiance of destiny have no effect upon his plight.

Abel, nevertheless, emerges from this dark night of the soul, or, as he calls it, "the blackest period of my life," by will power and rationalization. His revolt will avail nothing against God and against the inscrutable workings of the divine instrument, nature; and the rebel will only destroy himself in the struggle. But Abel undergoes a frightening "period of moral insanity" before he grasps the fact that he is committing suicide in his rebellion against God. He then accepts the responsibility for the crimes of which he is guilty--the murder of Runi and his people. He at last blames no one, not even God, for this wickedness; he makes no excuses for passion as the motivating factor.

Abel always believes in God and never denies the possibility of the divine existence, but during a moment of his defiance, before realizing how he injures himself, Abel wants to play the role of God. Imitating God, Abel will plunge into violence, a manifestation of God in nature; he vows to eradicate from his soul all the good traits of humanity. The concrete result, however, turns Abel away from vice, and the sight of old Cla-cla, murdered because of his violence, sends him back in search of himself. Then, in addition to

his growing revulsion at the harm he is doing to his soul and life, Abel returns to another concept, temporarily forgotten: Nature has a benevolent as well as a cruel side. Nature, as though hearing him, comes to Abel's aid: He sleeps outdoors on the cool grass, the sun warms him, and a few morsels of food afford him momentary pleasure. Abel's inner humanity comes surely to the fore when he goes to Nuflo's hut, decides to establish himself there, and buries the bones of the old man.

Nevertheless, Abel's attempt to build a new life for himself away from civilization and even from any inhabitants of the jungle is not successful. Abel broods in his solitude; the whole area, where so many memories plague him daily, constitutes an unhealthy source of his inner strife. Hudson very skillfully exploits two small episodes to augment the impact of his thematic and philosophical arguments: Abel's observations of a spider and a moth. Abel plays at God with the spider: he could kill the creature at any moment; he could cripple the spider by striking off one of its legs as he is tempted to do; or he could leave the spider alone with its delusion of security. The clue to Abel's salvation is his recollection of Rima's love for all life so that he spares the creature. The moth, on the other hand, directly resembles Rima. Its beauty attracts Abel; its unconcern with danger reminds him of her perilous trip from Riolama; and the moth's sudden fall into the fire, when Abel opens the door to let it escape outside, symbolizes what actually happened to Rima. There has been, according to Abel's tortured view, no justification for the life--and death--of the moth; and Abel, in his feeble efforts to help the moth, perhaps has inadvertently aided in its destruction.

At this point, Abel again declines; the values of civilization are useless in his fight for survival. The will power of the young man has been sapped to the point of exhaustion. His intelligence, reason, and education seem powerless against the terrors of the imagination and nature. Hudson may be questioning the role of civilization in dealing with primitive forces, and he may be showing the tragedy of modern man who has lost all touch with nature. Abel's continuous dialogue with himself, his repeated calling of Rima's name, and the illusory hope that she may be alive in face of all the contrary evidence present tragic indications of his pitiful condition. Ironically, at the occasion of a seemingly irrational act--the search for Rima's bones--Abel finds the means to save his sanity. He can now grapple with a specific task, concentrate his thought upon the artistry of the urn, and try to decide about the future. Of course, the mystery in the prologue about "a darkened chamber" in Mr. Abel's house is solved by this explanation of the origin of the "cinerary urn."

However, there may be some objections to Hudson's description of this vignette of the bones and urn as morbid and melodramatic, but the idea is certainly within the framework of nineteenth-century Romanticism. And it is logical and consistent for Abel to behave thus in the light of his many romantic actions in *Green Mansions*. The imagery of "a frail white-winged moth" which has disintegrated into "the finest white ashes" is not only beautiful poetry but the metaphor recalls the episode of the moth in the twentieth chapter, an experience affecting Abel a great deal. Although Abel has lost faith in God, his devotion to Rima's remains is converted into a religious symbol for the young man. He has deified, or at least sanctified, Rima; and the urn with the calcined bones is very much like a shrine built for the relics of a saint. Indeed, one should note carefully throughout the remaining pages how Abel increasingly raises the memory of Rima to a metaphysical level. At the conclusion of *Green Mansions*, in fact, Rima is the inspiration for Abel's belief in life.

This conversion of Rima into a symbol, even perhaps a religious symbol, results in Abel's statement several times that he now communicates with "a Rima of the mind." In the course of conversations, real for the disturbed Abel, the inspiration to leave the "green mansions" comes from the "phantom" of Rima. There is obvious weakness in Hudson's solution of his hero's crisis. Motivation for the plan is lacking because of reliance on the sudden voice of Rima as the cause for Abel's recognition of his plight. The whole passage is also very Victorian in the repeated moralistic and didactic sentences. But the device solves the problem for Hudson--and the hero. In short, the question for the writer is: Should he allow

Abel to perish in the jungle retreat, or should he rescue him? By selecting the second course, Hudson has likewise adhered to another Romantic credo: that the hero should linger long and sorrowfully after his lover's demise.

Abel's struggle finally emerges as a war between the imagination and the will. Thanks to his highly imaginative confrontations with Rima, Abel is ironically able to assert his will--and to reach Georgetown. His strong imagination is also displayed in the several instances where Abel describes the creatures of the "green mansions," such as the snakes--familiar already as a favorite object throughout the book. For example, Abel sketches a vividly savage picture of a serpent, "cold enough to freeze a victim's blood in its veins," and the remark is made that this monstrous creature is no coral snake like the one that Abel encountered during his first, loving gaze at Rima. The last pictures of the "green mansions" and the South American hinterlands offer forceful impressions of nature, awesome and formidable, in its untamed independence.

Thus, Abel muses upon his departure that a dozen miles here will be one hundred in Europe; that the land will be pockmarked by mountains, rivers, and forests; and that the whole aspect, in short, is "wild" and "savage." For example, Hudson refers to Roraima, the "gigantic wall" of British Guiana, the inspiration for Arthur Conan Doyle's fantasy adventure *The Lost World*. Nowhere, perhaps, in *Green Mansions* does the background of nature in the South American continent play such an impressive part as in the days when Abel sets out for civilization. Structurally and thematically, the descriptions of nature mirror the trials and moods of the hero. While nature in these concluding chapters is not as kind as in the opening and middle chapters, the shift has been somewhat made from a completely unfavorable (or evil, during Abel's agony) element. However, nature is now depicted as a "purgatory" and an "inferno" to be visited before coming to safety. The vision of nature by Abel is, then, a reflection of his developing mood as he leaves behind the romantic days in the woodland and resumes his life in the realistic settings of cities.

The last, brief chapter is somewhat like an epilogue to the romance, and there is principally a renewed emphasis to ideas stated previously. Several points in the prologue are reinforced although Abel, of course, is the narrator as he has been throughout the adventures. Striving to understand how he has eluded death, Abel at last concludes that he has been saved the same way as when the coral snake bit him--through frantic exertions of the will. He has thereby acquired "a new desperate courage" to face the rest of his life without Rima. Now, he plans to exist only for the purpose of rendering homage to Rima and preserving her memory by dint of his existence. Abel's philosophy--or religion--is one of stoicism; he still does not fathom the inscrutable actions of God. Only one fact stands out clearly for Abel: Rima's belief in him. Thus, he will do good works so that he can merit her respect.

In the three last chapters, therefore, Hudson has set forth many of his philosophical queries and replies regarding human existence, and he has also presented a plausible explanation of his hero's agony.

CHARACTER ANALYSES

ABEL

Abel, the main character, serves as the narrator in *Green Mansions* except during the short prologue when an unnamed British official in Georgetown sets the stage for the story. The reader is then alerted to one fact which must remove a certain amount of suspense: The hero, despite all his travails, large and small, has survived.

Abel is well prepared for his encounter with nature and Rima because he has deliberately sought to escape from the realistic, artificial, and corrupt atmosphere of modern civilization; in short, Abel is psychologically motivated for the venture which is to befall him. Although he had originally journeyed

inland to seek gold, which would have restored him to power, wealth, and his former way of life, Abel responded enthusiastically to the stimulus of primitive nature.

Even his initial experiences with the Indians contain favorable impressions, and the episode of the drinking bout with the Parahuaris is humorous as Abel adjusts to his new way of life; he would not have been opposed to spending a term of exile among the savages, enjoying nature and analyzing the habits of the natives.

Abel's curiosity, however, leads him to enter the forbidden "green mansions" of the South American hinterland, and the slow, suspenseful realization that a human being lives in the woodland arouses the young man's ambition to become acquainted with this mysterious person. During the second phase of Abel's development, considerable emphasis is placed on analyzing his various reactions; the effect is a sound, psychological study of his moods. The whole section also has some amusing moments when, for example, he stays away from the forest in order to force Rima to appear. Although a great deal is learned about Abel during these two stages, the chapters are only preliminary to the meeting between the youth and Rima.

The emotional and romantic height of *Green Mansions* is of course the relationship between the two, but the love affair reaches a level of mutual understanding for a short time. Prior to Abel's explanation to Rima at Riolama about the disaster to her people, he has met rebuffs and shyness from the girl. His love for Rima increases during the difficult period of frank communication between the two. Finally, at the mountain of Ytaioa, Abel ironically provides happiness for Rima by mentioning accidentally the name of Riolama because he causes the beginning of the tragedy. He shows tragic features also, symbolizing in his quest the plight of modern people pursuing the ideals of love, beauty, and perfection.

Going from a realistic to a romantic attitude, Abel at last emerges as the tragic hero after Rima's disappearance from the story. Rima thus liberates Abel in a certain sense as he only develops completely when he remains alone after the end of their friendship. The book is certainly not a character study, but the chapters after Rima's flight belong to Abel; he increasingly dominates the narration. The deepening tragedy is paralleled by the importance of Abel in the story and by the manner in which his character unfolds during the various crises.

Abel, suffering from a traumatic shock because of the sure signs of Rima's death, almost goes insane under the burden of his self-imposed isolation. The loss of his one value, without any specific ideal to replace that security, leaves him in a void. He falls from the state of innocence and idealism to a condition of barbaric primitivism and violence. Abel, in short, turns from goodness to evil. He resorts to trickery, betrayal, and murder in the same degree that the Parahuaris had done in their behavior toward Rima.

During his final descent into isolation and crime, Abel borders dangerously on a decision which could lead him to suicide. Only Rima's memory saves him, and his determination to conduct himself as her servant brings him back to civilization. Too much attention may have been given to Abel's development in these closing chapters, as some critics and even the author conceded.

Nevertheless, the intimate analyses of Abel's agony after Rima's death, in particular, are poignant, plausible probings of the young man. He is a youth who has fallen in love, looks upon the future optimistically, and suddenly sees all his expectations dissipated by the aspect of the life he has ignored. Nature, so vital a force throughout the romance, triumphs in showing a cruel side. Abel, so enamored with nature, suffers grievously because he has not expected such swift, heartless treatment from the blind forces of natural circumstances. His hopes were raised too high, and his romanticism allowed him to lose sight of the adverse aspects of human existence.

Nevertheless, the chapters in which Abel sinks into despair are the ones his character is best traced. Although the constant and sole attention is placed on the hapless youth, alone in the "green mansions," interest is sustained by the concentration on his predicament. Hudson's beliefs--and doubts--are brought out very fully during his hero's final crisis. Abel is the young man of Hudson's own time who must search for an ideal if the materialism of the age is not to stifle his spirit. Hudson is also frank in sketching what befalls the youth who tries to embody a dream. Abel's idyll, vanquished by the elements he had accepted, sustains him for the rest of his life by providing a stoical base of service and devotion.

Abel, then, possesses evident and marked autobiographical traces which are also convincing by use of the first person as the narrative device in *Green Mansions*. Hudson, too, came up against the brutalities of universal suffering when he was almost fatally stricken by illnesses. His recovery, however, ended his dream of a vigorous, outdoor life, and, like Abel, Hudson found himself cut adrift from his moorings in nature. Although critics of Hudson's romance are unanimous that the work is in many ways the story of the author's own quest, they have been unable to show precisely the influence of the writer's life as clearly as they believe exists in *Green Mansions*.

RIMA

Although Abel dominates the entire action in the romance, Rima perhaps remains more fixed in the reader's memory because she represents the idea of pure spirit. She is more myth than real woman, but Hudson has tried to rationalize this problem by making her the sole, surviving representative of a mysterious race of bird people. In short, Rima exists through the romantic and idealistic interpretations of Abel. She seldom is at the center of the stage in the drama, and her two main scenes at Ytaioa and at Riolama are short. Even at these times, Abel is present.

Rima's presence in *Green Mansions* is limited to the middle section of the book or, more specifically, from chapter seven to chapter seventeen. In chapter seven, Abel meets Rima with Nuflo; later, Rima disappears directly from the story by her hasty return to the "green mansions." Her appearance is very subtly prepared for, and Abel's interest in the mysterious dweller of the forest is gradually aroused by suspense and curiosity. The mythical qualities of the "daughter of the Didi" are intensified by the superstitious warnings and fearful behavior of the Indians. One should observe how Hudson unfolds these layers of the mystery so slowly and yet so dramatically, keeping the reader's attention focused on some small incident happening to Abel--for example, Abel's near encounter with Rima, which instead ends in an impressive display of terror converted into humorous irony by use of the *araguatos*, or howling monkeys.

Finally, of course, the climactic moment arrives when Abel approaches Rima: She is, then, not only a human being like himself, but she is almost simultaneously converted into the personification of a supernatural dimension. Nuflo's narration of her mother's history, his own past, and Rima's childhood illuminates the physical background but contributes little practical insight about the girl's psychological problems. Again, instead of a study in depth, Hudson consequently depicts Rima in the throes of a previously unknown--and human--sentiment, love. This fundamentally simple and normal emotion is the vortex around which swirl all the shy movements and disappearances of the girl, and these stirrings of love in Rima, and her responses to them, are the cause for Abel's annoyance, frustration, and even anger.

These four chapters, seven through ten, constitute Hudson's deployment of the love motif, but the action, slow as in the introductory chapters, provides no startling revelations as the intensity of Abel's love for Rima grows. Rima's character still resides in the shadows of the mythic glow that Hudson has given her. If, then, Abel represents certain autobiographical aspects of Hudson, Rima symbolizes his aspirations in the philosophical sphere. Rima is the eternal virgin, perfection on the feminine plane; she is for Hudson the ideal for which people hope and possibly seek. Rima, like Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is

more spirit than substance.

Rima later emerges as a leading character because her fate is linked closely to that of Abel. In fact, the sharpest portrait of Rima in the romance is provided when she demonstrates momentarily the potentialities of a real person rather than an allegorical figure. She forces the two men to do her will by her determination about the trip and her return to the "green mansions." Rima, here, does not seem like the shy, retiring girl of the previous chapters. Her energetic and uninhibited personality, her aspirations about seeking her roots among the bird people, and her growing love for Abel come to the fore. This enrichment of her character, if allowed full rein, might have resulted in a psychological portrait as interesting as that of Abel.

However, Rima's role is very limited within the book because she vanishes so swiftly. Her moods are varied with romantic qualities, matching those of her lover, as the predominant force. Rima, in her wrath at Nuflo's silence about her past, appears almost shrewish, but the performance is very convincing and realistic. Then, after the shock of comprehending that the bird people no longer exist and that she will never find a home with them, Rima turns to Abel in the most sentimental scene of *Green Mansions*. Although Rima declares her total devotion to Abel, she departs impetuously, alone in a last proof of her basically romantic nature. This last action is consistent not so much with that of a woman deeply in love for the first time but rather with the tradition of the romantic heroine. She reverts likewise to the allegorical image, representing a mysterious and ephemeral ideal, that Hudson develops in the first part of the book.

For the remaining chapters, Rima serves as a myth for Abel which he proceeds to lift to the level of sainthood, or perhaps deification. In addition to this treatment of Rima by the faithful Abel as a model of holiness, Hudson associates the young girl with his concept of nature. The memory, impression, and idealization of Rima, then, have a contemporary or relevant meaning in the fight of beauty against ugliness, good against evil, the preservation of unspoiled nature against the degradations of commercialization and exploitation, and the need to have a vision of a better life.

NUFLO

Although Nuflo's role is minor within the complete structure of *Green Mansions*, he is a welcome comic relief, at times, to the high tension and melodramatic moments. Nuflo comes closer to having a realistic characterization than do Rima and Abel. There is no allegorical mode to any of Nuflo's actions even if he perhaps is a faint symbol of civilization in contact with nature. Nuflo, in part, is the opposite of Abel because the old man is from a lower social class with none of the cultural and political advantages of the hero. Nuflo has also been a criminal in his youth, and he must now by necessity live outside the jurisdiction of the law where he could be apprehended. He is likewise bound to superstitious beliefs and is literally afraid of Rima because of her supposed powers to intercede with heaven about his fate after death. Nuflo has few ideals, but his knowledge and reactions are invariably practical, with his own survival the principal motive. For example, he is kind to the dogs on whom he relies for hunting, but he can kill one of the animals without any sorrowful outbursts or remorse, as Abel learns on the return trip from Riolama. The same behavior pattern marks Nuflo's sly method of eating meat without Rima's apparent knowledge.

Abel, frequently exasperated by Nuflo's attitude and evasiveness, nevertheless finds a companion with whom he can communicate on easy terms. Nuflo's murder elicits Abel's sincere feelings toward the old man; and Abel's words at the burial scene, simple and noncommittal, indicate the youth's final judgment on Rima's guardian: "'Sleep well, old man,' said I." Hudson's characterization of Nuflo is very possibly drawn from gaucho types whom he knew in his early years in Argentina; characters such as Nuflo are familiar actors in the gaucho literature of South America.

Nuflo's contribution to *Green Mansions* is valuable for several reasons: He solves the mystery about Rima's birth and background; he lightens the mood by providing variety; he contrasts with the hero; his actions are often characterized by humor and even comic elements; his knowledge of nature guides the group to Riolama; and he shows himself to be the stronger of the two when Abel falters during the return to the "green mansions." One should also remember Hudson's use of language and the difference between Abel's and Nuflo's patterns of speech. Abel speaks a cultured and flowery language, the result of his background and training in Caracas; Nuflo uses a rougher and more common idiom. Hudson is also skillful in attempting the rendition of Spanish linguistic patterns into English sentences as he allows Nuflo to talk. Nuflo is representative of the humble South American of Spanish origin.

THE INDIANS

Like Nuflo, the Indians whom Abel meets during his residence in the "green mansions" are realistic characters without any idealized features. In fact, Hudson's--or Abel's--feelings toward the natives are apparent throughout the book. Fundamentally, Hudson never shows any positive features of the natives. The Parahuaris symbolize, in Hudson's allegory, brute force and the ugly side of nature because they are the immediate cause of Rima's death and thus destroy Abel's paradise.

However, Hudson has shaped in a very real fashion his individual portraits of the Indians. Three natives occupy a place of minor importance: Runi, Kua-kó, and Cla-cla. Runi, the chief of the Parahuaris, is the spokesman during all the debates with Abel; his arguments are cunning and skillful in their primitive logic. Despite the reader's sympathy for Abel, the complaints that Runi lodges have some merit despite the repetitious insistence: The Indians sheltered and befriended the young man in his dire need, and he has not behaved as a friend or an appreciative guest toward them. Kua-kó, one of the bravest and most promising warriors of the tribe, lacks the wily intelligence and guile of Runi. Kua-kó is obviously a foil for Abel, and the latter's superiority in all their encounters is always noted by Hudson. In the dramatic account of Rima's death, Kua-kó is the narrator; Abel symbolically slays Kua-kó as the immediate culprit for the merciless deed. Cla-cla is the only Indian whom Abel accepts as a decent and sympathetic human being; she provides the young man with several amusing moments, especially during the evening when they sing around the campfire. Although the old Parahuari woman appears only briefly in the story, she has an important part in Abel's redemption. The sight of the murdered Cla-cla, a crime instigated by Abel's desire for revenge against the Parahuaris, restores him to his humanity. If Hudson's attitude toward the Indians is severe, he has somewhat tempered this hostility in the character of Cla-cla. He has sharply and effectively countered the presentation of deceitful savages by a warm, humorous member of the tribe. In some ways, Cla-cla provides a balanced picture to the scene just as Nuflo contrasts with his realism to the romanticism of Rima and Abel.

THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

The unnamed British officer in Georgetown appears only in the prologue, and he has no role within the narrative framework. He has befriended Abel and has now decided, supposedly after his friend's death, to reveal publicly the story told to him. This familiar device in literary form adds an air of veracity, curiosity, and mystery to the tale.

Two conclusions thus emerge about Hudson's personages in *Green Mansions*: They are very limited in number, and character development is not a major objective of the author. Three main characters, if Nuflo is included, are depicted. Rima, however, appears only in the middle of the book, and she disappears from the action after the seventeenth chapter. Abel, serving as the narrator for all the chapters, receives close attention and comes closer to the concept of a rounded or developed character. The Indians and the anonymous government representative have small parts and only provide a backdrop as necessary ingredients of the plot.

CRITICAL ESSAYS

HUDSON'S WORLD IN *GREEN MANSIONS*

Green Mansions is a romance and an allegory, using nature and a tragic love as the background for the presentation of Hudson's ideas and ideals.

Is Hudson, then, a poet, or is he primarily a naturalist in *Green Mansions*?

Close to the tradition of Western civilization which found great inspiration in nature in classical times, Hudson is a follower of the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Wordsworth and Thoreau are spiritual relatives of Hudson. Although he spoke little of the former, Hudson proclaimed Thoreau's *Walden* as "the one golden book" in the field of nature literature. In an increasingly scientific age, Hudson absorbed influences, such as Darwin's, but he developed his style according to the established patterns of the prior generation. No innovative stylist, Hudson accepted the lengthy, descriptive, and flowery techniques of Victorian prose. His lack of a formal education and his removal from the main currents of literary trends until late in life may be some rationalized explanations for his modes of composition.

The naturalist or the scientist gives the value of his intellect, his experience in research, and his training to any subject. He must, of course, be almost coldly rational and objective in his approach, outlook, and presentation. Hudson, a recognized naturalist before his transfer to England, contributed greatly to the popularization of the South American continent to English-speaking audiences, unaware or scornful of the beauties of that vast, unknown world. Hudson's love and respect for his former homeland clearly won him admirers for his contributions about accurate, stimulating, and revealing aspects of Latin America. Although, ironically, he never visited the precise setting of *Green Mansions*, his descriptions of the flora and fauna of the region have not been challenged. Nature, always a theme in his writings about South America and England, characterizes the whole atmosphere, setting, and philosophy of the romance.

Hudson believed that the poet, in harmony with the naturalist, must reveal and explain nature. The poet relies upon the senses and the imagination to interpret natural phenomena, and he consequently is personal, emotional, and perceptive. The intuition or the reliance upon the first, swift feelings guides the poet. Hudson is very close to the preceding generation, to poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, in his defense of the lyrical and subjective renditions of the sights of nature.

If, therefore, Hudson is an artist who paints word pictures of nature for his readers, he is likewise restrained in this realm by his commitment to science. But he is, critics seemingly agree, a poet first and a naturalist second. Visual observation is evidently his primary sensorial quality, and Hudson resembles in many ways a painter by his emphasis on colors, linear movements, and harmonious form. Many of the scenes, especially the two dramatic meetings on the mountaintops of Ytaioa and Riolama, can be visualized within the framework of a painting. Hudson speaks of the art of painting very often in his works, and he criticizes photography because it reduces nature to a single dimension. He is very articulate in his poetic descriptions: He can concentrate upon a small creature of the woodland, the leaves of his beloved "green mansions," or the effect of light and shadow upon the setting; or he can write at length about his deep feelings for nature and his vision of humanity's happiness on earth. Thus, *Green Mansions* is an esthetic creation rather than a scientific treatise, but the book possesses a solid basis in scientific fact which gives verisimilitude and balance to the total effect.

THE MYTHICAL FACULTY

Hudson defined his poetic strength and forceful imaginative powers as the mythical faculty. The desire for communication with nature, stimulated by imagination and fantasy, induces an awakening of the soul so that a supernatural presence is felt. This sentiment, however, should not necessarily be associated with dogmatic or orthodox yearnings for God. Hudson rejected formal Christianity, although he tried to reconcile religious feelings and his pessimistic outlook about the tenets of organized religion.

This mythical faculty of Hudson is of course linked in philosophical language to the idea of pantheism or the unity of God and nature. Although Hudson rationalized his feelings as animistic rather than pantheistic, the literary manifestations of the two doctrines are closely associated in *Green Mansions*. Animism, or the personification of inanimate objects and natural phenomena, follows from the pantheism, but pantheism was denied by Hudson as his philosophy. Abel, enamored of nature as an ideal, sees in Rima the human representation of supernatural forces. Her perfection resides in an inner beauty, enhanced by the love and appreciation of nature, which radiates outward. Life, for example, is contained in the flowers of the "green mansions"; and Abel visualizes Rima's uniqueness mirrored in the *Hata* flower. Abel comes into daily contact with possibilities of the divine influence since it exists in all things, but he does not always reach that spiritual level because his soul must be prepared for the union of God, humanity, and nature. He requires the stimulus of Rima as the catalyst for the full appreciation of these poetic feelings. Animistic sentiments lead Hudson into lofty flights of sparkling poetic prose, and examples abound in *Green Mansions* where Abel, though lacking the presence of Rima, can find higher meanings in the primitive environment. For example, one of the poetic and philosophical excursions of Abel occurs when he, alone in the Parahuari village, hears the sound of a bell. Recalling at first the symbol of Christian worship, Abel immediately rejects this interpretation because the sound is too ethereal. This bell sounds in harmony with the supernatural, which is more inspirational than church bells; and Abel is then led into pantheistic and/or animistic paths. The sound of bells is soon understood as the warbling of bellbirds which Abel apotheosizes in a following passage, sensing increasingly the divine presence.

Hudson, then, did not accept religious orthodoxy; and he classified himself in his own phraseology as a "religious atheist." After his serious illness from typhus and rheumatic fever at the age of fifteen and his subsequent reading of Darwin, Hudson turned his back on strict adherence to theological explanations and doctrinal rigidity in his search for answers to life. It is perhaps difficult today to realize the tremendous impact that Darwin's *Origin of Species* had upon European thought during the second half of the nineteenth century. Darwin's concepts regarding variation of species and the survival of the fittest easily found their way into the structure of *Green Mansions*. The trees are richly described in the lush and exuberant South American tropical jungles; the foliage brightens all the towering trees with a carpet of variegated colors. Hudson as the naturalist and the student of Darwin blends successfully in the descriptive passages of the romance. But there is a principle behind these performances of nature, or otherwise Hudson would be only a local color artist, a mediocre talent with some writing skill. Hudson has also absorbed the conclusions of Darwin that life evolves and continues by dint of struggle; conflict, hostility, and cruelty are concomitant with the existence of life in nature. Chance and mechanism, also inherent in the Darwinian system, completed the destruction of Hudson's belief in the solutions of Christianity.

Hudson, coming to accept all these consequences of Darwinism, is nevertheless disturbed by the apparent lack of purpose in this whole fight for survival. He cannot at the same time abandon the teachings of orthodoxy despite his own sad experiences as a youth, his scientific observations, and his readings. Indeed, no real originality lies in this dilemma of Hudson because the entire Victorian age was shaken to its supposedly solid foundations in faith by the same problem--years before Hudson faced the issue.

Matthew Arnold and Alfred Tennyson, for example, agonized about this conflict between science and religion; they refer constantly in their poetry to the doubts raised by Darwin's theories.

Hudson, nonetheless, is saddened by his lack of faith, and he asked himself in his writings: "How reconcile these facts with a beneficent Creator who designed it all?" Rima's death comes at the hands of senseless brute force because the Indians, ironically so close to nature, acquire no feelings for the beauty embodied in the young girl. They are ignorant and callous about the beautiful "green mansions," and they only exist in a debased state. More than accidental, Rima's fate stands out as a deliberate manifestation of what nature can do: It can destroy and kill beauty and ugliness alike without cause, explanation, or justification. These Darwinian ideas were grasped by Hudson, a trained naturalist, who saw from his own studies the truth of these conclusions. Hudson could not fathom any purpose in creation which resulted in sudden annihilation, and he certainly could not accept a God as an all-loving maker of the universe who would permit such frightening destinies for his creatures.

By the end of his life, however, Hudson did come to perceive some solution to the terrible prospect of death at the whim of nature. In *The Book of a Naturalist* (1919), he concluded that the Darwinian vision might lead to a new and deeper spiritual attitude. At first, people cling to the past desperately because it affords them comfort and security, and their beliefs die or change slowly. Finally, they sift the new ideas, radical in their view, for any fragments of faith which will sustain them. They came in Darwin's case to a somewhat optimistic conclusion--or rationalization--that evolutionary theory might, after all, prove that humanity was progressing upward. Although Hudson sympathizes with the logic of this appeal, he primarily finds in these rationalistic endeavors the inspiration to grasp some anchor in the swirling sea of his sorrow about the loss of faith.

STOICISM

Hudson, like Abel in the two final chapters of *Green Mansions*, accepted at last the consequences of life stoically, but he never faltered, again like his hero, in his anguished memories of a merciless and irrational life force. Hudson's stoicism also derives from his reluctant and melancholy abandonment of Christianity for the philosophical replies to his questions. There is certainly no arrogance or defiance in Hudson's retreat from Christian solutions. Abel's mood in Georgetown, already sketched briefly in the prologue by the British official, is not only stoical but also characterized by acceptance of Christian humanitarian principles. Thus, Abel makes no mention of salvation or any theological issues, such as heaven and hell; he lives humbly with his bitter sorrow at Rima's death. In fact, the only god he has recognized was Rima, and it is thereby logical that Abel calls her "divine" in the closing lines of *Green Mansions*. Pain is always a source of woe for Hudson, and he can never accept either the Christian doctrine that it leads to an eternal reward or Darwin's view that pain, if brief, is not so crushing a burden. Hudson, although he stresses that the memory of pain cannot be eradicated, is convincing in his insistence that humanity must survive, and he praises the panacea of pain as conducive to formation of the will.

Hence, Abel is a combination of three philosophical experiences for Hudson: the early religious influence of Christianity, now salvaged for humane values; the impact of Darwin, leading to the realization about the cruelty and whimsicality of nature; and the stoical attitude, exemplified by a passive devotion to Rima. Perhaps this reconciliation of diverse philosophies is only a protection, erected by the puzzled author to serve his peace of mind. But Hudson, frank and honest, admitted this possibility and defended his ideas. The doubts and agonies take their toll as Abel must suffer mental torment until he dies, and no wholly optimistic, safe mode of thought assuages the pain.

GREEN MANSIONS AS AN ALLEGORY

One of the important differences between a romance and a novel is that the former may, although not necessarily, operate on the allegorical level. Since the characters in an allegory represent rather fixed or secure ideas, they do not have to undergo change; they can therefore remain basically the same throughout the whole story. On the other hand, a character fully developed within the context of the action and the other players is able to move about with more ease because he is not the symbol of some pre-determined concept from which he cannot vary. Nearly all critics of *Green Mansions* have commented upon Hudson's lack of extensive characterization in the romance, but Hudson, writing an allegory, is depicting within the text the interplay of ideas so that the criticism seems unfair in view of the author's plan.

The selection of one of the most primitive and unknown areas of South America is no accident on Hudson's part because such a choice illustrates emphatically, though in exaggerated manner, the idea of nature; Hudson wrote often of the beauties of the English countryside and disliked intensely the large population centers, such as London, but England was probably too intimately associated with civilization to serve his purpose. The jungle and hinterland, first visited by Abel, symbolize the wild, untamed nature which humanity has forgotten or ignored in its flight to the cities. Civilization has divorced humanity from its roots in the outdoors, and we are now alienated psychologically from a needed source of inspiration and idealism. The "green mansions," set within the framework of the vastness of primitive nature, represent an Eden or lost paradise. This allegorical mode occurs, therefore, beyond the boundaries of civilized forces; there are no crowds and no preoccupation with the myriad problems of cities. The romance could be set in almost any chronological period after the conquest of the South American continent by the Spanish.

Into this situation Hudson settles comfortably as he proceeds to develop the idea of Abel and the idealization of Rima. The human race is portrayed in the anguished searching and inquiry of Abel; the disillusioned acceptance of reality by Nuflo; and the combination of primitive simplicity and happiness by Rima. Rima, indeed, is the dream of humanity, and Abel symbolizes the possibility--but not probability--of transferring that vision to the mass of humanity. Nature is, of course, brooding over the whole scene and action as the great imponderable force, for good and for evil. Abel is also the epitome of the man of Hudson's time, and he is the literary expression of the author's observations and conclusions about civilized influences from lengthy English residence. Likewise, Abel is the symbol of the romantic, sensitive, and cultured individual who could appreciate nature. In the involvement of this trio--the "green mansions," Abel, and Rima--is drawn the allegory of Hudson: nature, humanity, and ideal.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Hudson remained throughout his years a political and social conservative with little interest in liberalism despite his belief in the unity of all existence in nature, a sympathy toward lower creatures of the natural order, and his own humble origins. By no means a wealthy man and certainly beyond the pale of very fashionable circles in England, Hudson still showed aristocratic tendencies in his works. In *Green Mansions*, for instance, he expresses antipathy for the Indians; he berates them for their inferiority without giving any indications of possible improvement of their lot through education and help. Abel's quarrel with Nuflo ends in the former's harsh assertion, pompously delivered, that the old man should "moderate your language" because he is "addressing a superior." The basis for Abel's haughty manner is that, in the hero's words, "an old man" is talking to a "young one." Perhaps the Darwinian theories explain this attitude with their emphasis upon change and the rise to power of new creatures after the defeat of old, exhausted beings. Nevertheless, Hudson avoids in *Green Mansions* any direct references to his own times. Neither the social nor political issues of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries find their way

into his romance.

INTENSITY

Hudson utilizes the literary technique of intensity throughout his romance, especially in the thematic development of the love between Abel and Rima. The emotional commitment of these two characters is highly impassioned and dedicated. All yield place to love as Abel is determined to devote himself completely to Rima in life, and after her death. In whatever phase the slender plot may be unfolding--a minor incident in the jungle without direct importance to the outcome of the story or a major episode vital to the action--the intensity of the characters overshadows any practical considerations. Abel, for instance, falls to his knees in one chapter in silent adoration of the woodland's beauty, and he sees Rima reflected in the *Hata* flower. When Abel loses Rima, his sorrow and his hatred equally know no bounds. The intensity of his passion has led him away from any rational restraints, and his hatred is so intense that murder is the only thought in his mind. Like Abel, Rima cannot forbear showing the greatest intensity in her impulsive desire to travel to Riolama, in the traumatic realization that none of her people are alive, in her pledge of devotion to Abel, and in her final insistence about returning alone to the woodland.

In terms of plot, the action intensifies after Nuflo's detailed history of his and Rima's past. Although Haymaker states that intensity characterizes the entire book, most critics agree instead that the most dynamic part of *Green Mansions* occurs after the scene at Ytaioa, and Nuflo's tale. However, one should keep in mind the brevity of the romance; within a few pages, in contrast to the lengthy Victorian novels, Hudson has made his characters cover long distances and reveal intimately their passionate feelings. Also, without intensity of language, Hudson would not have survived as a master of English prose in his masterpiece. Without the vivid, forceful background of "that milder purgatory of the forest" and the "inferno" of the "rude savage heart of Guiana," *Green Mansions* would be only another romance of the nineteenth century. English literature is abundant with rather similar tales, and the critics, such as Carlos Baker, have traced Hudson's literary borrowings from other minor works. Intensity is sustained even on the very last page when Abel pleads strongly and poignantly with the reader for understanding and acceptance.

ESSAY TOPICS AND REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does Hudson portray Indians throughout the romance generally?
2. Why is Rima an idealization rather than a human figure?
3. Describe the ways in which Hudson creates his image of the trees, or the "green mansions," in the book.
4. Who, in your opinion, is the main figure in *Green Mansions*--Abel or Rima? Justify your answer with examples from the text.
5. Analyze Hudson's religious views throughout the story, particularly in Abel's ideas.
6. How would you characterize Hudson's portrayal of birds and animals in *Green Mansions*?
7. Criticize Hudson's concept of nature, the good and the evil aspects, in the book. For example, do the positive or the negative features predominate?
8. What is the influence and impact of Darwinism in Hudson's philosophical outlook in the story?

9. Compare and contrast the two scenes at the mountaintops of Ytaioa and Riolama. Which episode is more effective? Which of the two characters, Abel or Rima, is more impressive in performance?
10. Summarize Nuflo's role throughout the romance. What is his function in the structure of the plot? What does he possibly symbolize in Hudson's aesthetic and philosophical judgment?
11. Mention three examples where Hudson blends his poetic art and his knowledge as a naturalist.
12. Make a brief summary of Hudson's overall portrayal of the South American hinterlands and geography in *Green Mansions*. What are his opinions about the future of this continent?
13. How does Hudson utilize suspense and mystery in the plot?
14. What is the role of violence within the structural framework of *Green Mansions*?
15. How is irony a part of Hudson's technique? Give three instances of ironic episodes or events in the story.
16. How, in *Green Mansions*, does Hudson restrict or limit characters and their development?
17. What are the lessons for humanity in the future that Hudson perhaps wanted to teach in this romance?
18. How does Hudson employ the senses to heighten the effect of the "green mansions" upon Abel? What sense does the author seem to rely on most of all?
19. What, in your opinion, is the most noticeable fault in *Green Mansions*? Be specific by giving some examples of this defect.

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