

## **A GOOD READ FOR THE NEW YEAR**

### **'The Professor's House' is the Book Group's choice for their meeting on Monday 1 March**

If you haven't read Willa Cather before, you are in for a treat! She is an early 20C American writer, whose most famous novels, including 'My Antonia', deal with the early homesteaders as they ploughed the virgin prairies and dreamed the dream, not always realised, of a land of hope and promise. 'The Professor's House' was written slightly later in 1925 and deals with an America in which the early dreams are becoming tarnished by commerce and prosperity.

The Professor teaches European History in the University of Hamilton, a town not far from Lake Michigan, and at the age of 52, with a successful career and an acclaimed 8-volume historical study of early Spanish adventurers in Mexico to his credit, he is forced to look back on his life and what he has achieved. He feels he is no longer needed by, or has much in common with, his wife and two married daughters. All of their lives have been transformed by their contact with Tom Outland, the brilliant student who was mentored by the Professor, and who, when he died in Flanders in 1915, was engaged to the Professor's elder daughter.

Tom Outland had lead an adventurous life before becoming a student, and this is described in detail in the second half of the book, with an evocative account of his discovery of the deserted settlement of an ancient Indian people on a high mesa above the plains of New Mexico.

The book deals with so many issues - mid-life crisis (although the term would have been unknown to the author!), the ideals and inexperience of youth, the corrosiveness of success, and, as the title suggests, the importance of house in which you live. There will many ideas to explore on Monday 1 March when St Catharine's Book Group meets at 2 Horton Road.

For more details of the book and the venue, see the poster in the Galilee or contact Bill or Rebecca Spear, or Tricia Pocock on 525496 or at [rpocock@aol.com](mailto:rpocock@aol.com).