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The Rise of Silas Lapham (Norton Critical Editions)

William Dean Howells

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This edition of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* reprints the text established by Walter J. Meserve and David J. Nordloh for *A Selected Edition of W. D. Howells*.

Extensive historical annotations have been added to the text of this Norton Critical Edition.

The process of composition is followed through Howells' initial sketches and letters. Analysis of the contemporary stereotypes and myths that Howells parodied in his novel is provided by Robert Falk, Clark W. Bryan, Theodore Dreiser, and Robie Macauley, and by letters from Roswell Smith to Howells.

Contemporary responses by friends and readers, and by critics, illustrate the misunderstanding and hostility with which realistic fiction was sometimes greeted in Howells' time. Critical essays by Donald Pizer, William R. Manierre II, John E. Hart, Harold H. Kolb, George N. Bennett, Everett Carter, and G. Thomas Tanselle represent a variety of ways in which the novel has engaged the attention of critics as well as a broad selection of the critical methods that have been applied to it.

As one of the primary documents of American literary realism, the novel raises questions as to the meaning and utility of realism as an aesthetic ideal. These questions are treated in essays by C. Hugh Holman, Henry James, Larzer Ziff, Edwin H. Cady, Robert M. Figg, Charles L. Campbell, and Howells himself.

A Selected Bibliography is also included.

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From reader reviews:

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