

# Esther Gould's Book Corner

## PROSE WITH MUSIC IN IT

### "SEA HORSES"

By Francis Brett Young  
Alfred A. Knopf

In "Sea Horses" Francis Brett Young has written an interesting novel of the tropics and the sea. Written in beautiful prose, and printed in graceful type on excellent paper it makes an harmonious aesthetic experience.

The story is not extraordinary, nor is the character portrayal, though it is good, but the chief beauty lies in the descriptions of nature in its unusual moments. "Twelve hours before with muted engines she had stolen through the sand like a ship in a dream; but from the Gulf of Suez she fled before the north wind like a thing possessed by the barren horror of Sinai whose mountains encompassed her in their lunar desolation. On the second evening as they made The Brothers, the wind fell dead like a bird caught in the fume of some poisonous crater. Westward a young moon sank helplessly upon the molten summits of the hills that sheltered Thebes."

The description of Panda, a harbor town in Portuguese East Africa, reminds one in its vivid brutality of Paul Gauguin's pictures of the tropics.

We first meet Captain George Glanvil as the ship is nearing Naples from which, its cargo discharged, it is to go on to Liverpool, allowing its crew to escape for a Christmas at home. But on arrival in port it is found that an Italian firm has chartered the boat for a trip to Portuguese East Africa. The disappointment, coupled with the feeling that the owners have acted a little unfeelingly in the matter, creates a strained mental atmosphere as the Vega turns, and in silent acquiescence, noses her way back toward the east.

There is on board another cause for unusual tension—the presence of two passengers, an English woman and her child, who, at the request of the Italian firm are being taken to Panda to join the woman's Italian husband whom she has not seen for seven years.

At the end of the long voyage the inevitable awaits them. The husband, degraded by financial ruin and the influence of the tropics has sunk to the level of the worst of the natives. There remains the rescue and the ending of the love story, the solution of which is strangely unconvincing.

## AN INDIGESTIBLE TALE

### "THE QUEEN OF COOKS—AND SOME KINGS."

Recorded by Mary Lawton,  
Boni & Liveright

Rosa Lewis' story must be far more interesting when it is told by her own lips than when committed to cold paper. Else why should "several important editors" have been after it for years, or journalists hung about it like hungry dogs around a bone, or why should the American girl, Mary Lawton who finally brought down the prize have dangled about in London for months waiting for the capricious Rosa to unloose her tongue?

At last, at any rate, it was unloosed, and what a strange hodge podge of information and opinion she let forth. The really interesting part of Rosa's story is the part she pays least attention to—the fact that, starting as a scullery maid, she became through her own efforts and initiative an educated and charming woman, the greatest cook in England, raising cookery to a new plane among the arts. The friendship of many great people of England, Europe and America was hers, both when she went out to cook for them at their great dinners and later when she owned and ran the Cavendish Hotel.

But Rosa is strangely inarticulate in portraying character and inordinately bashful about disclosing names. So we read how she went to cook for W—in Scotland, or was engaged to cook a lunch for Lord G—at B—, or that "the Princess Y— has just died and nobody cares a damn."

Her style is more remarkable for its jumpiness of thought and redundancy of phrasing than anything else. "I think the Prince of Wales had a great deal of pleasure in America. He had a happy time there, and I think that is the reason. I think America saw the worst of us before

the War. Except just in the West End of London" etc., etc.

On the whole we wonder why there has been so much excitement over Rosa's story. Undoubtedly an interesting character herself, if she were speaking a look, a gesture, an inflection would help us to bridge the astonishing gaps of thought and study a continuous Rosa behind it all. But on the printed page, without these helps she simply does not "get across."

## HELP TRAFFIC POLICE, PLEA

### Motorists Urged to Employ Cooperation

More consideration for traffic officers would simplify motoring for local car owners, in the opinion of Charles M. Hayes, president of the Chicago Motor club.

Mr. Hayes contends that lack of cooperation with drivers is, in turn due to failure of many drivers to cooperate with traffic officers.

Replying to a questionnaire on the subject sent out by the American Automobile association with which the Chicago club is closely affiliated Mr. Hayes said:

"In an effort to regulate the pedestrian far greater demands have been made upon the traffic officer's skill and energy. Whereas formerly he could devote practically all his attention to vehicular traffic he must now watch pedestrians carefully. In addition to guarding against vehicular violations of the simplest of traffic regulations he must be on the alert to check pedestrian violations. Many automobile drivers do not seem to appreciate the additional work the traffic officer has to do, and the new responsibilities he must shoulder. The result is that there is a tendency to nag the traffic officers by impatient tooting of horns and by failure to act with due consideration for the conditions at hand.

"Safeguarding the pedestrian is, in the final analysis, a means of safeguarding the automobile driver, but this idea does not seem to have found its place in the new scheme of things. When a traffic officer compels a pedestrian to cross according to directions he automatically helps the motor car

operator who would otherwise have another hazard to contend with.

"Traffic officers need the cooperation of the automobile drivers. Many officers have entirely too much to handle when at their posts, but with a little help from the drivers who stand to benefit through traffic control the matter would be quite different. From my personal observation of conditions locally, as well as in other cities, I feel that much could be accomplished for the betterment of traffic control if all drivers would keep before them the following rules:

"Know the traffic rules intimately so that the traffic officer will not be obliged to 'coach' on the scene, meanwhile delaying everyone else.

"Be tolerant and patient.

"Be ready to go when the officer gives you the signal. He has to work faster nowadays, and you must be ready when he's ready.

"If he becomes confused use your head and try to help him. If you can get out of the way so much the better.

"Avoid congested crossings. It costs no more to go out of your way if you do not have to delay at crossings."

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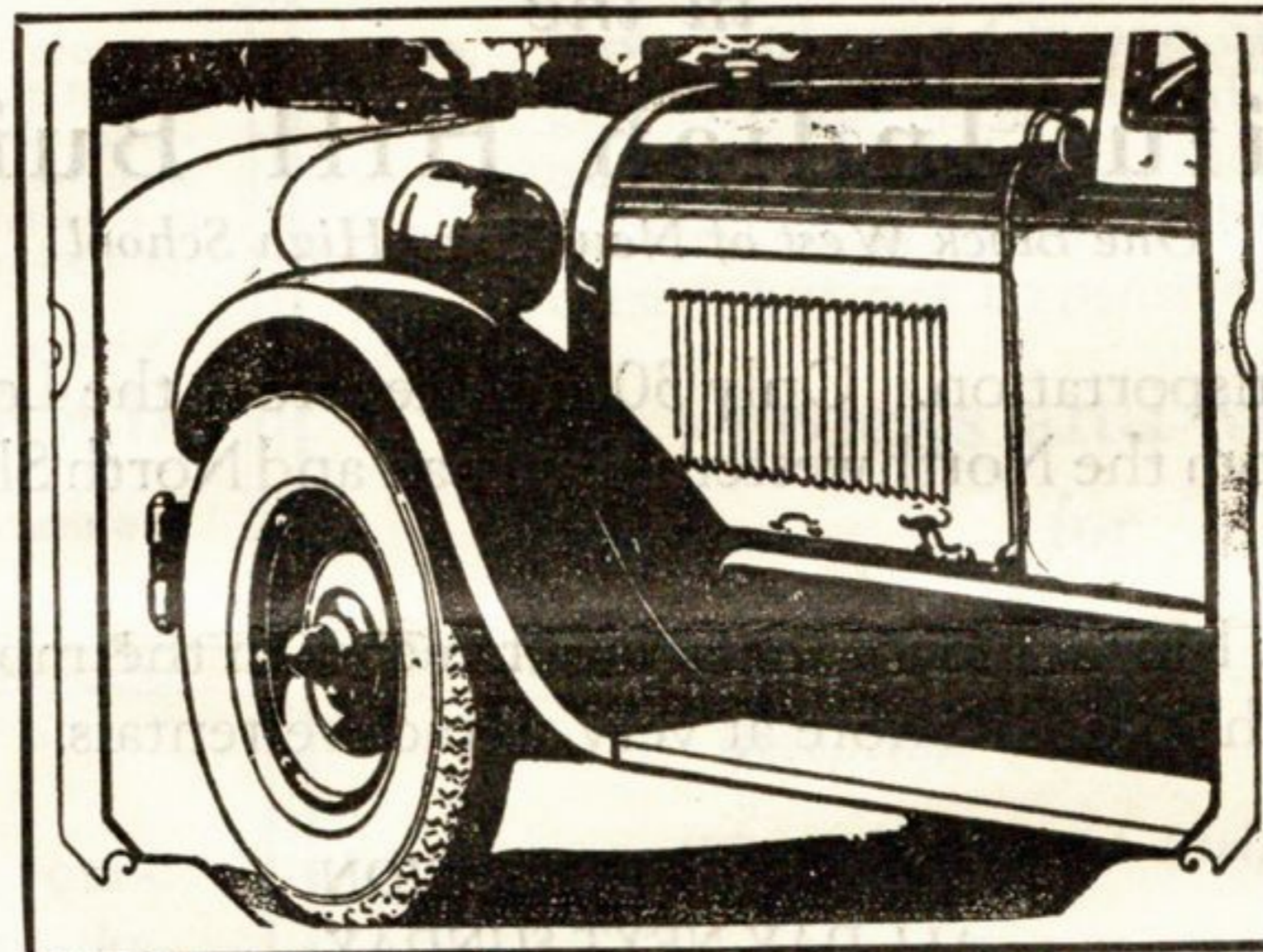
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