

Just Paragraphs

by Esther Gould

Stanley Vestal has taken one of the figures dearest to the American heart in choosing Kit Carson as the subject of a biography for the spring. It seems that Mr. Vestal knows that Western country intimately, that he lived in it as a boy, was friendly with the Indians and was even permitted to view many Indian rites that adults would never have seen. So the outlook seems good for a sympathetic and interesting story of this romantic figure.

AMERICA ABROAD

"THE GYPSY"

By W. B. Trites
Frederick A. Stokes Co.

America is by way of becoming famous in France, what with Ernest Hemingway and now a new star in our firmament, W. B. Trites. "The Gypsy," Mr. Trites' first book, was published in France and received extravagant praise. Then it was brought over here and, given a most artistic format, has been launched in America.

It is interesting to speculate upon the reasons why a book of this type might be popular in France. It is the story of an artist, Arthur Mallock, a man who, at fifty, considers himself a failure. He has never, because of indolence or lack of inspiration, been able to fulfill the promise his early work gave. Then one day in Spain his eye is caught by the figure of a young gypsy. Graceful and lithe "she walked as if to barbaric music." Arthur fell in love. His wife, Julia, with all the trust in the world helps Arthur to obtain the services of the gypsy as his model. She even has her come and live at their house. Arthur paints remarkable pictures. He becomes quite a sensation in New York, the inspiration all being due to the gypsy and the strange hold she has over him.

The gypsy is crafty and, egged on by her mother, suggests that Arthur might marry her. She mentions poison in the same breath and Arthur seems by his silence to give tacit consent. So one evening Julia is poisoned. The rest of the book is given up to Arthur's remorse and his own death.

Now this seems the sort of thing which would appeal more readily to a French than an American audience. The French who make wide concessions to the passion they call love will more readily understand and forgive Arthur's remarkable compliance with the plot to kill the wife whom he deeply though not passionately loves. But that brings up the weakness of the book; it is in characterization and motivation. None of the characters live; they are paper dolls pasted on a background of real beauty. Mr. Trites' talent thus far has found itself in description but not in the more intricate phases of a novel.

The novel that has captivated the country:

DUSTY ANSWER

By Rosamond Lehmann

A best seller everywhere! Christopher Morley said of it, "We have not had since "The Constant Nymph" a first novel of such brilliant cruel and tender beauty."

Henry Holt & Co. \$2.50

A POET'S NOVEL

"BLUE VOYAGE"

By Conrad Aiken
Charles Scribner's Sons

Conrad Aiken's novel, "Blue Voyage," is a poet's novel. It is the "stream of consciousness" of a young man, William Damerest, unsuccessful dramatist, whose problem for success is not so much to write better as to make up his mind that it is worth while to write at all. It is one of those books in which as a groaning lay reader said the other day, "You read a thing and don't know whether it's happening or not." True, but you do know that lots of things that never happen are more real than lots of things that do. And when you finish you know a great deal about William Damerest which you could not have known if you had heard only the things that do.

Mr. Aiken has a quality in his writing, a "life" which makes it what we call poetic prose. There are scenes of beauty as there are scenes of a more or less brutal realism. Damerest is intensely aware of the life on the ship about him—of the girl Cynthia with whom he is in love and yet whose weaknesses he sees quite clearly, of Mrs. Faubion who attracts him with an attraction about which he has no illusions, of the Jew who sells chewing gum and whom he calls "Caligula," of old Smith, returning, homesick, to the town of his childhood in which he won't know a living soul.

This "Blue Voyage" is a book for those who care for the thing that doesn't happen, who care for a finely chiselled prose, in other words, it is a book not for the many but for the few.

WORTH READING

"MEN OF DESTINY"

By Walter Lippman
The MacMillan Co.

Walter Lippman, in this book, "Men of Destiny," gives one a sense that he is sitting on top of the world—not the "New York World" where he actually does sit, but our world, round like a globe, so that one could sit on top of it and see quite a distance on every side. Mr. Lippman does see and then he is able to tell us what he sees with the most astonishing clarity and precision.

The first of Mr. Lippman's articles is upon "Al Smith, Man of Destiny." In it he sets forth the theory that Mr. Smith, to whose ability and integrity he is anxious to do homage, has been selected by Fate for a destiny larger than any of which he dreams, that of bringing to a focus the struggle which is inevitable in the history of the country, and yet for which we are not yet ready—the struggle between city and town. It is the town which has produced the leaders we have trusted in the past, we are not yet quite ready to trust the city, yet it is from the city that Mr. Smith comes, a figure demanding attention and consideration.

IRON & SMOKE

By Sheila Kaye-Smith

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