

LE DOSSIER DE PRESSE
DES "FAUX-MONNAYEURS"

(SUITE)

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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THE COUNTERFEITERS. Translated from the French of ANDRÉ GIDE by DOROTHY BUSSY. (Knopf. 10s. 6d. net.)

The novel is an extremely interesting subject, and in any discussion of it several pleasing half-philosophical problems, elementary but insoluble, are certain to arise. What, for example, is the nature of that reality which the novelist usually seeks either to lay bare or to construct? There may be different kinds of reality, or, again, it may be that the novelist should not concern himself with reality, but should produce a pure work of art. We should expect that M. Gide, while writing his first novel, would go into all this, and certainly his novel could not well be like any other novel. M. Gide has clearly thought over these problems, and in the end they are presented in a novel which is like a nest of Chinese boxes, or like a play within a play within a play, as in William Morris's *Love is Enough*. In *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* there is a novelist, Édouard, writing a novel also about counterfeiters, and he discusses his aims as a novelist. We are reminded at times of the curious problem of the relation of Clissold to Mr. H.G. Wells. At one point Édouard reads from his novel to a character in M. Gide's novel in order to influence him. Two events in the two novels are similar and react on each other. At another point Édouard is talking of false coins, and a

character in M. Gide's novel takes out an actual false coin, which "puts out" Édouard. Moreover, Édouard explains that the subject of his novel will be "the rivalry between the real world and the representation of it which we make to ourselves." He keeps a journal in which he notes down facts which he may work into his novel, and speculates how he may use them. Incidentally this journal, casually quoted whenever convenient, assists M. Gide in his effort to break down that elaborate sewing together of everything which is so much a trouble to a novelist. *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* does not, at any rate in its construction, seek to imitate that reality or probability in the telling, at which other novelists labour.

Possibly M. Gide hopes to conjure up reality by contrasting things more and less real. Sometimes these contrasts are too violent, as when he introduces an angel. The angel symbolizes the conscience, no doubt, or the guiding star of one of the characters, but it is also another kind of reality or unreality, another contrast. The whole thing is made even more complex by the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, for M. Gide, like Édouard, has kept a journal while writing a novel, which he has published. But whether or no reality is to be conjured by these methods — and it may possibly be that these elaborate contrasts do in some way assist the form of the novel and tie it together — it is very natural that a literary man who is not a novelist — not a story-teller who hopes that some beauty may come, he does not know how or why, out of his story-telling — should when writing his first novel present these curious problems. They are profoundly interesting to anyone who speculates about the novel. There is this kind of reality, M. Gide says, and there is that ; which is more real ? It is as if an art critic could take a vast canvas and adumbrate in it all the different aims of painting, practical but contradictory æsthetics. But contradiction, if there is contradiction, does not matter. Édouard writes down some views on the novel one day in his journal, and the next day he says that they are nonsense. We cannot expect M. Gide to say whether the views are really nonsense, since the novelist is surely not answerable for views expressed by his characters.

But there is a novel as well as practical æsthetics in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. It is quite possible to separate the story from the practical æsthetics as one reads. It is a very good story, one might say a good novel. It is in the manner of Dostoevsky, but the overwhelming speed, the breathless haste at which the Russians live is slowed down. Nevertheless, there is the same method of viewing

life. A strange and terrible incident is contrasted with a strange and meaningless incident, thus proving one does not know what, perhaps some philosophy of life. We feel that something very important is being shown to us, and we cannot see why it is important. The main theme of the story, which appears at the same time almost to be an under-current, is the tragic adventures of a group of school-boys. They, in a mysterious and muddled way, explore all the vices of childhood, forming a kind of secret society for this end. They pass false coins as well, and in the end a little boy is persuaded by his companions to commit suicide. It is a very terrible story, and the mystery with which childish vices are surrounded to grown-up people is admirably represented. There are also young men who are rather mysterious, though in the same sort of way as Prince Myshkin, for example, is mysterious ; and though one cannot quite see why they should be mysterious, it may be because the world is to them, as is very well shown by M. Gide, a mystery. M. Gide has a happy way of explaining precisely what a character is feeling and yet making us think that we have not by any means got to the bottom of that character. Only the older men are perfectly transparent ; and their frailties are so ruthlessly exposed that we feel as if M. Gide were looking through a brick wall to what is not by any means all that is on the other side. They are too transparent. But M. Gide's women, especially Pauline, the wife of a bourgeois who is ruthlessly exposed, are admirable real, neither too mysterious nor too transparent. Perhaps it may be thought that M. Gide says too plainly what Dostoevsky implies : "Well : that is what life is like." M^{me} Bussy's translation is admirable, both because it may easily and with pleasure be read as if there were no original and because it is very accurate.

PAUL MORAND

(*The Dial*, juin 1926, pp. 503-5)

(A la revue mensuelle américaine *The Dial*, Paul Morand (né en 1888) donnait en 1926-27, assez régulièrement — à peu près un mois sur deux —, une chronique littéraire française. Sa "lettre de Paris" du numéro de juin 1926 (pp. 503-9) est consacrée aux Faux-Monnayeurs et aux deux volumes de *La Prisonnière* de Proust, ainsi que, plus brièvement, à *Bella de Giraudoux*, *Méïpe* ou *la Délivrance de Maurois*, *Mademoiselle de la Ferté de Pierre Benoit*, etc...)

PARIS LETTER

April, 1926.

Paul Valéry has written : "It was my idiosyncrasy to love... in art only the creative process." (1) This saying might well be inscribed as epigraph upon the last page of André Gide's new novel, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, in which Edward who is Gide himself observes similarly : "I make notes day by day of the progress made by my novel in my mind, keeping as it were a sort of diary. Imagine the interest which such a note-book from the pen of Balzac or Dickens would have for us ! An account of the prenatal origins of the novel would be more absorbing perhaps than the novel itself." Although *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* is long — it contains nearly five hundred pages and this is long for a French novel — it is never tiresome. Possibly piqued by recent attacks upon him, it would seem that Gide has, while retaining his more familiar characteristics, made a point in this book of appearing *sauve* and even amusing. The book comprises five or six interrelated plots which far from confusing and tiring the reader are cleverly developed and maintained, thanks to the central character. Gide himself, who with extreme clarity and self-awareness follows step by step the progress of his book, ridiculing its faults — none of which escapes him — and disarming all possible criticism. In the first plot, a young man finds that he is an illegitimate child, and leaves home. His subsequent travels, diversified by many dangers, form a theme upon which have been embroidered the philanderings of a vain, unscrupulous adventurer. By comparison with other portraits in an excellent gallery of contemporaries, the portrait of Lady Griffith, the English *inamorata*, seems lifeless and artificial. To compensate for this disappointment, we have in each of the other situations, one unforgettable caricature : Count de Passavant whose artistic tastes and snobbish respect for so-called "advanced" talent, not to mention morals, have placed beyond the pale of society — a composite photograph of two well-known Parisians, recognizable to everyone and whom as a matter of fact everyone has recognized ; and the old music-teacher, La Pérouse, a touching figure, over whom hovers the genius of Dostoevsky.

Starting from the same point, Valéry and Gide advance toward diametrically opposed solutions of the literary problem. Valéry posits as his goal pure, gratuitous intellectual energy, the gratuitous activity of disinterested mind, indifferent to the very content of its thought and reduced to "the supreme poverty of purposeless power". His theory is explicit in *Une Soirée avec Monsieur Teste* (2) and in *Introduction à la Méthode de Léonard de*

(1) Cf. *Entretiens avec Paul Valéry*, by Frédéric Lefèvre.

Vinci (3). This ideal activity is in sharp contrast to the ideal passivity with which Gide meets the external world — a world envisaged as a neutral ground where causes are generated and effects derived while the work of art matures as indifferently as a plant. Gide even denies having selected special characters. "I did not seek them" he asserts ruefully ; "They happened to be ahead of me in my path, and I followed them." Rather, he followed himself through the labyrinths of his curiosity, a curiosity that has grown stronger each year until it has become identical with human sympathy ; though when we consider his refusal to summon doctor on the occasion of Olivier's suicide, we must admit that this sympathy is tempered by a fair share of prudence. Perhaps it is after all only a kind of scepticism, intelligent, uncourageous, keeping him always, in spite of everything, on the edge of life. Because he has desired above all else plasticity, he has ceased to exist. Once again in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* there is that Gidesque mingling of protestantism and paganism which permeates all his work from *L'Immoraliste* to *L'Enfant prodigue*. After all we must continue to take Gide as we find him. Even people who appear to themselves extremely unstable never really change. They never rid themselves of their failings — and that is excellent ; for when we seek to improve ourselves, we succeed merely in substituting for natural vices artificial virtues. And only what is natural matters.

In *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* we have a definition of the ideal novel, which begins : "A novel which would be at once as true and as remote from reality, as human and as fictitious as *Athalie*..." What Gide describes us, and what he will himself never create, for he lacks that true sympathy for human beings which is the first requisite of a novelist, has been achieved by Proust, whose sudden fame so disquieted Gide. *La Prisonnière*, the two volumes of M. Proust's new book, concludes the long series of *À la Recherche du Temps perdu*, which began in 1913 with *Du Côté de chez Swann*. There still remains to be published *Le Temps retrouvé*. (...)

CYRIL CONNOLLY

(*The New Statesman*,
18 février 1928, pp. 595-6)

(Cet article a été recueilli par son auteur dans *The Condemned Playground. Essays 1927-1944*, Londres : Routledge, 1945, et New York :

(2) Published in *The Dial*, February 1922, under the title *An Evening*

Macmillan, 1946. Nous n'en reproduisons pas le dernier paragraphe, une quinzaine de lignes consacrées au roman de Babette Deutsch.)

NEW NOVELS.

THE COUNTERFEITERS. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Knopf. 10s. 6d.

IN SUCH A NIGHT. By BARETTE DEUTSCH. Secker. 7s. 6d.

The Counterfeiters is the most important work of Gide's to be translated into English and its appearance is an occasion to consider in what the merit of Gide's work consists.

There is probably no French author whose reputation it is harder for an English critic to appreciate ; we are accustomed to have our neglect of Racine and Corneille flung in our faces, with our incapacity to appreciate a certain esoteric perfection in La Fontaine, which makes French critics think that however much he is praised in England, he is never praised right. In these cases it is something essentially Gallic that we are supposed not to be able to understand. With Gide, however, it is obviously because his essential quality is so English that we are not impressed by it, and that the French, who have had no Pater to give an academic twist to the sensuous world or clarify the distress of adolescence, derive such absorbing and elusive excitement from his work.

Yet Gide is the most creedless of all leaders of French thought. Valéry is an intellectual who applies his perspicacity like a hose to the problems of metaphysics, or the most finicky refinements of classical verse. He belongs to the main French tradition, though to a highly rarefied development of it ; Gide, though intellectual, would suppress his gifts in favour of a capacity to grasp physical sensations and transmit them in poetry. He would feel that the dilemmas of the intellect do more to wreck a poet than all the temptations of the world, and that he who is master of his emotions is generally his reason's slave.

Where there is a rigidly defined tradition, there is an equally defined revolt from it, and this the *surréalistes* now lead. English literature, being less rigid, drives its prodigals into a hazier and milder opposi-

(2) Published in *The Dial*, February 1922, under the title *An Evening with M. Teste*.

(3) Cf. *Note and Digression*, appended to *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci*, and published in this issue of *The Dial*, pages 447-457.

tion ; they know nobody will try to chase them, so it is absurd to run away. Gide is in this position in France ; romantic in outlook, classical in style, with no political background to his work, and a horror of being taped, or being defined or captured — like Proteus — in his original shape, or killed — like Mercutio — at a battle to which he was not asked. He is the apostle of the hybrids, a class in England so numerous as not to deserve the name, in France so rare that no provision has yet been made for them in any literary code.

The hybrid is perpetually haunted by a conviction of exile, his heart is expended in homesickness, his intellect in trying to discover what is his home. This central loneliness, this native hue of indecision causes the hybrid to cling desperately to all societies that are at ease in the world ; complex himself, he is drawn to the simple, sceptical to the religious, meditative to the men of action, homeless to the homely. Of course the hybrid, as we are familiar with him, is not so deeply tainted as this ; he is usually an aristocrat turned intellectual, an artist who dislikes his art, a Bohemian turned respectable or someone unable to choose between two values, art or ethics, action or thought. These are the hybrids of circumstance, who have not had the courage to suppress their possible selves, to prune themselves of half the buds that weaken the fruit by being allowed to flower. They are torn between conflicting vocations, not realising that they have only one vocation and that is to be torn. With the spiritual hybrids, it is worse. Homeless since the loss of Eden, these Cains and Ishmaels acquire a conviction of guilt as profound as their sensation of exile. This leads to a passionate curiosity that sends them experimenting everywhere to find where they belong, but dictated as it is by conscience, and not by science, it trails away into sensationalism, or the rich luxurious wail that is the war cry of these dangerously articulate people, and which, loaded with lyric beauty and self-pity, must surely drown all refrains of hymns and psalm tunes, and acquaint the Creator of the amount of subjects He has left on the earth "erroneous there to wander and forlorn".

M. Gide possesses all these characteristics, and almost every possible combination of hybridity ; without his puritan sense of sin he would not read into the physical world so much calculated sensuality ; without his classic style he would not be able to carry off so much that is abandoned or sentimental ; and without his intellectual integrity, he would not be able to affect a relative indifference as to ~~how~~ people behave. The effect of

this is a kind of dankness which pervades all his work, something vacillating and ineffectual which proceeds from his sensuous comprehension of so many contradictory schemes of life. Then one feels that he is not naturally a rebel, that he hates young men to read his books and promptly run away from their parents, that he tries to make himself like it, and that the result is a higher degree of morbidity than before, so that he can hardly describe a plate of fruit without making one feel it is indecent, or a noble impulse without suggesting that it is impure.

The peculiar quality of his work is a kind of desultory lyric strain that runs through all English literature, but is very uncommon in French ; this, however, is more apparent in his earlier work, and has given way to a kind of philosophising that is the root of his great influence on the young, because he teaches them to dramatise, and sentimentalise the values of their own life. This is what Wilde and Pater did for England, and Gide combines the luxuriance of the one with the applied philosophy of the other. There is no scene so typical of Gide as that in *Marius* where the young Marius and Flavian read through *The Golden Ass* in the barn, or the young Sebastian refuses to be painted in the family group because he is unsociably under the influence of Spinoza. Gide is, however, an extremely intelligent man with a much wider curiosity than Pater, and a profounder insight than Wilde's. Moreover, he writes entirely on the side of youth, his mission seems to be to glorify the distress and the idealism of adolescence, and sound for the first time the depths, if any, of the French schoolboy's reserve. Childhood has long been idealised in England, and we have had a host of public school stories and groupings of the different shades of prison house that close round the growing boy. In France, however, adolescence has almost passed unnoticed, there has been no transition in literature from the spoilt, precocious French child to the pale and serious young man. For this reason Gide's romanticism, his sympathy and restless habit of troubling all the waters where the young Narcissus sees his face, is invaluable to French thought — both as steering a middle course between the Academy and the wild men, and as tapping a new reserve of intelligence and beauty, which is that birth of intellectual values and sensuous perception that occurs to all youth in all lands. But this, however valuable to France, has long been understood in England, and it is absurd to treat Gide, whom we have in reality fathered, as representing either a new way of life, or of literature, and least of all as one of those mysterious

cults from across the Channel which it requires a sixth sense to appreciate, and an intelligence greater than our own to understand. France is still grappling with Butler, Wilde, and Pater ; if they are to catch us up, they cannot do better than by thus assimilating them, with a strong dash of Swinburne, and all rolled into one.

The Counterfeiters is a novel about a novelist writing a novel called *The Counterfeiters* ; we see the characters through a series of receding mirrors, the nearest reflection being all that we get of their real selves. The novelist is Gide, or a novelist's idea of Gide, and we see him, noble, understanding, helpless, brewing indecision and distress all round. His countertype, or Anti-Gide, is another novelist, de Passavant, who is in the true Lord Henry Wotton style, modernised, so as to be a caricature of the rich, slick, amateur, fashionable writer whose book *The Horizontal Bar* — whose epigrams ("What is deepest in man is his skin") point very much to the leaders of the motion for motion's sake, wagon-lit, dancing dervish school. Then we have two boys, Olivier and Bernard, who represent the emotional and the intellectual aspects of Gide's approach to a way of life. The novelist is on the whole a disappointing character. He seems, like most hybrids, to lack vitality, or rather to find it tidal, so that he is forced to prey on the spirits of his young friends and becomes easily afflicted with that kind of premature old age, which is the punishment of those who are afraid to grow up with their contemporaries. The plot is intricate and absorbing, and this is the kind of book that is very much easier to read in English than in French. There is a large amount of profound criticism and irony scattered through the book, as many true observations on the novel itself. Occasionally, however, the sophistication becomes irritating, and in Edouard's long analysis of love one hopes in vain for some Melbourne to break in with "O can't you let it alone !"

What really is preposterous, beyond even the author's morbid sentimentality, is the gang of Borstal boys which he depicts. Apart from Bernard and Olivier, the school-boys, when not engaged in bringing out a literary manifesto, are discovered organising a brothel, stealing books, blackmailing their parents with stolen love letters, passing false coins on a large scale, and finally hounding the weakest to death by means of an extensive suicide pact. Not since Jude's little son hanged himself and his brothers, have book-children shown such enterprise in the control of their lives. Granted Gide's preoccupation with suicide, or certain cases like the Loeb

murders, the depravity becomes credible, but one certainly feels that it shows a decadent curiosity for feeding on the extremes of action, for searching out the perverse in nature or the innocent in order to pervert it. His love of life seems a *passion malheureuse*, and his curiosity about it a *soif malsaine*. The book is very well translated and well worth trying to read in spite of the impatience which one is bound to feel. It is an excellent book to have brought out in England, because, although it will not influence English intellectual life in any way, it does help us to understand the kind of revolution that is going on in France. Besides, to appreciate an author who is intoxicating the younger generation is always an experience, especially when one is not intoxicated.

(...)

GERALD GOULD

(*The Observer*, 25 mars 1928)

(*La première moitié de cet article de trois colonnes est consacrée au roman Keeping Up Appearances de Rose Macaulay ; le reste, à cinq autres romans : Short Turns, de Barry Benefield, Brighton Beach, de Mrs. Henry Eudene, Galatea, de Margaret Rivers Larmir, Bull Among China, de Diane Boswell, et The Counterfeiters. Le critique du grand journal londonien n'a guère donné d'importance au livre de Gide...*)

NEW NOVELS

MISS MACAULAY AND OTHERS

(...)

The Counterfeiters is an experiment : a long, able, intricate experiment : an experiment that fails. M. Gide is not content with the ordinary apparatus of the novelist, but he has not made up his mind what to put in its place, with the result that his personalities fade away into his method, and the plot seems to consist largely of interruptions. There are two main threads of interest — the rival personalities and literary theories of writers, and the emotional and intellectual struggles of adolescence. A connection is established between the two by the literary as well as the personal enthusiasms of the adolescents. There are occasional good sayings — for instance : "Other people's appetites easily appear excessive when one doesn't share them." But the main impression is of a dreary and confused unpleasantness. Schoolboys, one knows, *can* be unpleasant : but surely they do not often engage in the circulation of false coin !

THEODORE PURDY, JR.

(*The Saturday Review of Literature*,
12 novembre 1927, p. 301)

(*Quelque lecteur du BAAG saurait-il nous dire qui est Theodore Purdy Jr., sur lequel nous n'avons pu trouver aucun renseignement ?...*)

A SPREADING PLANT

THE COUNTERFEITERS. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Translated by Dorothy Bussy. New York : Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. § 3.

In the journal which he kept during the composition of his immense novel André Gide has revealed the germ from which the entire book sprang. In the beginning there were two newspaper clippings. The first told of the arrest of a band engaged in passing counterfeit coins. The youth of the members and the extraordinary code revealed in their confession made the affair unusual. The second was a simple but terrible story of suicide. Driven to the act by his schoolmates, a young student blew out his brains in the midst of a class. Details show the horrible *sang froid* and planned cruelty of his comrades. On these bits of juvenile abnormality Gide has built up, with rare firmness of touch and inventive ingenuity, a complicated narrative framework. The process is laid bare in his journal. The result is *The Counterfeiters*.

Unlike his earlier stories, which he now refuses to dignify with the name of novels, *The Counterfeiters* is far from stylized, simplified, and reduced for the expression of a single principle. He has been careful to make its form such that all traces of the modern psychological novel shall disappear. Yet it is not realistic, nor does it offer us a cross-section of any particular *milieu*. He has, instead, attempted to dispense with all the unessentials, to fall back on the old idea of the "pure" novel. From his two clippings an immense plant of the imagination has grown, so luxuriant and often so exotic that any summary of it must necessarily be both inadequate and misleading. The book is a sort of demonstration of strength on the novelist's part, a kind of proof that material, a thesis, documentation, psychological correctness, and all the other shibboleths of whatever school are unimportant. What matters (he appears to claim and demonstrate) is the way in which the narrator illuminates his subject, whatever it may be. His knowledge of existence and his ability to set down that knowledge clearly is all that distinguishes even the greatest novelist from the teller of tales without meaning.

The demonstration is almost gratifyingly successful.

The fabric of his novel is intricately woven, and at times extremely curious to Anglo-Saxon eyes. Against a background barely indicated, but at moments diabolic and unreal, he presents a series of interlocking episodes, each leading to another, continuing yet renewing the narrative without any slackening of interest. The principal figures are Bernard Profitendieu, his friend Olivier Molinier, and Olivier's uncle, Edouard. Finding that he is not the son of the man he has always supposed to be his father, Bernard leaves his home, confiding only to Olivier. When Olivier goes to meet his uncle at a railway station on the following day, Bernard follows him and picks up the check which Edouard has dropped after leaving his valise in the parcel room. Instead of returning check or luggage to Edouard, Bernard claims the valise, opens it, and finds in it Edouard's journal, from which he learns that Olivier's elder brother, Vincent, has become involved in an affair with a married woman, Laura Douviers, who is expecting a child by him. He has lost at roulette the money intended to aid her during the confinement. It is to help Laura, with whom he had once fancied himself in love, that Edouard has returned to France. In a state of romantic frenzy, Bernard rushes off to Laura's hotel, where Edouard turns up in time to catch the thief of his luggage, pardon him, and arrange to take him to Switzerland with Laura, as secretary. There Bernard conceives a passion for Laura, while Edouard talks at length of the novel he hopes to write — a novel to be called *The Counterfeiters*. They meet a Polish boy, Boris, who is recovering from a nervous disease at their sanitarium, and he returns to Paris with them to enter the pension school kept by Laura's father. Meanwhile Olivier has been introduced by Vincent to Count Robert de Passavant, a brilliant and perverted young writer. Vincent has been helped by this personage both financially and in his love affair with Lady Griffith, a typical "femme fatale". He now makes Olivier editor of a magazine he is financing, and takes him to Corsica for the summer. At the pension Bernard is thrown rather unwillingly into the arms of Sarah Vedel, a daughter of the house. All these persons come together at a dinner given by Passavant's review, at which Olivier confesses his disgust for his patron to Edouard, who persuades him to give up the editorship. Bernard returns soon after to his home, much chastened, and Laura goes back to her husband. The book ends with the two episodes founded directly on the clippings — the counterfeiting affair in which Olivier's younger brother is concerned, and the suicide of Boris.

The character of the book is not always pleasant. The preoccupation with sexual perversion which Gide has shown

lately (*Corydon* and *Si le Grain ne meurt*) is here exemplified in the relationship of Passavant and Olivier, and in a more sentimental manner in the affection of Edouard for Olivier. There are traces, too, in the valise incident of an earlier attitude which may seem curious to those unfamiliar with Gide's other books. Indeed, Bernard was originally named Lafcadio, and was to have been the hero of *Les Caves du Vatican* in a later stage of development. It will be remembered that that delightful young man pushed a fellow traveler out of the window of his railway carriage simply because it occurred to him that there could be no possible motive for doing so. The influence of Dostoevsky, to whom Gide has devoted one of his best critical works, is doubtless responsible for these peculiarities of conduct on the part of his heroes.

But matters of derivation and significance aside, what a miraculous growth is this novel of many novels ! For from the initial situation spring new situations, the original characters engender new ones, until there is not one, but a whole series of novels within the book. One feels that Gide has stopped this endless multiplication by a sheer effort of will and not because his imagination is in any way taxed. He is sophisticated without ceasing to be profound and he is profound without dullness. The task of writing a novel that is modern in the worthiest sense and yet still as clearly a novel as *Tom Jones* has been superbly performed. His tact and skill in construction, the classic quality of his style (for even his enemies will admit that Gide writes French as no one else can at present time), and the continued intelligence of his observation, combine to make *The Counterfeiters* rich beyond all but the best of twentieth century fiction. Yet it can be read with pleasure for the "story" alone. Perhaps Gide's real triumph is this manifestation of the universal beneath a glittering surface of the particular. More than a happy instinct for expressing emotions, more than the tricks of the trade, have been necessary to achieve this subterranean wealth.

André Gide's reputation in America has so far been of the most deadly sort. Four of his books have been translated ; his name is known and will even produce a certain effect if injected abruptly into a literary conversation ; but it may be doubted that any save the few whose business it is to read him have really bothered to do so. Now that France and Barrès and Proust are gone there is no one whose word carries greater weight in the province of French prose. He is not a "difficult" writer — not, for example, half so difficult as Proust. His work is sufficiently varied to afford for almost any reader the discovery of some good thing.