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white man marrying an intelligent Japanese woman from a family that is composed of neither villains nor bawdy-house keepers nor cloaks.

Finally, I wish Mr. Paris would eschew murder, suicide and all death by violence as a means of furthering his plot. In Sayonara there is even more of movie melodrama than in Kimono. His characters have therefore to be wooden in order to bob more easily on the strings of melodrama. As a consequence he cannot lend plausibility to his story of an English missionary who marries a Japanese prostitute, descends to the life of a mean oriental rustic and then plunges from debauchery to debauchery before starting anew on evangelism. Even in an unfamiliar world an educated Englishman would not be so gullible as he is here represented.

For those who are interested in Japan and want to know a phase of Japanese life hardly ever presented, this is nevertheless an interesting novel, and one distinctly worth reading.

NATHANIEL PEPPER.

Mr. Masters's Prose

The Nuptial Flight, by Edgar Lee Masters. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.50

Mirage, by Edgar Lee Masters. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.

WHEN Mr. Masters first turned to prose as his medium, he reverted also to the scene of his Spoon River Anthology. In Mitch Miller and Skeeters Kirby he revived in a tender, reminiscential mood the associations of his earlier years, with their homely, intimate quite American background. Such sophistications as his verse had achieved by broadening out from Sangamon County to Chicago and the great midland valley were forgotten, especially in Mitch Miller, which has a limpid style, a boylike fancifulness, and a clean objectivity unlike anything else that Mr. Masters has written. And the nature of the subject, in this first prose book, precluded an exclusive preoccupation with the sex impulse, whether treated analytically or "epically" or "philosophically."

The Nuptial Flight is not a continuation of the histories of these first two prose books, although the background largely remains the same. It is a survey of three generations of the Houghtons from 1849, when William Houghton and Nancy Creighton came by different paths from Kentucky to meet at Whitehall, Illinois, until the present day. The mood, at least at the start, is epic; there is nothing better in Mr. Masters's prose than the biblical simplicity of Father William and Mother Nancy—the one happily endowed pair—who prospered, begat children, and watched the unfolding tragedies of their descendants. This primal couple recall somewhat Isaak and Inger of The Growth of the Soil. But Mr. Masters's preoccupation is less with them than with their unfortunate children and grandchildren, and in his presentation of their characters and their marital infelicities he is forced to abandon the simple epic strokes of his opening, to paint in detail, and it soon becomes evident that Mr. Masters for all his specifications and his will to blink nothing unpleasant is not a realist. He cannot draw a figure in the round. Here again the earlier figures are better done, the farmer's boy Walter Scott and his hastily acquired wife Fanny are

more life-like than their son, the violinist Alfred and his harpy Ida. So too Whitehall with its dissipations of beer and "cove oyster" parties, its village mœurs, is better realized than the more sophisticated haunts of "the Artists" (as Mr. Masters calls the practitioners of the fine arts and their satellites) in Chicago, in Philadelphia, and tentatively in New York. For all its frequent lapses of technique, for all its heavy sordidness in detail, The Nuptial Flight has scope, fecundity and vitality. The epic significance called for by the title is not to be discovered in this collection of domestic infelicities, neither in the uncertain descent of Nancy nor in the nature of men and women. It is popular romantic biology to attribute to a possible Spanish strain of blood impulsive and passionate imprudencies in mating. Nor is every woman an exploiter and every man an exploited. These things are not so easily disposed of!

As if aware of the failure in his epic treatment of marital disharmony Mr. Masters chose for *Mirage*, his last prose volume, one instance of disaster, one not unlike that of Alfred and Ida in *The Nuptial Flight* for a more intensive treatment. Here he resumes the story of Skeeters Kirby, reveals retrospectively his ruined marriage and his entanglement with a Circe, and his struggles to emancipate himself and achieve emotional stability and self-understanding. It is a simpler picture, a more definite theme. The story of Kirby's emergence through the sordidness of blackmail and our barbaric divorce customs to a realization of the tawdriness of his Circe for whom he has striven in vain may be verified in any daily newspaper. But in the vulgar quagmire such as Kirby's life became, the fine flower of spiritual achievement may be grown. Whether the state of soul to which the man finally arrives will seem such a fine flower, is a matter of personal judgment. But the process of his growth as pictured in *Mirage* in sufficient literal detail is not a promising one: finally convinced of his Circe's casual infidelities and general unworthiness, Kirby, nevertheless, returns to plead, perhaps humanly, that "all be forgotten and forgiven" and another disastrous marriage begun between them. But when finally disillusioned—and incidentally repulsed—he goes forth from the hectic and alcoholic scene of renunciation to the arms of a woman in a neighboring hotel suite with whom he had scraped acquaintance on a railroad train a few days previously, as a second step in the cleansing of his soul embraces on presentation one of those studio divinities with whom the author inter-leaves the more serious engagements of his hero, then sends for a secretary he had formerly employed in the hope that a woman—any one—will do the trick for him and make him sound, lives with her, breaks her heart and returns for final consolation to an amour with the studio divinity, who is now living an emancipated life with gentlemen friends—one questions. All this promiscuity may be pathologically true of the wounded male soul, but Mr. Masters is not sufficiently equipped as a realist to give his pathological version either significance or credibility. It may be true, but what of it?

In these days style is both such a negligible and such a debateable matter that in saying that the style of *The Mirage* is the worst that Mr. Masters has ever written in verse or in prose I am conscious of expressing merely a personal reaction. The style of *The Mirage* is a long, long way from the restraints of the Spoon River etching, from the flexible vigor of *Domesday Book*, from the self-effacing simplicity of Mitch Miller. It is just bad style.

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THE career of a man of action who by his sheer energy, his quick wit, and his compelling and pleasing personality won for himself a conspicuous place in the drama of world politics and Far Eastern affairs. From a daring, lovable youth, we follow him through the thrilling days of his work in the Orient to his last and significant service in the Great War.

Adventure and excitement never ceased to pursue him as he became successively an employee of the Chinese government, a war correspondent, a member of the American consular service, a financial diplomat, a business man, and a soldier.

The story moves amid the pageantry of Oriental life and intrigues and is illuminated by selections from the writings and sketches of this sensitive, artistic young man who was fascinated by the panorama of life as it passed day by day before his eyes.

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Subtly, perhaps unconsciously, it reveals that degeneration in taste, in grip upon life, that the people of Sangamon County suffered in their pilgrimage eastward to the metropolis of New York! They were at home in Sangamon County and however plain and common their life was, it was not vulgar. They do not realize themselves in the luxuries and sophistications of their new environment. They live invariably in some "suite of an elegant and luxurious hotel," with the specification of "twin beds." Their doors are opened by "butlers," and their upholstery of studio or apartment is modelled after that of the "Ritzdorf."

In sum they have become, "just good fellows about town, well-dressed and well-behaved, and familiar with society and with aristocratic living," i.e. that of the Ritzdorf. The Circe delivers herself thus: "And Becky was furious. She said, 'I'll just bawl that old bounder out when he comes again!'" and "You're a peach," shouted Becky, slapping her fat knee." The final agony of parting after various drinks from a bottle which the lady keeps under her bed is expressed in the following manner:

Becky opened her eyes. Her face became a bonfire of rage. Her red hair bristled like a wild animal's. "You're just a liar to say that. And you can't say such a thing in my room. This is my room: I pay for it." "Did you see Delahar?" "Yes, I did, and he's a roughneck." "Well?" "None of your business. . . . Leave my room," Becky said. "No, I'll not leave your room." "I'll have you put out." "You don't dare, Becky, you don't dare."

Circe is not elegant in manners or speech, but when the author speaks for himself it is much the same, e. g.:

She was looking forward to the arrival of these artist Americans, who had seen life here and elsewhere, and who were coming to enjoy the hospitality of herself and her son, and to enrich his life by their presence.

However, the drama of Circe and her victim is very real drama, whether expressed in the bootlegging atmosphere of the expatriates of Sangamon County enjoying the luxuries of "the Ritzdorf," or in what they would call "more refined and cultured circles." It is not inevitable that Circe should be either subtle or well-bred, but she should have power, distinction of some sort to create pity and interest in her victim. And the victim himself should have or achieve some spiritual distinction. The state of soul to which Skeeters Kirby at length arrives after his numerous amatory contacts is lengthily expressed in terms of Hindu philosophy and generalizations about the War, about life, and the human heart—what "the artist Americans" call "ideas." . . .

It is a fact that Sangamon County, Illinois, has moved on to New York and Europe, and it is well worth while to know what they are doing and saying in their new environment. But it will have to be recorded by some one who is conscious of what they are, not by one of themselves. As to the illumination of sex relations, a recital of naive fornications reveals nothing fresh.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Eleventh Virgin, by Dorothy Day. New York: A. and C. Boni. \$2.00.

AN absorbing plot, sped to a giddy conclusion by a number of daringly modern escapades, a heroine defiantly, arrestingly modern, a host of bohemians, hospital workers and collegians to push the aspect of modernity to an even more violent degree—why, in these violent modern times, will such a book be a failure? Because of its author's total inability to write a single line of good, compelling English, or to give her book the one support and excuse that its cynical tone needs more than anything else—realism.

H. B.

Through a printer's error just before going to press, the signatures to the correspondence printed on page 102 of the New Republic of June 18, 1924, were transposed. Art and the Movies should have been signed Arthur J. Zellner; Is Compromise Necessary? should have been signed Steven T. Byington; the letter following should have been signed George Soule and The Job and the Middle-Aged Woman should have been signed Norah Keating.

Contributors

J. B. S. HALDANE, the eminent British scientist, has served on several Royal Commissions, is a fellow of New College, Oxford, and the author of many scientific books and essays.

WITTER BYNNER, poet and playwright, whose contributions appear frequently in current periodicals, is the author of *The Beloved Stranger*, and other books.

FRANK H. SIMONDS is a well-known journalist and the author of *They Shall Not Pass—Verdun, 1916*.

SIR WILLIAM GOODE, K. B. E., member of the Supreme Economic Council and Director of Relief in Europe for the British Government in 1919; was the British representative and Chairman of the Austrian Reparation Commission, 1920-21. He was the unofficial financial adviser to the Austrian Government, 1921-22; and is now unofficial financial adviser to the Hungarian Government.

WILLIAM L. LANGER, who is a member of the faculty of Clark University, has made a special study of the diplomacy of the late nineteenth century, and is preparing a book on the subject to be published by the Harvard University Press.

PERCY H. BOYNTON is a professor in the English department of the University of Chicago, and has written, among other books, *London in English Literature*.

JEAN ATHERTON FLEXNER has studied at the London School of Economics, and is at present on the Industrial Relations staff of Curtis, Fosdick and Belknap.

LEWIS MUMFORD is the author of *The Story of the Utopias*. Boni and Liveright will publish his most recent book, *Sticks and Stones: An Interpretation of American Architecture and Civilization*, in the fall.

DAVID S. MUZZEY is a professor of history at Columbia University, and the author of *A Life of Thomas Jefferson*, and *Readings in American History*.

KIRSOPP LAKE is the author of *The Stewardship of Faith*, and other books, and is a professor of early Christian literature at Harvard University.

JOHN DEWEY is professor of philosophy at Columbia University. He is the author of numerous works on philosophy and education, among them *Essays in Experimental Logic*, *Democracy and Education*, and *Creative Intelligence*. His most recent book is *Human Nature and Conduct*.

NATHANIEL PEPPER is a journalist and student of Oriental affairs.

ROBERT HERRICK, who is a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, is the author of many novels, among them *Together*, *Clark's Field*, and *Homely Lilla*.