



Mrs. Roosevelt was guest of honor at a party given last week at Rockefeller Center by the *Ladies Home Journal*, which is publishing her reminiscences, under the title "This Is My Story." Mrs. Roosevelt told reporters that there will be nothing in her book about the Supreme Court.

News Pictures of the Month by Robert Disraeli

André Malraux (center, above), who arrived in America last week, prepares an address for *The Nation's* dinner in his honor, hears comments from Ernest Hemingway (left), and Robert Haas of Random House, publishers of Malraux's "Man's Fate." . . . (Below) Catherine Drinker Bowen and Barbara von Meck, authors of "Beloved Friend," broadcast a program on Tchaikowsky.



Evening on Murray Hill: Ford Madox Ford (above) calls at Dorothy Speare's hotel and takes her out to dinner. Mr. Ford has two books out this spring: "The Great Trade Routes" and "Portraits from Life;" Miss Speare's latest novel is "The Road to Needles." (Below, left) Clifton Fadiman, *New Yorker* critic, takes the chair at an "Author's Grievance Hour" held by the Book and Magazine Guild . . . (Below, right), E. M. Delafield, author of "I Visit the Soviets," talks with Robert E. Ely of the League for Political Education, backstage at Town Hall after her lecture on the U. S. S. R.



The Vogue for Vogues

Some Literary Fads of the Nineteen Twenties

BY IRENE AND ALLEN CLEATON

NINETEEN TWENTY to 1930 was the decade of "normalcy," the Florida boom, the Teapot Dome scandals, the Big Bull Market, prohibition, and an astonishingly successful revolution in manners. It was also a decade of fads. The war generation had started to play and needed continual shots of Something New to keep its mind from those years when life had been so fast, fierce, and occasionally so tragic. It got the Charleston, Coué, mah jong, Gertrude Stein, Greta Garbo, and spiritualism.

This craze for crazes created the faddist, who exercised his talents for modernity by assiduously keeping up with and popularizing "the latest thing," and if possible, by inventing today what would be tomorrow's "latest thing." A famous faddist was Carl Van Vechten, who possessed an astounding range of interests for a literary man and enough enthusiasm to spread over the lot.

Anything that was being talked about intrigued Van Vechten. He urged *The Reviewer* of Richmond to print a piece of Gertrude Stein's before notice of that

lady's importance had more than trickled back from Paris, and when the American public still expected words to fit together with some semblance of sense. *The Reviewer* took his advice and used an article starting, "One little Indian boy, two little Indian boy, three little Indian boy, four little Indian boy, five little Indian boy, six little Indian boy"—and so on in conclusive proof that Miss Stein knew how to count. (This was titled, appropriately enough, "Indian Boy.") Later the same magazine printed an appreciation of Van Vechten by Miss Stein, and he was forced to confess he had no idea what it meant.

Van Vechten was an unofficial press-agent for the Negro Renaissance, which attracted an enormous amount of attention in the first half of the twenties. The Young Intellectuals were demonstrating their lack of race prejudice by vociferous praise of the art of the down-trodden black brother. White critics as well welcomed the writing of Negroes with gratifying hospitality, and white authors wrote almost as many books about Negroes as the Negroes wrote about themselves.

The reverberation was terrific when Van Vechten abandoned fads and too-facile fiction to produce his serious novel, "Nigger Heaven." It treated Harlem realistically, and its characters were set forth as humans instead of perambulating problems. Harlem did not care for this at all, although Van Vechten's best novel gave the race tremendous sympathy and understanding.

Negro literature, even at the top of its popularity, did not hold the fad arena unchallenged; there were enough contenders to confuse any country but America. The sensational twenties produced them so rapidly that it was difficult for moderns to keep their dinner conversation up to date. War books and books on psychic phenomena were the first of the literary "rages." The former occupied a big percentage of space in the book stalls in 1919 and 1920; in 1919 of fifty novels of any claim to worth thirty dealt with the World War. Nearly all were disgustingly sentimental and false—so much so that John Dos Passos's realistic "Three Soldiers" received a New York Times review concluding with the remark that it was easy to understand why the dust jacket was yellow.

The psychic phenomena fad was as direct a product of the war. The possibility of communication with sons, brothers, and sweethearts killed at the front caused it to be an instant success, and America seized trustingly on the writings of Arthur Conan Doyle and Oliver Lodge and their many imitators. Some of these books were sincere, some "phoney," nearly all ridiculous.

By 1923 this foolishness had been laid to rest and people were talking of Mary Garden, the Ziegfeld Follies, Einstein, the Russian Ballet, Charlie Chaplin, the *Little Review*, the tango, Marcel Proust, Dadaism, glands, mah jong, and Coué. Particularly were they talking of M. Émile Coué, who offered a phrase—"Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better"—as a cure for all ills.

While Coué possibly was saying to himself, "Every day in every way, my book is selling better and better," upon the best-seller list with his "Self-Mastery" were H. G. Wells's "Outline of History" and "The Outline of Science," by J. Arthur Thomson, and only a few steps down were Hendrik Van Loon's "Story of Mankind," and "Outwitting Our Nerves" by Jackson and Salisbury. The decade of tired business men, nervous breakdowns, phobias, and jitters called out many panaceas of the type of "Outwitting Our Nerves," and produced the credulous state of mind which made possible the swallowing of such theories as Coué's.

While toying with the fascinating subject of nerves and mental healing America was imbibing short gulps of culture from hefty kegs put on the market by Wells, Van Loon, and numerous learned authors who had crammed an astonishing amount of knowledge into their omnibus prod-

Courtney Ryley Cooper (below), author of "Here's to Crime," relaxes at his New York hotel after a nation-wide lecture tour . . . James C. Wilson (right) four-wheels in New York after broadcasting a dramatization of his recent book, "Three-Wheeling through Africa."



William A. Brady (below), veteran producer, at home on Park Avenue; his autobiography, "Showman," is just out.

