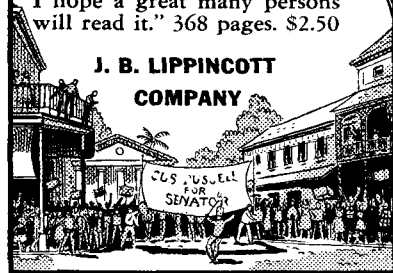


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Fiction

THE GOLDEN TOUCH. By Stephen Longstreet. Random House. 1941. 317 pp. \$2.50.

Mr. Longstreet writes the story of Mike Seabrook, Wall Street operator and wizard of international finance, with energy, enthusiasm, occasional force, and no genuine literary power. Capable of describing his characters in eloquent phrases, he is apparently incapable of making them live to confirm his descriptions. Mike, he assures us, is "elemental and fierce and ruthless," but after following Mike's career through three hundred pages we still have to take his creator's word for these alleged facts. Mike himself does not convince us. And the characters who surround him are no more successfully realized. Leda Owen, the love of his life, can scarcely be said to exist at all, unless it be on the plane inhabited by the colorless heroine of slick magazine fiction; while Sarah Seabrook, who is presented as a sturdy daughter of the soil, compact of earthy wisdom,

unfortunately reminds one of a shrewd mother rocking in a Bronx flat while her ambitious son battles for fortune in a down-town world that she does not know and distrusts. That her roots should lie in an "up-state New York farm" is beyond believing. Of the high finance with which the novel is so largely concerned the author writes from the point of view of an imaginative board-boy or a rather innocent customer's man: he does not penetrate its mysteries, so he cannot admit his readers to them. It is not enough for Mike to shout: "Check on all the holding companies! Get me open wires to Rome, Stockholm, London, Berne, Luxembourg!" Mr. Longstreet is at his best when he describes Joel Suleiman walking through the markets of New York at dawn, watching food from all corners of the earth pouring into a city that always awakes hungry. But, for the most part, this novel comes about as close to the reality with which it purports to deal as does the average Hollywood scenario. Hollywood scenarios are both popular and profitable.

B. R. R.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE BLONDE DIED FIRST <i>Dana Chambers</i> (Dial: \$2.)	Politeness of susceptible Jim Steele entangles him in two Manhattan murders and unexpected Bermuda voyage, with incredible outcome.	Tangled marital affairs of sultry beauty motivate plot that spills over into fantastic, but bubbles with zip and action.	12 min. egg
TRAITOR'S PURSE <i>Margery Allingham</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Sadly hampered by amnesia Mr. Campion tries frantically to pierce fog and foil plot that strikes at heart of English existence.	Diabolical "Minute Fifteen" involves redoubtable Albert, his puzzled companions, and reader, in hair-raising chain of situations, above and below ground.	Scintillating
DECOY <i>Cleve Adams</i> (Dutton: \$2.)	Rex McBride, on trail of Cal. plane-crash perpetrators runs afoul ruthless and unsavory mob of foreign conspirators and their molls.	No holds barred in this rapidly moving, realistic, high-tension tale of diabolical plotters and their final undoing.	Tempestuous
NO TIME TO KILL <i>Geo. Harmon Coxe</i> (Knopf: \$2.)	Two murders and almost successful attempt give Mass. lawyer and operative Carlos Black plenty to keep their hands full.	Good central puzzle, rich assortment of characters—socialite and thug, numerous taut situations—all heightened by clever and effective understatement.	Recommended
MOURNED ON SUNDAY <i>Helen Reilly</i> (Random House: \$2.)	Young widow accused of running down wife of ex-lover on lonely York state road. Insp. McKee confounds real criminals.	Judicious combination of deep-laid deviltry, hair-trigger action, romance, and believable detecting rank this with Mrs. Reilly's best.	Top-flight
THE FOG COMES <i>Mary Collins</i> (Scribner's: \$2.)	Laura Tashera, decorator and decorative, augments income illegally and fatally. Sheriff Wade, solid type (Carmel, Calif.) fits the pieces.	New writer. Characters, natural. Dialog, swell. Suspense to last gasp. Move over—Ford, Eberhart, Rinehart. We got another boarder.	Gold!
THE ISLAND OF FU MANCHU <i>Sax Rohmer</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Nayland Smith & Co. outwit wily and diabolical Oriental in scheme to dominate America.	Dr. Fu's inventiveness knows no end, and a succession of thrills follow on his way.	Thriller de luxe

TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS ASSOCIATES

THE recent musical battle between the ASCAP and the BMI has probably revived more interest in old songs, song books, and sheet music than all the historical and nostalgic films that have been popping out recently from the Western factories. To be sure, the heroes of the day and the BMI are Stephen Foster and "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair," his torch song, and, for that matter, the torch song of the air-waves today. Not long ago, exploring among some old song books of about a hundred years ago we found a thin, black song book with the gilt lettering "Gentle Annie—Melodist." It was published by Firth, Pond & Co. (New York, 1858) and, looking through it, we found, much to our astonishment, that the gentle Foster was the composer of many less familiar songs.

To us this was news indeed. We knew of course of "Oh, Susanna," "Old Folks at Home," and several others that are now famous American folk songs, but we could not recall having heard "Gentle Annie," "Willie, We Have Missed You," "Maggie by My Side," and "Old Dog Tray." Now we feel badly about this, for if the radio gentlemen are bent on bringing back Foster to us they should do so completely. We wonder also why some of Foster's contemporaries have failed to be represented. In *Gentle Annie* we find that Messrs. Steele (words) and Buckley (music) have written "Kiss Me Quick and Go" of which the first stanza reads:

The other night while I was sparking
Sweet Tur-li-na Spray,
The more we whispered our love talk-
ing

The more we had to say;
The old folks and the little folks
We thought were fast in bed,
We heard a foot-step on the stairs,
And what d'ye think she said?
O! Kiss me quick and Go my honey,
Kiss me quick and go!
To cheat surprise and prying eyes,
Why kiss me quick and go.

Chorus:

Kiss me quick, and go my honey,
Kiss me quick and go;
To cheat surprise and prying eyes,
Why kiss me quick and go.

We were touched by a song entitled "Weeping, Sad and Lonely" or "When This Cruel War Is Over." Published in 1863 during the Civil War its sorrowful lyrics must have brought tears in many a home in the North and South. The Words are by Charles Carroll Sawyer and the music by Henry Tucker. The song was "Inscribed to Sorrowing Hearts at Home" and the first verse goes as follows:

Dear-est love, do you remember,
When we last did meet,
How you told me that you loved me,
Kneeling at my feet?

Oh! How proud you stood before me
In your suit of blue,

When you vow'd to me and country
Ever to be true.

Chorus:

Weeping, sad and lonely,
Hopes and fear how vain!
Yet praying,
When this cruel war is o-ver
Praying that we meet again!

It was of interest, too, to come across *The American Minstrel*, by George Andrews and Asahel Abbot, published by C. M. Saxton, New York, 1849. This book is one of "practical exercises, songs, hymns, and chants specially adapted to the use of schools and academies." The names of Andrews and Abbott are new to us, but apparently both of these gentlemen must have enjoyed considerable popularity in their day. This is the title and first stanza of the song they wrote shortly after the California gold rush:

THE CALIFORNIA

Gold-Hunter's Glee
Come Listen to me, Yankee boys, a
story I'll relate,
That happened in the valley of the
California State;
'Twas far down in the bottom lands we
hunters went, so bold,
And work'd like busy bees when we
thought about the gold.

Chorus:

O the gold! the gold! they say 'tis
brighter than the day,
And now 'tis mine I'm bound to shine,
and drive dull care away
La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

There are three more stanzas to the song; Asahel Abbott must have stirred many an Easterner's heart with his lyrics. For the song goes on and tells how the miners dug their "heap of gold" and

I Got some boards and boxed it up
and then for home I started.

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