

# André Gide

AND HIS GREATEST BOOK

## THE COUNTERFEITERS

ANDRÉ GIDE is coming into his own in America. Of *The Counterfeiters*, out less than two months, three printings have already been required. The response of critics and public alike has been for the most part unanimous.

It has been praised for almost as many reasons as it has found readers, but all come away from it with the feeling that here is something genuinely new, significant, and provocative. Thus Gide has been compared variously to Balzac, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, Flaubert, Proust, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. It is a sufficiently Catholic assortment, but it is indicative of the respect in which suddenly he is held and of the diversity of the effects he has on his readers. The truth is that here is one of those rare books which re-create themselves with each new reading and which must, of necessity, mean different things to different persons simply because no two individuals view life in precisely the same way. Like life, it is not all of a piece; it is a vast mosaic in which each separate tile has been laid by a master hand.

Gide's earlier books—three of his fictions and a study of Dostoevsky have been published in English—have had to face an almost complete indifference in America. *Strait Is the Gate* (*La Porte étroite*), one of the most delicate and searching analyses of the Puritan conscience that have ever been written, has been available for three years; *Lafcadio's Adventures* (*Les Caves du Vatican*), a fantastic romance which combines the elements of a detective story with the salt of penetrating satire, was published here in 1925. Neither book has as yet made any great impression on the American reading public if sales are to be taken as an indication of a book's real success—and, imperfect as that method may be, it remains our only practical one. Both books stand in the very front rank of Gide's work, as does *L'Immoraliste*, soon to be translated. It is to be hoped that the public which now accepts *The Counterfeiters* will extend its curiosity to embrace these former products of the same pen.

The reasons for the present suc-

cess of *The Counterfeiters* are not far to seek. They are to be found in its novelty, its compelling honesty, its audacity, its profound humanity; in its sheer artistry and overwhelming power. There are some twenty characters in the story. We pick up and follow for a time the thread of their several interrelated lives. There is a complete absence of the usual paraphernalia of the novel—no elaborately contrived backgrounds, no "settings," no clogging attempts to explain these characters in terms of external conditions. Gide is concerned with the inner manifestations of the spirit; he has no time for mere interior decoration. Events spring from events as spontaneously as in life. The characters come together, part, advance, recede; their destinies are being shaped by forces which they neither control nor know. The book comes to no conclusive end; indeed, it has no real beginning. All this has a deceptive air of improvisation; and Gide improvises as in a larger sense does life itself—lavishly, with seeming gratuity. But behind this apparent artlessness there is concealed the hand of the craftsman, a novelist of genius whose concern for the purity of his art has in no wise lessened the human interest of his writing.

In the expectation that it may contribute something to the appreciation of his work, the publisher has prepared an illustrated eight-page circular on André Gide. It contains a short biography, the history of some of his more important books, and a discussion of his ideas and tendencies. It will be mailed free upon request.

And if you have not seen the descriptive catalogue of all B O R Z O I

BOOKS published in Autumn, 1927, will you not ask for that also?

BY ANDRÉ GIDE:  
*Strait Is the Gate*, \$2.50; *Lafcadio's Adventure*, \$2.50; *THE COUNTERFEITERS*, \$3.00; *Dostoevsky*, \$2.50.



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