

# The Critic Finds a Fortune

It is much more difficult to criticize a book you like enormously than one you dislike or enjoy mildly, just as it is easier to describe a casual acquaintance than your best friend. There is something about friendship which, while it does not blind you to faults, makes them appear relatively unimportant; and there is something illogical about friendship which makes it frequently impossible to explain just why you like the other person so much. You describe him to a third person by saying, "I like him and I think you will," which is just about the way we feel about Douglas Goldring's *The Fortune*. However, it is possible to be a little more explicit; there are several excellent reasons for liking it.

The story follows the usual lines of a modern English novel, public school, Oxford, the war; but in this case it ends in Ireland and has in addition the sanest, clearest, most convincing exposition of the conscientious objector's point of view that any writer of fiction has yet set forth. It ought to be read by the many people who have condemned the C. O., unheard, to outer darkness. It propounds, likewise an interesting theory that it was the "na-

tional cult of the gentleman" which was responsible for the war.

There may be plenty of people who do not like Douglas Goldring's novel, "The Fortune," because it deals with two of the questions on which we think with the most heat and the least reason: Ireland and the conscientious objector to war. But even tho you object violently to the author's attitude on these points you cannot fail to be impressed by his ability and skill, particularly in the drawing of unusual but very real and vivid characters. Consequently you will welcome with open arms *Margot's Progress*, in which you find the same skill without the dangerous problems. Maggie Carter started life behind the counter of a grocery store in Montreal. By dint of beauty, force of character, unlimited nerve and the happy expedient of changing her name to Margot Cartier she became a wealthy London hostess to whom duchesses said, "my dear." But she wasn't satisfied even then; she was too much of a person. She is an enormously interesting individual, and even the most New England conscience can't help rejoicing over the success of her utter ruthlessness and self-seeking. It is the kind of story which might easily be preposterous but is convincingly inevitable, and Margot isn't the only person in its pages who is worth meeting.

*The Fortune*, by Douglas Goldring. Scott & Seltzer. *Margot's Progress*, by Douglas Goldring. Seltzer.