

modern machinery exacts from the worker a higher craftsmanship than the old handicrafts. In attempting to make this point, Mr. Ford is self-contradictory and by no means finally convincing; but he has much to say that should be of interest to the "bookish men."

BEAUTY IN TROUBLE

Charlotte's Row, By H. E. BATES. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Mrs. Esmond's Life, By H. E. BATES. Lahr. 10s. 6d.

The artists who are quick to the beauty of the world are most sensitive to the hideous things, to the things which threaten and would destroy beauty. In the realm of ethics the same rule occasions no surprise: we know that sin and man's blundering ignorance occupy the minds, not of the stupid and the sinful, but of the world's saints and wise men, and we are accustomed to the devastation created in the souls of such men by the distresses of the world. Still, however, many expect that the artist shall concern himself only with the loveliness of the world, and in the end they will confuse beauty with a mere prettiness, forgetting that the lover of beauty must transmute or transfigure the hideousness of life. There is no author of stories more sensitive to perfection, to clear and lucid beauty, than Mr. H. E. Bates; and yet he comes before us in two books which, except for their style, are heavy with the world's ugliness, sorry with the world's injustice and the sad refusal to praise what is praiseworthy. The artist pipes and pipes of the gaiety and gladness of the world, and no one will dance. Instead man builds hideous things like *Charlotte's Row*, houses where live anger, deceit, drunkenness, unkindness, malice. Of all these drunkenness is the least blameworthy: at least it is a way out, and it is one of the bitterest things in the problem of our world that man cannot bear to abide in the spiritual city he makes for himself. Somewhere within his heart wings flutter still, faintly and yet more faint; and at times a man will let them fly in the air he has avoided to seek the beauty he has denied. That is the tragedy of Pauline; that is the tragedy of the boy; that is the tragedy of Pauline's catastrophically farcical, painful birthday-party. Her father is not truly a bad man, in spite of his brutality and his

drunkenness; but he has built himself a prison of hideous wickedness, and must sometimes pretend he is free of it. Those who do not feel any of his need are indeed out of *Charlotte's Row* and in hell. This is a fine, painful, uncomfortable book, in which the author's integrity makes the moral far more effective than if he had in the least emphasised it.

The short story, *Mrs. Esmond's Life*, is even better, and must soon be issued in a more popular form than this, limited to three hundred copies. Mrs. Esmond runs a cooked meat shop, and Mr. Bates' account of her life turns one against all cooked flesh, so painfully sympathetic it is. A widow, she sees romance coming to her when Henryson, an old friend, is widowed; but the commercial traveller turns to Effie, her slow chlorotic daughter, and suddenly old age and disappointment are let down on Mrs. Esmond. The tragedy that blackens the life of all three has nothing of arrangement in it; in this story Mr. Bates reminds us of those early novels in which Mr. George Moore first tried to let us see a little of the lives of the hard worked.

SHORTER NOTICES

The World Our Neighbour. By VERNON BARTLETT. Matthews and Marrot. 6s.

In this little book Mr. Bartlett discusses the present condition of International Affairs, with particular regard to the points of friction that have arisen as a result of the War, the various Peace Treaties, and the internal revolutions that have changed the governments and outlooks of many states out of all recognition. Much of what Mr. Bartlett has to say has already been said by him in the course of the wireless talks he has been giving during the past three years; nevertheless, the presentation of this matter in book-form is to be welcomed. It is only by mutual adjustments and compromises that perpetual and cumulative friction is to be avoided; understanding is the essential preliminary to sympathy with the other fellow's point of view, and so far as the facts can be correlated in so brief a precis, Mr. Bartlett has correlated them. As for interpretation, he is not dogmatic, and more often than not lets the facts speak for themselves.

Circus Nights and Circus Days. By A. H. KOBER. Sampson Low. 10s. 6d.

There is a literary-philosophic quality in Dr. Kober's circus reminiscences that gives his thorough and intimate record of circus life a most agreeable savour. Dr. Kober has travelled with a famous circus as press agent, and so has come to be looked upon by those with whom he has made up the massed histories of their work and ways of circus life.