

**SALLY GO ROUND THE MOON.** By H. E. BATES.  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ , 42 pp. The White Owl Press. 3s. 6d. n.

Tchehov could write of ineffective characters and make them significant, but the gift is not a common one, demanding a depth of understanding given to few writers. That Mr. Bates possesses notable qualities of understanding no one acquainted with his books will deny, but his work varies considerably, and "Sally Go Round the Moon" is hardly upon his highest level. It seems less a story than a sketch for a story. None of the characters is really explicated. The central figure, Christopher, a would-be divinity student who has married a shiftless tea-shop waitress and lives with her in a Clerkenwell slum, scarcely once awakens from his state of "dreamy stupidity," and his brief revolt against his environment and circumstances is not really felt to solve anything, even for himself. It is not a moral judgment, but a fact, that a man cannot annihilate his difficulties by simply turning his back on them. The wife, Ada, is a mere shadow of a characterless human being, while her sister Phoebe, who pines for her country home, to which Christopher in the end sends her back, is no more than one of Mr. Bates's familiar country girls whom he has not exerted himself to vitalize. Perhaps the best things in the story are the incidental, as the portrait of Karl the bookseller and his bookshop.

**BUSINESS GIRL.** By STEPHEN SOMERSET.  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ .