

## THE NEW NOVELS

### SHORT STORY ARTISTRY CUT AND COME AGAIN. By H. E. BATES. Cape. 7s. 6d.

It is, perhaps, hard on an author, even one who is young and still presumably in fairly rapid process of development, that he should be expected perpetually to beat his best, and there really should be—and is—nothing derogatory in saying of Mr. H. E. Bates's new collection of short stories, "Cut and Come Again," that it sustains rather than raises his own previous high level. For to say just that much is in itself to say not a little. Mr. Bates is writing some of the most pleasing and finished short stories of the day; and if he seems at times to work a shade overmuch to a formula, at least it is one which is philosophical not technical, living not dead. He sees life with instinctive simplicity, in a vision of humanity struggling blindly if bravely in the nets of life from birth to death, "unsure about it all, lost in a conflict of doubt and tenderness and some curious inexpressible pain."

That, anyway in eleven of these fourteen tales, is basic. The variety is in the detail; and the mood of that, rather than its practical range, is limited by the prevailing negative character of the conflict. These men and women, and even children, fight against circumstance (which includes themselves) not because they know for what they battle, but because it seems in the nature of things that they should do so. Often, indeed, they do not so much fight as endure, in an attitude of dumb acceptance which finds its ultimate expression in the longest story, "The Mill," wherein a young girl suffers mutely and without intimation of rebellion all the pain that the brutality of others' blindness lays upon her shoulders. The negativity may seem to some readers too complete, the characters barely human; it is, nevertheless, in its wintry fashion a finely controlled piece of artistry. The other long story, "The House with the Apricot," which appeared last year in a limited edition, and was then reviewed in these columns, has a more positive expression, and therefore easier appeal, but is at root identical. "Beauty's Daughters" and "The Station" come in much the same category. The briefer and barer "Little Fish" and "Jonah and Bruno," stories of schoolmasters and children, exhibit a more obvious protest, but in each case born of fear and not of courage. "Waiting Room," a study of two boys waiting to be tended to in a hospital, carries negation almost to improbability; and "The Plough," "Harvest Moon," and the title-story are in their different delicate ways better pleasing. In three lighter stories—one of Uncle Silas; one of a kind of inferior second cousin of his, a liar who meets more than his match; the third not so much a story as a burst of laughter—Mr. Bates shows in welcome relief his capacity for comedy. But most of his tales, really, are bright with life, with individuals alive and interacting, and with the sweeping beauties of broad country backgrounds.

then as a rather episodically London. Distinctive character and crowd the pages with an all wealth (though scarcely vital the hapless mother, the eccentric young sporting lawyer's clerk marries, Terence's various tutors in crime, busybody nephine's artistic acquaintances Terence's runaway, criminals and many more. Their presence seem at times rather small beer Mr. Meyerstein successfully l and his story, rounded and chosen limitations.

### CRIME IN COLO

#### GAUDY NIGHT. By DORC GOLLANCE. 8s.

Gaudy night at Shrewsbury (Harriet Vane has returned scholastic atmosphere for the her acquittal of murder was detective genius of Lord Peter sees the dons afresh, and if servant eyes the reader acquainted with the austere by Warden; the sprightly Dean charitable in all but scholars fully embittered Miss Hilary fortably enigmatic Miss de rest. She leaves the city of with more than one reluctant glance from the uneasy work lioness, till there flutters from a sheet of scribbling paper murderess. Aren't you ashamed face?"

It was some months before whom such libels were not; she was not the only victim Others had received scurrilous words and pictures were walls; a mind diseased, and had been poisoning the serf Harriet, called in to unravel made the tension doubly ten students at most, she point one or two of the scouts, but e the Senior Common Room, n pect. And if, as seems scurrilities of the poison-pen of natural instincts repressed, than a don—intellect to outwage disembodied?

Suspicion in the S.C.R. give peg. The detective merits of no praise. Does not Lord Peter And where Lord Peter is, "faith though he be, unflinching l covers the clues which Miss S in his path and the reader's humours and excitements amicably hand-in-hand demar customary passing salute; readers know them well. T