

AND what about the Best Sellers?—a perfectly odious term, by the way. Two of them have been American—Kenneth Roberts's *North West Passage* and Louis Bromfield's *And the Rains Came*. Otherwise there are three of which I must say something. Audrey Lucas's *Old Motley* had charm and tenderness. It was better, I think, in its Quaker elements than its theatre. About H. E. Bates's *Spella Ho* I am in difficulty. He is, of course, one of the best writers of short stories alive, but after reading this book I am convinced that he is not really a novelist. Here he had everything—grand subject, a striking hero, a poetic background. Some of the prose is beautiful, but the characters, for myself at least, simply do not live. The novel breaks up again and again, episodically: there is none of the narrative drive that a novelist must have if he is to carry the reader with him.

Then there is Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, a fine return to the manner of Wilkie Collins and Miss Braddon. Miss du Maurier has been accused of careless writing and melodrama. Both accusations are true, but she can disregard them, for she is a novelist born and can tell a story with the best.