

CATHERINE FORTER. By H. E. BATES.  
71 x 51. 200 pp. Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d. n.

A young woman with an enormous head, sloping  
shoulders, and painfully distorted hands, cultivates

the paper cover of this novel, the third book by Mr. H. E. Bates. It is not an inspiring portrait, but it bears some relation to the depressing and discontented young woman who is the titular heroine of the book, although she was not physically deformed in any way. She suffered from the vapours; she did not know what she wanted, whether it was more Chopin or more wine, or more meandering with the worthless Andrew Foster, her brother-in-law. She was married to Charles, a tradesman, but she had begun to dislike him, and she felt infinitely superior and sensitive and could not bear to do anything he wanted or to know his friends. So she longed for escape, and at night she put her face into her pillow and said: "God! this miserable going on! Why is it?" Then she definitely loved Andrew, and she gave him herself, and some flat green sherry glasses which must have been hard to drink out of, and some money. And they made love, repeatedly, and Mr. Bates describes it over and over again. Sometimes Andrew jumped up and played Chopin to her, and sometimes behaved like this:—"He impulsively rushed to her, pressed her head back on the faded red tapestry of the divan and in a confusion of words asked forgiveness. She appeared not to hear. But he continued, and suddenly it seemed, from a series of rapid shakes of the head, that she was listening. And not hesitating, not heeding her, he began telling her about the Rhine, the green vineyards, the peasants, the old, shadowy towns, the house where Beethoven had been born, with its cool courtyard and air of repose. And he pictured her as a peasant, with great boots, black stockings, voluminous petticoats and a spotted kerchief. He said he would take her to the forest, the dark endless forests of birches and pines, still and patient as if always waiting for something, and then to the towns, where they could sit as he has done, in *Biergartens* drinking coffee and lager, and afterwards hear opera at night." Mr. Bates can write well, and he can at times write very badly. And Catherine, Andrew, and Charles are bores whom no amount of intensity will make anything else.