TROUBLED WITH SENTIMENT.

WRITING of his early struggles for expression, Ernest Hemingway declared recently: "I was trying to write them and I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action."

The authors of these three volumes of stories can hardly have been troubled as Hemingway was troubled. All three are, in the worst sense of the word, superficial writers—superficial not merely in depicting human action, but worse still in delineating human emotions. They put down not what they feel, nor even what they ought to feel, but what they think they ought to feel, and in one case what it is necessary to feel, no matter how falsely or fatuously, in order to please a fifth-rate public. Of the three, **Mr. Dermot Freyer,** author of "**Not All Joy**" (Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 7s. 6d.), is perhaps the most hopeful, since he is at least ambitious, though he is in another sense the most distressing, for as an apostle of the grand emotional manner he writes, as it were, with his hand on his heart and his head in the clouds, yearningly, sighing when his characters sigh and weeping when they weep. He is the kind of writer to whom Tchekov once wrote to this effect: "Write coldly. Never weep with your characters. If you drop a tear the whole effect is ruined." In such a story as "Salvation" the

impression is that if the tears are not actually falling, they are at least filling the eyes of the author. "Love lights the sleeping features with a sudden, quick smile, expressive, sweetly reposeful: a smile of infinite relief, of instant rescue from the dark gropings of the soul's dilemma: of salvation." Such a passage is utterly false in feeling. It is a supreme example of that emotional leprosy from which every writer, like Hemingway, must struggle to escape, or perish.

Mr. John Ressich ("**Dago Red,**" Benn, 7s. 6d.) is a magazine edition of Kipling, resembling him not only in his manner of writing and his choice of characters and scenes, but even down to the irritating habit, at one time carried to ludicrous excess by obscure Victorian lady novelists of moral-romantic school, of prefacing each story with a quotation from the poets. He is more slick than Mr. Dermot Freyer and less inclined to high flights of emotion, but he suffers from an identical lack of self-criticism, the ability to look with cold detachment at his work, an ability which would have enabled him at once to sense the falsity in such an opening paragraph as this: "Life for most of us is full of regrets: probably not an entirely unhealthy state of affairs. But in all lives there is usually one relentless grief that refuses to be adjusted." This is mere superfluous nonsense pompously trying to pass as profound thought. Has Mr. Ressich no sense of humour?

Unlike either Mr. Dermot Freyer or Mr. Ressich, the author of "**The Things We Do**" (Cassell, 7s. 6d.) knows what she is about and why she is about it. **Miss I. A. R. Wylie** has more than herself to satisfy. She knows for whom she is writing and she knows that to give satisfaction she must write of men who speak "with dry lips," of women who implore "Give me time to consider. We must wait. Give me the right to tell the world." She writes of them and she satisfies those she wishes to satisfy.

H. E. Bates.