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district about it, and an additional depth is gained from the woman's constant ache to be back in the country. There is a sub-plot, but this is stuck on like a stamp. If the author were anybody else one would easily find much to praise; but Mr. Davies is now an old hand, and would resent kindness. I found the whole thing commonplace, from such an author, as if he had ceased to observe life and were merely repeating without zest things he had almost begun to forget.

HE FLEW LIKE A BIRD

Reviews by H. E. BATES

THE five novellas in *The Flying Yorkshireman* (Hamish Hamilton, 8s. 6d.) are by five separate authors, Helen Hull, Albrecht Maltz, Rachel Maddox, I. J. Kapstein, and Eric Knight, of whom the last named alone is English. A novella used to be a long-short story, earlier a *conte*, earlier a novelette. Nobody liked these names, because they were contradictory, foreign, or misleading. So the editors of the American magazine, *Story*, decided on a change. They decided on novella, which seems to me just about as unsatisfactory as the rest. The word appears to belong to a brand of cheroot and has a slight flavour of literary beards and bohemianism. It sits affectedly like a lace cap on the sturdy bodies of the stories it describes. For, make no mistake about it, the stories themselves are very good indeed. There has already been a great deal of palaver about the title story, perhaps too much palaver, but the funniness of this farcical tale (the word tale beating the word novella every time) about a plain downright Yorkshireman who suddenly discovers after a revivalist meeting in America that he can fly, is beyond dispute. His doings in the air over New York, where he flies like a seagull and a pigeon but never quite like a lark, are killing stuff. There must have been a slight temptation here to turn the story into allegory, but Mr. Knight has resisted it, keeping the story on the level of pure fun, where it belongs, with only a sideways hint of the terrors that might be let loose if we *could* fly. Of the other stories I like particularly Mr. Kapstein's breath of nostalgic sentimentality, *The Song the Summer Evening Sings*, with its picture of the life of an almost bankrupt small-town grocer seen through the eyes of a boy. But all these novellas, tales, contes, novelettes, little novels, or long-short stories—call them what you will—are told with the firm accent of objectivity, and are the work of artists.

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The novella, the long-short story, seems to me a mould ready made for the liquid, rather over-spacious art of Mr. Geoffrey Household. In *The Third Hour*, his first and in every way remarkable novel, he used to perfection a manner which I then described as the philosophical picaresque. As he tries to pour his material into the smaller moulds of the short story you get a constant impression that he is a writer who has little patience with its meticulous measurements. He has more material than moulds. So the stories in *The Salvation of Pisco Gabar* (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.), good though they are, often give the slightly untidy effect of cups slopping over. The style and the location of the stories—Spain, Greece, Peru, America—are both rich and high-coloured, and it is significant that in the longest story, the novella of the book, *Delilah of the Back Stairs*, the style has ample room to spread and thin and simplify, with a consequent gain in credibility and effect. In my view Mr. Household is the best kind of romantic writer, equipped with style and

material more suited in their breadth and high colouring to the novel and the novella than the short story. But that still leaves *The Salvation of Pisco Gabar* high in the list of 1938 year's short stories.

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Last Stories, by Mary Butts (Brent Publishing Co., 5s.), leaves me wondering why and how this writer gained quite the reputation she did. They have an earnest, over-literate and at times naive air of being the work of someone who still had a long way to go toward full development.

THE WOMAN NOVELIST

Reviews by LILIAN ARNOLD

A PASSION for truth at any price and a gift for mimicry are perhaps not the surest foundations for human popularity. Lorna Galloway, the central figure in Mr. Stephen McKenna's *Breasted Amazons* (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.), has, however, other qualities. She is "decorative and a good mixer." Incidentally, she is a novelist of great possibilities, but her passion for truth leads to difficulties. The gift which enables her to reproduce to the life the mannerisms of her friends and acquaintances makes her work photographic and—unlike some photography—impossible to mistake for anyone but original. Having married an unpleasant man and divorced him (or did he divorce her?—I am not clear) she proceeds to put him in her next book. Recognizing himself for the very unpleasant centre piece of *A Captain of Industry*, within twenty-four hours of publication he calls on the publishers to demand its withdrawal, failing which he will instruct his solicitors to sue for libel. No publisher likes this sort of thing, and Lorna finds herself faced with the choice of moderating her sentiments in her next book or finding herself without a publisher. A more immediate consequence is the necessity of finding a refuge from a husband who talks coarsely of nose-slitting and other vulgar forms of retaliation. In this dilemma she unexpectedly finds a refuge in a house to let on the estate of a land-owner not far from her own home. It has been occupied by an artist who, having married and gone abroad, has no further use for it. Here she settles down to write her next novel in peace. Her landlord is a very charming man of the old school. He is impressed by Lorna's brains no less than by her beauty. The love affair which ensues is nothing if not turbulent, and it all but founders on a matter of taste. To Lorna the only question which matters is "Is it true?" Sir Miles finds it indecent that anyone should make copy of scenes which break all the laws of the game should be mutually sacred. It comes as a shock to find that he has been "entertaining a reporter unawares." Mr. McKenna has had the rare perception to see both sides of an irreconcilable argument but all his artistry fails to make Lorna anything but repellent or to persuade the most sentimental reader that she could make any husband happy.

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Family Ship, by Miss Lou King-Hall (Peter Davies, 7s. 6d.), recalls another diary which occasioned a good deal of stir some years ago—Miss Magdalen King Hall's *Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion*. This time, however, the diarist is no "lady of fashion" but a Navy Captain who sailed the seas in the early days of the nineteenth century when wives, sisters and female cousins were—most unsuitably—permitted to travel on H.M.'s men-of-war. It is an exceedingly entertaining piece of work affording many interesting sidelights on the ways they had in the navy of the period.