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mainspring of the narrative is the temperamental difference between two brothers—Jerry and George Asterton, sons of a "fishin' and shootin'" squire, Sir Gilchrist Asterton. George, the heir, comes up in every way to his father's ideas of what a young man should be; he is a good man to hounds, a regular dare-devil, healthily extrovert, in brief a traditional Asterton. Jerry, on the other hand, is an intellectual. He paints. He hardly knows a fetlock from a hind-quarter. His father is disgusted with him. The story roves from the English countryside to the African wilds; we meet District Commissioners, country squires, M.F.H.'s, designing mothers, hard-riding women, all well drawn and quite amusing to read about. It is, in short, an honest piece of fiction, without pretentiousness, and provides just the kind of entertainment it promises.

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Mr. John Dos Passos might be expected to deserve a better place than third grade in a batch of reviews. His trilogy of novels published under the inclusive title of *U.S.A.*, including the (possibly) best-known *Forty-Second Parallel*, has placed him among the serious novelists of America. It was a bit on the heavy side, repeated its pattern too often—somebody has well compared it to wallpaper in that respect—and worked rather too deliberately to the technical theory known as collectivism. But it did what it proposed to do with conviction, and deserves the respect generally given to it. In *Adventures of a Young Man* (Constable, 8s. 6d.) this conviction is missing. Mr. Dos Passos seems to have broken, or begun to break, with the underlying proletarian ideology of his major work, and very little but disillusion informs the present novel. It is the record of the career of a young man who began by pinning his faith to a similar ideology and ends up, rather mechanically (too many heroes have ended up in the same way in recent fiction), with the Spanish War. The sardonic irony of his death (an ignoble and futile exit) strikes me, as most of this book does, as a facile comment on political affairs rather than a comment on human nature in general, or on the heart and nature of this young man in particular. I venture to guess that this novel is a bridge-novel between two phases in the development of a considerable novelist.

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LONG-SHORT STORIES

Reviews by H. E. BATES

THE long-short story, most difficult and fascinating of all short story forms, is beautifully represented in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, by Miss Katherine Anne Porter (Cape, 7s. 6d.), who has for some time held a firm place among the best short story writers in America. She is a writer with, among many other gifts, an exceedingly fine sense of proportion. There are writers who would have made these three stories, *Old Mortality*, *Noon Wine*, and the title piece, into novels; there are novelists who would have regarded each of these themes as not big enough for a novel and would have promptly used them up as left-overs. Miss Porter's sense of proportion is so just and her sense of balance so absolutely accurate that she can never make these mistakes. Foremost among her other gifts are a beautifully handled feeling for emotion of all kinds, a rare sense of colour, scene, and place. Her portrayal of most diverse types—the decaying aristocrats in *Old Mortality* and the dumb, simple farm-folk of *Noon Wine*—are amazingly accurate, and she writes like a painter. Stories more satisfying and beautifully memorable than these have not come out of America in a decade. There can be no argument about their quality. They are the work of a master-hand, and should be accordingly treasured.

One reviewer of Miss Porter's earlier stories is quoted as having said that they had more promise of future life in them than the early Hemingways. Those early Hemingways or middle Hemingways, *The Killers*, *Fifty Grand*, *Hills Like White Elephants*, certainly lifted us out of our seats; but is it better to lift the spectator out of his seat or keep him, as Miss Porter does, firmly in it? It is now possible to judge just how remarkable the early Hemingways were, for his first forty-nine stories and a play written during the Spanish War are now issued together in *The Fifth Column* (Cape, 10s. 6d.). Let it be said at once that the stories which made Hemingway the most imitated short story writer in America since O. Henry now seem as good as ever; if they seem less revolutionary in manner than they did it is because that manner has now become a settled convention. The later stories carry less conviction, even have the air, occasionally, of being parodies of the man who wrote them. With the early stories they have one thing in common: the constant, melancholy, deeply religious preoccupation with death which reaches its most intense point in the famous *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, which I have tried hard and have failed to read. This preoccupation with death is, it seems to me, the key-point to Hemingway; it kills the notion that Hemingway is a tough writer. He is on the contrary a deeply religious, deeply sensitive, sadly poetic writer; the undertone of his prose rhythm is pitched and always has been pitched in a minor key. He is a writer who is very frightened of himself. And it was a good idea to gather up these stories into one volume, so that we can see just how good and how bad a writer he is and can be.

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Mr. C. G. Learoyd is a new-comer. His title, *Physician's Fare* (Arnold, 7s. 6d.), gives him away. He is a doctor, and most of his stories deal with doctors and their problems. There is a tradition that doctors who take to literature—Chekov, Maugham, Cronin, etc.—do very well, and Mr. Learoyd should be no exception. He has a manner of detached and amused irony that is very attractive. He probes into the decayed, deformed, and defunct tissues of humanity without sentimentality or fuss, and draws some surprising conclusions. His *A Nice Quiet Locum Tenency* alone heralds a new writer with a mischievous sense of irony and surprise. His writing has a thoroughly professional manner, and if he does not shortly forsake the surgery for the study I for one shall be surprised—and disappointed.

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COUNTRY COMMUNITY

Reviews by LILIAN ARNOLD

MR. ERNEST RAYMOND'S new novel, *The Miracle of Brean* (Cassell, 8s. 6d.), deals with a country community remotely situated at the foot of the Downs. It includes a typical rector and squire and various characters who come under the old-fashioned designation of "gentry"; especially there is the aged termagant, Mrs. Meadows, and her forty-year-old daughter, Lettie. Partly because her younger sister has married before her and her mother treats the elder daughter as something between a fool and a slave, Lettie puts on an armour of affectation to cover the shrinking of her own heart. Especially with the young and bright she assumes a heartiness which excites ridicule and leaves her wondering afterwards if she has made a fool of herself. As indeed she occasionally does. But in these days, surely, even an unmarried woman of forty need not consider herself permanently "on the shelf." Nor, I think, would a young and recently engaged young woman recognize in Miss Meadows

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