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ited by E. B. Osborn

TO New Fiction

A BLACK PUDDING OF DYNAMITE AND THUNDER

By H. E. BATES

Absolam! Absolam! By William Faulkner.

The Other Side. By Stephen Hudson.

The Gambler. By Anne Meredith.

Olive E. By C. H. B. Kitchin.

"ABSOLAM! ABSOLAM!" is very hard to classify and still harder to judge.

Mr. Faulkner may well have embodied in this huge and disturbing book, some huge and possibly disturbing truth; but I confess, in that case, that it eludes me.

This story of the Southern States, set in Mississippi about the time of the American Civil War, is built up about the life and death of Thomas Sutpen, a name already familiar to Faulkner readers.

He has not only surpassed himself but to my mind, defeated himself. The mind cannot stand up to, still less assimilate properly, this huge tempestuous barrage of verbal fury, and my final impression is that "Absolam! Absolam!" is a disturbing, conflicting, windy, disappointing book by a man who is at his best, perhaps the foremost novelist of America.

Cool and Neat

After the hot atmospheric orchestrations of Mr. Faulkner, another book on Nineteenth Century America—Mr. Stephen Hudson's "THE OTHER SIDE," a cool little number of a book which will ease the Faulkner-bruised mind like a pack of ice.

This book is simply the first-person record of Richard Kust, who goes from England to America, fifty years back to stay first in a curiously provincial New York, and then in a still more curiously countrified city of the Middle West, there to have adventures with prize fight promoters, light ladies, a German violinist, a woman of great character and beauty, and to be involved, finally, in the minor heroics of a financial fraud.

The narrator is a proper English Victorian prig, and the book might well have been unbearable. As it is, it comes over, simply written, it is a successful little example of that art which conceals art: a back phrase which, in turn, does bare justice to an honest, convincing, and in many ways beautiful piece of fiction.

A Flat Land

The fiction lover is, altogether, on dull rations this week, and dull is precisely the word for Mr. C. H. B. Kitchin's "OLIVE E.," which I can't help feeling is an early novel, reshaped, by a man who some years ago was reckoned good enough to tinkle Arnold Bennett into superlatives.

ACROSS THE YEARS

The most interesting parts of "IT WAS AND IT WASN'T" (John Long, 18s.), in which the Marchioness Townshend of Raynham looks back over her days, describe how the family came to reoccupy Raynham Hall (after a sandwich meal among the dust-sheets), and to take part once more in Norfolk life.

The tale of her early years of marriage, of difficulties with money, and of the re-establishment of the family after her husband's death is pleasantly told, livened with information about the great Townshends of the past (with whose portraits the book is well illustrated).

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