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Ex-Sergeant Cooper, extenuating nothing and setting down nought in malice, does somehow manage to justify his curious taste for life in the French Foreign Legion. After a violent and refractory childhood, he enlisted in 1914 at the age of fifteen and a half, but was released two years later on the condition of his serving in the British Army. In 1919, however, he signed on again for five years, and at the end of these for yet another five, because he found his nature still too violent to support the voluntary discipline of civilian life. He writes of himself and his experiences so reasonably, and is so scrupulous of being just towards the officers and men with whom he was in contact, that at moments the reader is almost tempted to take a popular romantic view about the toughness of legion life. But it is impossible to maintain it for more than three consecutive pages, and on the whole the book may be confidently recommended as a discouragement to prospective recruits.

From Morocco, as they say in the news films, it is only a step to the Congo, where Mr. Collodon was shooting elephants and capturing live gorillas as far back as the 'sixties and 'seventies. Before that, at the age of ten, his father had sold him for the modest sum of one pound to the skipper of a windjammer who "looked like the popular representation of the Devil." But the chapters devoted to this early period are a magnificent tribute to the character of that same man, Jonathan Scratch, for which alone the book would be worth reading, and Mr. Collodon's account of long spells on board and visits to remote ports (Captain Scratch invariably took the small boy with him when he had business ashore, just to keep him out of harm's way) seems to call back into life a whole vanished world.

The years he spent in the Congo occupy the greater part of the book, and it was a somewhat different place in those days from what it was when Mr. and Mrs. Cope Morgan passed through it on their way from Nigeria to Kenya. They made this three thousand five hundred-mile journey by lorry, and from Nairobi decided as a kind of afterthought to go on to Capetown, another five thousand miles away. Mrs. Morgan's record of it is in the form of a letter-diary which she sent to her daughter. She writes with unflinching good humour of their difficulties and is always observant of the natives, the animals, the trees and the flowers of the country through which they passed, so that these letters, with a good sprinkling of photographs, are no less interesting to read collectively than they must have been to receive individually.

Short Stories

- Outside Eden.** By J. C. Squire. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)
The Short Stories of Michael Arlen. (Collins. 7s. 6d.)
King Carnival. By John C. Moore. (Dent. 7s. 6d.)
Daisy Matthews and Other Tales. By Rhys Davies. (Golden Cockerell Press. 21s.)
March to the Gods That Heal. By Fairbairne McPhee. (Boriswood. 7s. 6d.)
Sympathy and Other Stories. By Peter Quennell. (Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.)
The Furnival Book of Short Stories. (Joiner and Steele. 7s. 6d.)
Full Score. Edited by Fytton Armstrong. (Rich and Cowan. 7s. 6d.)

It is not an accident that one of Mr. Squire's publications was called *Tricks of the Trade*. He knows them all: and the title could well be applied to the volume of short stories before us, many of which are actually concerned with trade—and tricks—of writing. It must be said at once that they are excellent reading. Perhaps the most amusing in this kind is the account of how the editor of a popular and expensive magazine was bluffed into paying an enormous price for a story he did not want, and how, in the end, matters were squared between him and the young high-brow author whom he had so improbably encountered. There is much satire and much sense in these stories, which will make wholesome reading for the aspiring writer. Others in the collection touch a deeper note. There is an adroit handling of the plot supplied recently to a number of authors by the perspicacious Mr. Fothergill, and in *The Alibi* Mr. Squire presents us with a story which experts in detection have praised, and which the non-expert can praise as a workmanlike piece of writing. Yet over the whole collection hangs, it must be confessed, an air of disappointment, the sense that a prodigious talent

has somehow been dissipated in pages, which, good as they are, are not enough to show for it.

The omnibus volume of Mr. Arlen's short stories reveals him as a considerable writer with intolerable mannerisms which he is rapidly shedding. It has been the fashion to deery his work, but it is often both subtle and witty. "The Shameless Behaviour of a Lord" is excellent in its kind, and even beneath the stories with the greatest burden of tinsel something real will often be found, as in the telephone message at the end of "Portrait of a Lady on Park Avenue."


Mr. John C. Moore is very good company. His stories are lively, vigorous, ingenious, and well contrived. The one thing that at present they lack is distinction of mind. The comment is not unfair, because Mr. Moore shows signs of taking himself seriously, and aims at being more than the good entertainer he is. Such a piece as "Alma Mater," commonplace throughout, shows him up rather badly.

Mr. Rhys Davies is considerably below his form in the tales here collected, which are shallow and morbid. Ladies in love with polar bears, and the stabbing of homicidal swans, are topics which need much better handling than they here receive if they are to interest the normal reader, and the influence of Lawrence, though diluted, is strong. Mr. McPhee's stories, on the other hand, suggest not so much Lawrence and water as Lawrence and a rather heady brand of South African alcohol. This is the more to be regretted as he shows himself to be an author of real and individual talent. "A Little Storm" and "Virgins" are not the work of a negligible writer.

Mr. Quennell's stories are very sensitive, alert, and thoroughbred. In sustained achievement, his volume is much the best of those under review. His mind touches life at many points, and he has that essential mark of the poet, the genuine gift of inquisitiveness. The two long tales are beautifully done, as is the title story, though the latter might perhaps have been strengthened if Fred's sister had not in so many words expressed her continual demand for sympathy. In "Climacteric," however, the balance between suggestion and statement is perfectly adjusted, and the incident of the five-pound note is a heart-rending expression of the eternal embarrassments of youth.

In *The Furnival Book* are collected the stories which were issued separately in limited editions over a period of three years. Most notable are the contributions of Mr. Hanley, Mr. Bates, and (once out of three times) of Mr. O'Flaherty. Best of all, however, is Mr. John Collier's "Green Thoughts," a story which in originality, ingenuity, and neatness of finish supplies everything that could fairly be demanded.

Full Score, a collection of twenty-five stories by almost everybody, is a higgledy-piggledy assortment well worth the money.



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