

## Other New Novels

### QUIET CORNER

By J. D. BERESFORD  
Hutchinson 8s. 6d.

Halcyon Place lies somewhere behind Notting Hill, in the regions of Holland Park, and is so hidden from the world that the passer-by comes upon it only by a kind of miracle, in response to a personal need. At least, it did lie there forty years ago, at the time of this story, when Timothy Gadshill realized that he wanted to become an artist and could no longer bear being a stockbroker. As he came to this great decision he also came to the gate of Halcyon Place, was admitted by "Uncle John" Maximilian, who seemed to be its owner, and felt that he had found a refuge where he could be safe from the opinions forced on him by the rest of his own social circle. He soon found that almost everyone else living in the little square was there for a similar reason, although the actual circumstances that had driven them to fly from the world were often ludicrously different.

Tim settles down, learns a great many new rules of conduct in life, unlearns many of the old ones, falls in love with Uncle John's daughter Cherry, a dancer, and spends a lot of time deciding how to save her from the embraces of a villainous theatrical manager. He succeeds in the end—but without a great deal of encouragement or enthusiasm from the reader, who cannot feel much faith in the reality of any of these rather stiff little figures. In fact this odd book is less of a novel than a morality play, where the characters represent "moral virtues and their contrary vices" rather than real people with actual existence in the world.

### COUNTRY TALES

Collected Short Stories  
By H. E. BATES  
Cape 7s. 6d.

Mr. Bates has here collected thirty short stories from five of his eight published volumes. In an interesting little preface he has some very sound and sensible things to say about short stories generally and the virtual extinction of the English market for them at the present time, also a view of his own short stories which is curiously like that expressed by Chekhov in similar circumstances but is none the worse for that. Chekhov, indeed, is most obviously the great name that might be associated with Mr. Bates's poetical style of story-telling, in which, as he says, plot counts for much less than character or atmosphere and in which so-called ideas count for hardly anything at all. Some of the earlier tales in this collection are inclined to seem immature by comparison with later ones, and readers may disagree with Mr. Bates's personal estimation of the particular stories that he includes among those that now give him most satisfaction; but he is one of the most attractive story-writers to-day and there are many examples of his work here that will be re-read with great pleasure. Apart from the stories that gave their title to three of the volumes—"The Black Boxes," "The Woman who had Imagination" and "Cut and Come Again"—perhaps the pick of the collection is "The House with the Apricot," or at any rate the first two-thirds of it, which comes as near to perfection as one can imagine.