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her story on almost every page with the one quality necessary to the making of all good fiction—suspense. This is the story of the Barnes family—Reginald, the father, dull, henpecked, constantly chafing under his wife's tongue; Edith, his wife, always conscious that she has married beneath her, an empty-headed, feelingless snob; Janet, their elder daughter, with all the hardness of the young medical student; Anne, their younger daughter, sensitive, a dreamer, and a shrinker from reality, who is betrayed by a wealthy young cad who leaves her with a child and runs off to America. And in the background there is always "Nurse," Mrs. Barnes's old family nurse who, knowing all, can forgive all. Miss Hughes-Stanton has an exquisite gift for irony, and not for an instant does she spare either the father or the mother (the description of the family's first holiday in France is a little masterpiece); but she has gifts of tragedy as well, and her book works up to a climax in true symphonic form. This is a real piece of craftsmanship; there is not a false note in it anywhere, and some scenes of beauty not easily to be forgotten.

Miss Norah James gets better with each novel she writes. "Jealousy" (Duckworth, 7s. 6d.) is the well-handled story of a couple who set off from London by car to Gretna Green to be married and of the thoughts of their past lives which come to them during their day's journey through the English counties. Miss James's chief accomplishment in this story is that she has written a *tour de force* without once reminding us of the fact. There is no straining after effect here, and each "flash back" occurs as naturally as if it had occurred in the mind of the reader. Miss James has need of little further technical equipment; all she now wants is a theme worthy of her technique.



Miss Norah James.

Those who like that unsatisfactory form of fiction, the story which is less than half the length of a novel and three times as long as a short story, will probably enjoy Herr Stefan Zweig's "Letter from an Unknown Woman" (Cassell, 5s.). With the exception of a few pages, this takes the form of a letter to a German author written by a woman who, unknown to him, had loved him from her childhood and twice during her life had given herself to him as a woman of the streets. The letter is written on the night of the death of her son (their child), and is the woman's own autobiography. The story is more than merely slickly-told; it is a terrible indictment on the shortness of human memory—and particularly of a man's memory—but it does not stir the emotions as deeply as it is obviously meant to do.

H. L. MORROW.

LAWRENCE'S SHORTSTORIES.

D. H. LAWRENCE in his letters often referred to his desperate, miserable, and unsuccessful efforts to make money by turning out magazine stories. It wasn't in him to be popular, he declared, and how little his genius was suited to popular taste and how poor his work would become when he drove himself unwillingly to try to satisfy that taste may be seen from the stories in "The Lovely Lady" (Secker, 7s. 6d.). With one exception—and a happy one—these stories lack that quivering spontaneity and that curious lively quality of interest which characterizes his best novels and such tales as "The Fox" or "Daughters of the Vicar." They read as though dashed off in haste in order to amuse the kind of reader that Lawrence at heart despised. One might call them Lawrence's attempts at society fiction. The people are thin and unreal, the style gossipy and cheap, the images slick and uninspired. They read like his first gropings for expression in fiction rather than the products of his maturity. The one exception is "The Man who Loved Islands," a

story written five or six years before he died, and for some reason—perhaps a wise one—withheld till now. Its irony, its sharp gaiety, its sureness of touch, and its pictures of sea and flowers make this story of a man who lived first on a large island with a mansion, then on a smaller island with a cottage, and finally on a sea-battered rock in a tin-roofed shed, in every way worthy of Lawrence at his greatest.

On the wrapper of Mr. Peter Quennell's "Symphony and Other Stories" (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.) we are promised a critical foreword by the author explaining how the stories came to be written and emphasizing their similarity of design, and this, in view of Mr. Quennell's shrewdness and intelligence as a critic, ought to have been highly interesting. But the foreword is not to be found. Perhaps Mr. Quennell, being a critic himself, thought better of thus playing into the hands of the critics. Nevertheless, one would have welcomed some explanation of the "similarity of design" of these stories, for curiously, in design, they have little in common. Their similarity appears to be rather in style. The prose in each story is hard and bright, the sentences have been constructed with intellectual care, yet there appears always to be something lacking. The words do not come to life. Mr. Quennell is like a pianist playing all the notes and all the notes correctly, but without passion or touch, and producing sounds but not music.

Mr. P. G. Wodehouse continues to exploit the popularity of the jocose Mr. Mulliner. It is scarcely necessary to review his "Mulliner Nights" (Jenkins, 7s. 6d.), but only to say that the stories told at The Angler's Rest are competent and typical. It is one of Mr. Wodehouse's triumphs that he is able to amuse the literary reader as well as the low-brow. Like Leacock, he is something of a satirist, too.

H. E. BATES.

AN M. P. SHIEL THEME.

MR. CHARLES WILLIAMS is the only writer I ever heard of who has succeeded in writing metaphysical thrillers—really metaphysical and really thrilling. In "Shadows of Ecstasy" (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.) he comes a little closer than usual to the machinery of the more mundane shocker. There is a revolt of the African nations against the white races and an air-raid on London, and an individual who has discovered the secret of perpetual life but is betrayed and killed by one of his followers. I could not help thinking as I read how easily the theme might have occurred to Mr. M. P. Shiel and how differently he would have handled it. He would have given us raw extravagance and shouting humour where Mr. Williams is urbane and benevolently ironical—and his would, I fancy, have been the better way of handling the material. But that is not to say that Mr. Williams has not handled it with a good deal of effect.

In "The Keys of the Flat" (Ward, Lock, 7s. 6d.), Mr. E. Charles Vivian has invented an excellent situation and worked out its details with unpretentious competence. Who put the white arsenic in Dione Bourne's sugar-bowl? Did she, to get rid of the girl whom she might have suspected of being a rival? Did her lover, to get rid of her now that she had become an encumbrance? The story is not, as it might have been, confined to a dry investigation of the possibilities. The characters are presented with a refreshing naturalness and a certain amount of humour.

Naturalness and humour are distinctive features of "Inspector Frost in Crevenna Cove" (Benn, 7s. 6d.), by Dr. H. Maynard Smith, which is just as well since the mystery itself is no great shakes. Dr. Smith himself does not seem to think much of it, for he diverts attention from it at every possible opportunity. But he provides an agreeable row of characters, of whom the portly and placid Inspector Frost is the most agreeable. His children are particularly good. As for the mystery of John Jones's murder, he and the reader can afford not to worry over it very much.

Journalists reading about the murder of a Night Editor will very likely murmur to themselves, "Justifiable homicide" and leave it at that. But in "The Mystery of the Golden Angel" (Collins, 7s. 6d.), Mr. Francis Grierson makes out of it an