writers spend their lives 'affirming' so much as exists. He is less interested in discovering whether a book conforms to a preconceived notion of what a book should be than in discovering what it makes him, and may make others, feel and think. 'Think' I add deliberately: M. Gabory is excited by ideas, and, differing with infinite civility from M. André Gide, holds that *La recherche du temps perdu*, considering the immense influence it has had on his generation and will have, in all probability, on generations to come, cannot be reckoned '*une œuvre entièrement gratuite.*' He is Proustian in his preoccupation with his own and other people's reactions. And, like Proust, he wants to discover what people really do feel. He possesses — acquired from the master maybe — that scandalous passion for psychological sincerity.

English admirers of Proust will not find this essay less agreeable for being written in intelligent, — I had almost said intellectual, — straightforward French. M. Gabory has far too much on his mind to indulge in those affectations, in that allusive, elusive, kick-me-under-the-table style so much in fashion — last season at any rate — with '*les jeunes écrivains français.*' That way may do well enough when one has no more in one's head than M. Giraudoux has in his. M. Gabory must analyze and argue; he has things to say at once too complicated and too precise to be expressed by winking the other eye or putting one's thumb to one's nose. He has tried to be lucid and intelligent. He has succeeded admirably. He will succeed even better in the next edition if he corrects a few of the misprints in this.

The Two Sisters, by H. E. Bates. London: Jonathan Cape, 1926. 7*s.* 6*d.*

[*Morning Post*]

The Two Sisters, by H. E. Bates, has a foreword by Mr. Edward Garnett, who describes it as a 'novel of essentials,' free from the excess of detail, informative or analytical, which crowds the realistic chronicles so popular in these days. It is a first novel by a twenty-year-old author, who has been able to show us, as in a fair, glooming figure, authentic figures of eternal though ephemeral youth, with all their tumultuous emotions. He does not idealize his creations; neither does he exhibit them as futile, undeveloped beings — for he is young enough to see youth for what it is, not for what it ought to be, or what it might have been.

Tessie and Jenny are the daughters of an eccentric father, who thinks he has inherited madness, and they live without friends in a lonely house near a river subject to dangerous floods, which is a protagonist in the drama, just as Egdon Heath is in *The Return of the Native*. Both of them fall in love with Michael, the son of a wharfinger, whose work is in the perilous waters, but he is Jenny's lover. The vital thing in the story is the truthful, complex impressions of the sad, sweet turmoil of first love's absorption in itself as shown in solitary spirits, both like and unlike one another. The drama has a quiet curtain — we see the two sisters, twenty years after, remembering it is the anniversary of Michael's death by drowning, and embracing in their stilly beauty, for time has been a long peace for them both. There are many poetical passages in a book which seeks the truth of the world within faithfully and is beyond doubt a work of genius.

The Pool, by Anthony Bertram. London: Allen and Unwin, 1926. 7*s.* 6*d.*

[*Daily Telegraph*]

HERE is a study of the proletariat which, in its grim realism, challenges, within its limitations, anything from the pen of Maksim Gor'kii. Only in these pages we get no philosophic yearnings, no dreams of distance, and, indeed, very few hints of escape of any sort or kind from incrustated reality. On the surface it is easy enough to judge, easy enough to complain, that we have too much of the 'real pig' and too little of the humanity that belongs at least to art, if not to life. The point is that Rosie Betts, the Parker boys, Bert Porlock, and all the rest of them, do belong to life. They are only too recognizable human figures. Rosie, who intends to bring up her illegitimate child for the sole purpose of killing his father, is not only a real human being, but not even a repellent one. Yes, Mr. Bertram has given us the truth as he sees it about Rosie Betts, and yet left her an East End English girl, with the qualities of the race by no means at its worst, an individual of infinite potentiality under fair conditions, and not at all a monster even under the most difficult. But at the very last there is no more sentimentality about Rosie than there is about the author. Rosie confesses everything to the boy who wants to marry her, including her old attitude toward the father of her child: 'I saw as 'e were n't worf botherin' abaht, an' I saw as that kid, wot was crippled an' daft, 'ud be better dead than alive. So I drahnded it. D' jer want to marry me nah, Bert?'