

shows to what spiritual heights she might have risen. But the heights daunted and balked her, and she got very near the depths. In her prime, when the whole world acclaimed her genius, few men could resist her powers of temptation, but when all is said that can be said against her, who could have resisted the temptation of her powers?

Fiction

Day's End, and other Stories. By H. E. Bates. (Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.)

The Runagates Club. By John Buchan. (Hodder and Stoughton. 7s. 6d.)

Vasco. By Marc Chadourne. Translated by Eric Sutton. Preface by Ford Madox Ford. (Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.)

The Way of Sacrifice. By Fritz von Unruh. (Alfred A. Knopf. 7s. 6d.)

Lest Ye Die. By Cicely Hamilton. (Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.)

Eddy and Edouard. By the Baroness von Hutten. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

MR. H. E. BATES is already recognized as an artist; and, if the reader should find *Day's End* a little devitalizing, it is because he deliberately confines himself to muted chords, and the tragedies of the inarticulate and inhibited. At their best his stories are adroit seizures of the quality, usually the despairing quality, that resides in a critical hour when nothing really happens; at their kindest they are like the long sigh that sometimes comes before settling to sleep; at their cruellest they convey the qualm of that pity which is not without contempt. His subdued method is not always effective. The name-story is too long, and its relentless details are merely depressing; while the anecdote of "The Schoolmistress" is over-subtilized into futility. He has, indeed, arrested transient and dreamlike impressions with a touch of aching beauty in "The Birthday," "Spring Song," "The Dove," and "Harvest." But, on the whole, we are left with a sense of impotent and almost imbecile creatures lapsing into paralysis in an unnaturally ominous world, and an inclination to accuse Mr. Bates of a wilful sadness. He sometimes forces his effect with unnecessary ugliness. "The train ran out to be besieged like a corpse by vermin" is not an inevitable comparison.

The stories told at *The Runagates Club*, the chief members of which are already familiar to Colonel Buchan's readers, are naturally of a more objective kind. Told by and to a company of secure and slightly Philistine friends during after-dinner ease and leisure, the adventures are naturally tempered by the prevailing mood. It may be that some of the ghostlier tales, like "The Wind in the Portico" and "Skule Skerry," might have been carried to a more acute point had they stood alone. But Colonel Buchan is frankly not on his more serious plane in this pleasant volume. His intention is to divert; and in such episodes of humour and queeriness as "The Frying Pan and the Fire," "Divus Johnston," and the gently malicious "Fullcircle," he admirably succeeds.

The *Vasco* of M. Chadourne snatches us away to worlds of terror and pride, to tread the burning marl and to realize the agony of the "Génération Perdue" of the young men to whom the Armistice could not give the peace for which they were for ever spoiled. Mr. Ford Madox Ford's introduction is suggestive, though the parallel with *Galleons Reach* will not commend itself to many. *Vasco* is a passionate individualist, the child of conflicting parents, who has fed his spirit with the mysterious music of Mallarmé, and the intolerant aspiration of Nietzsche. He refuses the poplars and quiet acres of his heritage, desiring to recover his soul "naked as Adam, on some seashore at the other end of the world." So he sails to the Pacific Isles; and whoever reads of his hallucinated days in Papeete, Tautira and Nuhiva will realize the great tress, the burning flowers, the luminosity, the heavy fragrance, and the soft corruption of this dubious Paradise like a personal experience. He finds a companion, the "desperate" Plessis, who, seeming to be the superman that *Vasco* cannot make himself, plays a strange part in his psychological drama. This is a striking example of the disintegrating kind of novel; and the translator has finely preserved the limpid and passionate beauty of the style.

The translator of *The Way of Sacrifice* has hardly been so fortunate. Evidently his author is occasionally incoherent;

but the English rendering is of a bewildering literalness. Written before Verdun, this book caused Fritz von Unruh to be pronounced insane. It is hard to believe, as the cover states, that it was secretly read in the German ranks, merely because of the evident difficulty of the style, which is partly very modernist, partly sentimental in the old German Romantic Revival manner. The conversations are impossibly theatrical. The horror and disgust of modern warfare seem to be revealed as in segments, circles, fragments, broken and distorted by the hectic and grotesque characters of the company described. Doubtless the book has its place in the dossier of war-literature; but it sounds as if written in a brilliant hysteria.

Lest Ye Die is Miss Cicely Hamilton's revision and enlargement of a novel issued as *Theodore Savage*. It is a prophecy of the disappearance of civilization in a final war, and of the human lapse into primitive conditions. It is a forcible and earnest piece of writing. Still, like all books concerning the future, it fails to convince.

After three exacerbating books, *Eddy and Edouard* seems positively emollient. The Baroness von Hutten presents a fragile boy, who, born in America, belongs on his mother's side to a great French family. His determined grandmother reared Edouard as a French gentleman. Judge Forbes and other citizens of Perry saw to it that Eddy did not forget his American citizenship. After the death of his grandmother, the Eddy part of him prevailed; and not till he was fifty did he let himself be drawn to Europe, where, of course, he finally encountered his French relatives. Yet he ended by acquiring the family castle in Savoy, and marrying a cousin, though not quite as he intended. The conflict, or rather the alliance, of Eddy and Edouard is thoroughly amusing. This is a rambling, leisurely novel thronged with loquacious and kindly people; and, when we leave Eddy-Edouard in a fit of mirth at his own expense, we have become quite attached to him.

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR.

FOR WHAT LAND? By Arden Beaman. (Constable. 7s. 6d.)—Mr. Beaman's mental shelves are as well stocked as if bought at a single swoop from Selfridge's. The first plunge of the hand brought out the Hero with Ideals, Victor Harlsdene, who has just been left an estate in England. He retires from the Indian army and returns to build Jerusalem at Harlsdene. Lest the story should flag through his finding this too easy, we have Bolshevism liberally doled out, a sprinkling of the contrariness of human nature and much friction between the matrimonial-minded countryside and the hero, vowed to celibacy for the sake of his Ideals. Then, with considerable gusto, Mr. Beaman tosses the Pure Vamp and the Ingenuous Girl into the plot, also a hunting accident which ends with a night of forced unconventionality in a lonely hut. No harm is done, however, and a good excuse made for the never-failing circus turn of the irate parent with the horsewhip. The vamp chooses a hunt ball for announcing to the hero that he will shortly become a father, and the husband of the vamp appears, complete with revolver. The vamp poisons herself, writing an anguished letter as she does so: "My dar——" (Dies). For all these incidents, the story flags.

IN THE BOY PROPHECY (Benn, 6s.) M. Edmond Fleg creates a sensitive boy, who, with simplicity and great intensity tells the story of his bewildered spirit. When he was five years old, a passing priest first said that he looked like "the infant Jesus," then, on hearing that he was a little Jew, added, "What a pity!" The child's parents, rich and cultured people, are of a sceptical kind. It is his little playmate Mariette who suffers misery concerning his salvation, especially after her first communion. She gives him the Gospel of St. Matthew; and the beauty of the Christ, the blood-guilt of the Jews, the mystery of the Host, work such a strange fever in his childish mind that at one point he begins to dream ominously of the river and the peace of the drowned. A school friend at the same time inconspicuously perplexes him further by offering him the initiation of the Scouts. Another, a Palestinian, teaches him the difference between Jew and Israelite. Illumination promises to come when, in an unavailing effort to find the secret peace of the synagogue, he meets a wise sad Rabbi who lends him the Old Testament, where he seems to discover the God of the Jews and the true mission of tortured Israel. Mariette has gone into a convent to pray for him. He will be a prophet to hasten the advent of the true Messiah of peace. But he realizes he must wait till he is older. This intimate autobiography of a spiritually gifted child is brief, sincere, and of penetrating pathos.