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typical of the style of the book; and the last ten words seem to represent the method which Mr. Landau himself has followed. Finally, the infelicitous character of some of Mr. Landau's references to Madame Paderewska has been thrown into relief by her death in the interval between the writing and publication of this book. Paderewski's married life, so far as the world knows, was almost ideally happy; and even if in later years there were (to borrow Mr. Landau's phrase) "nervous excitations," the veil need surely not be withdrawn from them. In any case, to use phrases which state nothing explicitly, but might imply almost anything, seems inexcusable.

JOHN HALLETT.

Sea Fever

A Sea Lover's Memories. By Thomas Washington Metcalfe. (Faber. 12s. 6d.)

THE author of *A Sea Lover's Memories* is one of those soldiers who ought, without doubt, to have been a sailor—a sailor, moreover, in a century long before his own. The very titles of his chapters and illustrations give warning of the romantic and regretful note of his writing. Ships that were Ships, The Old Gaff-topsail Days, the Loveliness that Was, a Dame of the Old Regime—the words drip with the romance of distant days and his pride in the beautiful ships that sailed in them:

"I count myself fortunate," he begins, "in that I was born a member of that great band of brothers to whom call the boundlessness, the mystery, the romance, the glory of the sea."

The words are singularly familiar, but when we learn that

"I never met Conrad, though I saw him once, when riding in a Kentish valley . . . the nearest approach I had to one whom to meet, in later years, I would have walked a thousand miles,"

the secret is out.

Someone, it may have been George Moore, once declared Conrad to be made up of nothing but the wreckage of Robert Louis Stevenson and the scraps of Henry James. Mr. Metcalfe might in turn be described as a mixture of the flotsam of Conrad and the jetsam of a Thesaurus. He is so convinced of the grandeur and majesty of the sea that nothing but a grandeur and majesty of words will satisfy him in describing it. So such favourite words of Conrad's as serene, mournful, mysterious, profound, swim about with the heaviest verbiage in the language, creating a ghastly effect—and worse crime of all for a sailor spinning his yarn—a boring one. Mr. Metcalfe reiterates constantly his love of sea-romance and sea-beauty, but romance and beauty are the very qualities that one misses from his pages. Conrad, by his peculiar vision and his genius for words, created his atmosphere and effects by an intense piling up of imagery, by a sort of gorgeous verbosity. By the same process Mr. Metcalfe destroys his. His big words lie dead on the page, mere dictionary words, without spirit. Very occasionally he elects to be more simple, but it is still the simplicity of the grand manner:

"But she was always like that, a tall and slender woman, like a graceful flower, a white and lovely lily, who swayed as she moved, whose sweet fragility when at rest, as though the bloom were too heavy for the lissom stalk. She was as exquisite as a figure in Dresden china in her delicacy . . . To aspire to love her, to handle her with a touch coarsened by worldly grossness, would be, it seemed to me, a profanation. But she was married, though the man by her side was not her husband. And though he was a strong man, a knightly man over whose sensibilities the curtain of impassivity was always close-drawn, I knew that he loved her and that she knew it (but only at last, after these few days) and knew, too, that his noble mind was the fitting complement of her own."

The passage criticizes itself. Clearly the delineation of character is not Mr. Metcalfe's strongest point. If he has a strong point at all it is his love of ships; he feels and loves the beauty of clippers, their white sails, their fine movements, their naked spars. His memories of such ships are interesting, but not unusual, and the sea on which they sail is always a little too British and the flag they fly seems to be always the same flag. "It has meant a lot to the world, that flag. You ought to be proud of it, young sir." "Well," says Mr. Metcalfe, "and we are proud of it, no matter how unfashionable at this juncture that may be. Patriotism——" But one knows only too well how it goes on. "What with Great Britain," as Edward Thomas once lamented, "Britons, Britishers, and the English-speaking world, the choice offered to whomsoever would be patriotic is a little embarrassing."

H. E. BATES.

The Panel Doctor

This Panel Business. By A. G. P. (Bale, Sons and Danielsson. 10s. 6d.)

THE family doctor or general practitioner of today is nearly always a panel doctor; and it is to panel doctors that practically the whole of the working men and women of this country look for medical treatment. The panel system has now been in operation for 20 years; so that we should have at our disposal sufficient experience of its working to enable us to form a rough estimate of its actual achievements and of its potentialities. The system had a very bad start. Medicine is an art the value and efficacy of which depend very largely on the good will of those who practise it; and it is unfortunate that Mr. Lloyd George and his advisers did not take more trouble, when introducing the Health Insurance Act, to enlist the interest and co-operation of the organized medical profession. Most of those who entered the service did so reluctantly, from sheer financial necessity. It soon became obvious that, so far as their pockets were concerned, panel doctoring paid the doctors very well. But the initial sulkiness persisted subconsciously as a curb on enthusiasm. For some years past, a new spirit has been growing up within the service; and it is probably fair to say that the majority of panel doctors today give to their insured patients the best of their skill and knowledge so far as the bureaucratic conditions and limitations allow. The virtues of the system are many. It gives to the doctor a truly professional status, freeing him from the sordid ignominy of haggling for fees and demanding money payment as a condition of relieving pain or saving life; and, at the same time, it enables poor people to select from neighbouring practitioners the one in whose ability and sympathy they have most confidence.

But many defects have become obvious. With understanding on the part of the administrators and a more uniformly good spirit among the doctors, most of these defects could easily be remedied, even within the framework of the existing Act. With many of these limitations the writer of this book deals critically and, on the whole, helpfully.

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