

**MRS. ESMOND'S LIFE.** By H. E. BATES. 7½ × 5,  
25 pp. - E. Lahr (68, Red Lion-street, W.C.1.)  
10s. 6d. n.

Mr. Bates here relates in just over twenty small pages how Mrs. Esmond tended her cooked-meat shop, worried over her fat indolent daughter, dreamed of marriage—for she was a widow—to an elderly widower who, however, preferred her daughter; how her grandchild was scalded to death; and how, finally, she decided to join her sons in America—if, that is, it were the will of God, Who rules all. It is told with a good deal of its author's delicacy and charm, and a frequent characteristic aptitude of phrase ("She could see the bluebells running like a light blue flame over the dark earth"), but also with a certain remoteness as though his interest had, after all, not been fully engaged. The descriptions and dialogue are adequate but scarcely forceful, and it is only a typical lack of imaginative certainty which appears when the statement, "For some weeks she hated Henryson," is followed three lines later by "But after a week or so this vindictiveness gradually gave way to something calmer." The small type used for printing the story is not displeasing in itself, but its arrangement on the pages is far from satisfactory.