

A GERMAN IDYLL. By H. E. BATES. With Wood Engravings by LYNTON LAMB. 9½ × 6½, 40 pp. Waltham St. Lawrence, Reading: Golden Cockerel Press. 17s. 6d. n.

In this characteristic story Mr. H. E. Bates writes with all his accustomed skill and sensitiveness upon a familiar theme—in his writings—of youthful tenderness blossoming to beauty between boy and girl (they are little more), dwindling again to become a precious memory before ever it fructifies in love or dies in disillusion. It is the theme of the sexual-glimmer that never becomes a flame, at which no moth will ever burn its wings. It is the delicately rendered lyrical essence of adolescent idealism, unstained by experience. What is really mainly new here is the German setting, though even that does not differ vitally from Mr. Bates's English countryside. A young tourist, travelling down the Rhine for the first time, but in company with Karl, a London bookseller (who has appeared in at least one other of the author's stories) revisiting his native land after twenty years, meets at an inn the landlord's daughter Anna. He cannot speak her language, nor she his. But eyes can say more than tongues between youth and youth, and lips can give kisses when words are vain. They meet, they kiss, they part—the episode is closed for ever, a sealed memory. More, almost, than the tale is the telling—the background of Rhine steamers and landscape, of German village, home, an inn, orchard, forest and by-way—all rapturous with summer scents and dreams. Mr. Bates once again proves himself wholly at home in his own small field, while the production of the volume sustains the standard established by the Golden Cockerel Press.

SOMEHOW LENGTHENED. By ALICE COBBETT.