

NEW NOVELS

Among new novels are *THE GODS ARRIVE*, by Edith Wharton (Appleton, 7s. 6d. net), and *THE FALLOW LAND*, by H. E. Bates (Cape, 7s. 6d. net).

"The Gods Arrive" is a study of adjustment which will rank as one of Mrs. Wharton's most penetrating and entertaining novels. The heroine, with the unfortunate Christian name of Halo, is the Mrs. Tarrant who figured in "Hudson River Bracketed," and the hero is the youth who was allowed to read in the empty house close to her home. Vance Weston is now one of those novelists of fiction who take themselves with ponderous solemnity as a creative artist and who is accepted as a genius by Halo and most of the world. He and she wish to marry but Tarrant declines to divorce his wife or to be divorced, so that to force this issue they go abroad together. Europe is an old story to Halo but a new and enthralling one to Vance, and she has some lonely hours while he makes discoveries of persons and places and plans and writes his books. He nobly fights a vein of weakness in his own character that makes him idle and inconsiderate, but he comes near to various tragedies, including the wreckage of his relationship with Halo. The variety and liveliness of the book keep the reader thoroughly amused as the scene is moved from Spain to France and from England to America. Halo meeting with social rebuffs and trying to overcome her native conventionality and love of law and order, while she nurses Vance's "genius," is a fine and attractive creature, and the long process of patient adjustment to Vance's difficult temperament never wearies her.

"The Fallow Land" is a story of life on a small English farm over a period of nearly half a century; of a young servant girl who marries the farmer's son and comes to live upon it, to bear and rear her children there, to take its burden upon herself, to see her sons leave her or be wrenched from her, to find herself alone in her elder age, and at last to go the way of all flesh, leaving the farm, the fallow field at least, almost as though she had never set foot there. It is therefore of its essence a somewhat sad story, bearing the burden of life's own inexorable sorrows, yet weaving the chances and changes of fifty years into a concordant pattern. Beauty and sorrow become one in a single poignant harmony, binding the succession of incidents into a unity which is also a unison. Especially striking is the complete adequacy of detail. Every descriptive phrase, each metaphor, each adjective even, is right, and with a natural, a wholly spontaneous rightness. Every character, like each instrument in an orchestra, has his or her appointed place and part, yet is vividly and individually alive; one comes to know them, to understand them, to feel with them. This is certainly Mr. Bates's best as it is his most ambitious novel.

In addition to the reviews published regularly in *The Times*, full criticisms of new books, together with a comprehensive list of current publications, will be found in *The Times Literary Supplement*, issued every Thursday, price 3d.