

at his alibis. If he could have done it, then he probably did. In this particular case he did do it.

THE GRACE OF MR. LYND.

Mr. Robert Lynd's new volume of essays called *I Tremble to Think* (Dent, 6s.) once more shows the apparently effortless ease with which, using anything for a motive, he can write that quiet, uncontroversial sense which offends none and pleases everybody. Sometimes it is the doctrinaires who draw him, as when he ridicules General Göring for telling the Germans to prefer gun-metal to butter. People who have never wished to see all-in wrestling will not feel more inclined to do so from his description of it. There are also one or two literary essays and two notable little obituaries. The former discusses Letters to the Editor—those voluntarily unpaid contributions to journalism which the most famous and the most obscure equally dispense. His recollections of A. E., the Irish poet George Russell, and the more intimate recollections of Clifford Sharp, the first editor of the *New Statesman*, touch a deeper feeling. Indeed, the latter preserves a vivid portrait of a man too unambitious to be remembered as widely as he might have been. Beside the varied content; however, the unobtrusive grace of the style of these essays distinguishes them. To write such easy, lucid English is no easy feat. It is not so much the heights to which Mr. Lynd rises as the high average level below which he never falls that is his great virtue. If he is often content

gamekeeper is to Mr. Bates what the policeman is to the small boy, an inheritance of antipathy. This hate adds danger and salts the descriptive writing.

For her part, Miss Miller Parker enters into the propriety of the prejudice; she gives a full black sinister page to the gamekeeper. Technically, in both drawing and cutting, her wood engravings are as good as anything being done to-day. She has more sense of pattern and less sense of dramatic space than Miss Clare Leighton, who did a book of the same kind for the same publishers last year. Miss Miller Parker shows no failures in this book. Her exact knowledge of what can be done with her wood and steel gives anyone who has tried it the pleasure of amazement. She is, perhaps, too fond of solid blacks for a book with type in it; but that is her choice; and plenty of parts of her engravings show that she could use greys more if she wished to. This book ought to be widely liked, because it offers so much, in letterpress and picture, for the ordinary-minded. Mr. Bates plays no artistic tricks; his eye is on the wood while he waits for the word. Miss Miller Parker offers no false simplicity and no highbrow distortions; she won't puzzle the unfashionable. Yet both writer and engraver have that sureness and distinction which constitute style.

A DEFENCE OF SCOTLAND.

Annie S. Swan is what is called a "comfortable" writer. Nothing in her work shocks or disturbs her readers. Her women are virtuous; her men respect them. Kindliness and loyalty predominate in her world over the baser emotions. Yet she is not consciously a purveyor of wish-fulfillments, for she has the great good fortune to see life just as it is represented in her books. One can imagine how distressed she must be to find her younger contemporaries insisting with one voice that her beloved Scotland is decadent. Her goodness of heart simply will not allow her to interpret the post-war Scottish scene as they do. So we get the impression from *The Land I Love* (Nicholson and Watson, 5s.), which is in some sort a reply to them, that here is a kindly, but slightly bewildered mother doing her best to win fractious children from their fretfulness. It is a soothing book, composed of essays on the problems of the Scottish farmer, fisherman, and industrialist; interspersed with simple annals of the poor, and it will be welcomed by that large section of Scotsmen who refuse to believe that anything is amiss with their native land. Its subject circumscribes its interest, but the endearing charity of the author and the homely simplicity of her style will commend it to thousands who lose no sleep over the implications of the "drift south."

PEEVISH EXPLORATION.

The river valleys and glaciers of the mighty Karakoram mountains, which straddle the undelimited frontier between the extreme north of India and Chinese Turkestan—lying rudely parallel to the Himalayas on the one hand and to the Kuen Lun on the other—have been very imperfectly explored and mapped. The indefatigable and intrepid Central Asian traveller, Colonel Schomberg, records the observations of a June-to-September tour in 1934 in a beautifully illustrated book, which he justly entitles *Unknown Karakoram* (Hopkinson, 15s.). He devoted his attention to the northern watershed of the range and the inhospitable regions where the Braldu, Mustagh, and Raskam rivers contribute their waters to the formation of the Yarkand. In winter these wild, almost uninhabited, scenes are inaccessible; in summer their valleys almost impassable because of the mud-laden floods pouring from their melting glaciers. The author, facing hardships, dangers, and fatigues that might well have made a younger colleague blench, penetrated gorges and ravines hitherto untrodden by a white man and traced out unknown routes for future travellers, supplying much invaluable information in his accompanying map. His book is quite indispensable to any student of these parts.

Unhappily, the ordinary reader's pleasure is gravely marred by the writer's atrabilious pen: with the rarest exceptions he dislikes, distrusts and despises his fellow-men wherever encountered. His hate is catholic and extends also to inanimate nature. He speaks of a "black, ugly glacier" that was "just a nuisance," of the "accursed and capricious Shingshal stream," of a "wind that fouled our tempers," of a return to camp "in an active state of peevishness."



MISS ROSALIND WADE,

whose new novel is reviewed on the previous page.

with the nearest topic of the moment, and never afraid of it for seeming trite, you will not find triteness in the essay. The widest measure of common agreement finds its individual voice in Mr. Lynd.

OUT OF THE WOOD.

When Mr. H. E. Bates writes about the country you can always feel the change in the pulse of his writing, and when Miss Agnes Miller Parker engraves a creature, furred or feathered, you can always detect a sweeter line and a stronger pattern in her work. In *Through the Woods—from April to April* (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.) both artists have their happiness often, and this lightens their labours and adds the last pleasure for the reader. Mr. Bates begins by suggesting that, as the wood is only a step away, we should go down to it. And his writing is so tangible, audible, visible, that the deception is nearly accomplished. If, as one reads on, the senses tend to respond less and less to his invocations, this is not really any fault in him—he has to squeeze into two hours or so of reading what Nature takes a steady year over and repeats annually. April to May is so much longer than chapter to chapter. The right way to tackle this book is not to swallow it, but to keep it by you, and when you have nearly forgotten the last chapter, to read the next. But failing this Mr. Bates himself has provided some relief from satiety of description; Uncle Silas is admitted, and several other equally characteristic, though not equally wicked, relatives or persons. And that irrational prejudice against the gamekeeper (he is One, his name only is Legion) is rightly introduced, however wrongly felt. The