

DAY'S END and Other Stories. By H. E. BATES.

8 × 5½, 286 pp. Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d. n.

These stories are not so good as they might be, in view of the promise of Mr. Bates's first book ("The Two Sisters," reviewed on August 8, 1926), but their thought is again poetic and original; they have the same freshness and great descriptive beauty, though there is not much that is solid in them. Nearly all of them deal with things of the country—fuel-gatherers, a village idiot, the baker's wife at a fair, an old man dying on his small farm. But they are not rustic like Mr. T. F. Powys's stories; nor "earthy." People and ideas, images rather than facts and passions occupy Mr. Bates. The themes of all the stories are rather queer and unexpected, dealing with immature things, odd things, out-of-the-way yet common-or-garden things. "The Fuel-Gatherers" and "The Idiot" and "The Baker's Wife" hang most together, but some of the other stories contain phrases or images that remain deeper in the mind, induce the attention more "to the remembrance of poignant things." By their inexpressiveness and yet artistic economy Mr. Bates's writings have that "illusion of vague profundity" which Mr. Santayana has spoken of as a characteristic of youthful sensibility. But he has undoubtedly found the way in which he should write, and the more he writes like himself the better.