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satisfying in itself, but leaving behind it a strong desire to explore Cheshire's little-known beauties for oneself.

The fact that any novel has been deemed worthy of a £2,000 prize tends perhaps to make one more than usually critical. It would be interesting to inquire how many masterpieces have amassed so much. Let it be said at once, however, that **Miss Elizabeth Seifert's Young Doctor** (Collins, 7s. 6d.) is worthy of the prize. Like most novels dealing candidly with the medical profession from within, it has universal interest. Its principal character is Anthony Evelyn McNeill ("Annie" to offensive comrades), a young Canadian physician, personally attractive and enthusiastic in his profession. With something of Don Quixote in his ideals he naturally falls foul of much that is venial in the small-town life of Darcey, Missouri, where, as in most self-satisfied communities, any suggestion of possible improvement is taken as personal insult. Perhaps the most important question which the book leaves to the reader is, "How often do medical ethics compel a doctor to turn a blind eye on the incompetence of his colleagues?"

**Swallow's Eaves**, by **Mr. R. Cameron Ward** (Hodder and Stoughton, 7s. 6d.), is the story of a fortnight's holiday spent by two London girls on a small Derbyshire farm. The girls are of different class and circumstances. Nancy is a genuine worker and Jean a London butterfly. That Jean should prove a temptation to Richard the farmer, to whom the other girl is more evidently suited, is inevitable, but no hearts are broken and both heads are wiser for the experience. It is a well-told story, sound in country atmosphere, with well contrasted characters.

## JOHN BROPHY'S STORIES

Reviews by H. E. BATES

**M**R. JOHN BROPHY, known chiefly as a novelist, is nevertheless an intelligent enough writer to be perfectly at home in the practice of the short story. His volume, **The Queer Fellow** (Collins, 7s. 6d.), is a selection that represents about one third of his output in the short fiction form over the last ten years: i.e., about forty stories in all, together with prefaces, notes, and an appendix of "circumstantial notes on the origins of these stories." These notes are very honest, interesting, and self-revealing. Unlike some other writers, Mr. Brophy finds it impossible to create in the absolute sense, and is thus a writer of observation rather than imagination. He needs contacts with people and places before the spark in him is set off, and in this way his stories come. He sees an invalid watching the lions being fed at the Zoo, and is powerfully struck by the expression in his face: the result is the penetrative, almost horrible story, *The Lions Are Fed at Noon*. He meets a young woman on the bus, and pays her fare: result, *Half a Crown*. This keen sense of response to human activity is constantly active and gives him stories whose beginnings are firmly based in reality, so that his work is never mushy or loosely conceived, but always firm, spirited, and full of attraction. A good volume this, and doubly interesting because of the notes on the stories' origins.

I do not think Mr. Brophy would claim to be a poet; whereas **Mr. A. E. Coppard's** whole grandeur and failure as a short story writer lies in the fact that he is, and never has been and never can be anything else. Mr. Coppard must be the veteran of present-day story writers who still count, but he remains absurdly and flippantly young in spirit, so that his new

volume, **You Never Know, Do You?** (Methuen, 7s. 6d.), has still something of that fantastic beauty and slap-stick zest that are associated with volumes like *Clorinda Walks in Heaven* and *Fishmonger's Fiddle*, which swept us off our feet. The difference now is that Mr. Coppard, older and perhaps slightly less clear-seeing, places more faith in the allegorical than in the plain painting of mother earth, at which I shall never tire of praising him as a master. But however you look at him, Coppard is still Coppard, and neither side of the Atlantic can claim another author quite like him. Only he could have written the twenty-three stories in this book, and I rejoice because here, at least, the allegorical has less place than it has sometimes had in his later work, with a consequent increase in attraction and quality.

**The God With Four Arms** (Barker, 7s. 6d.) introduces us to **Mr. H. T. W. Bousfield**, one of those cosmopolitan-minded writers who are at once at home in all capitals and with all kinds of people and all the more startling kinds of human activity. Where these fellows gain their knowledge of criminals in Rio, mysterious Greek islands, and millionaires' yachts is very mystifying. If they can carry it off well, with slick phraseology, a little poison, a murder or two and some mystery, as Mr. Bousfield does, all well and good. Plenty of people demand their short stories like that, and Mr. Bousfield can satisfy them.

Lastly, without any doubt, a master: Gorki. To have collected stories representative of his many phases from 1894 down to 1924 cannot have been an easy task, since Gorki revised much, was translated badly, or was often not translated at all; but the job has been well done by Avrahm Yarmolinsky and Baroness Moura Budberg in **A Book of Short Stories by Maxim Gorki** (Cape, 10s. 6d.). The most famous stories are here, and some not previously translated. To read again after a long interval a masterpiece like *Twenty-six Men and a Girl* and to find its beautiful quality unchanged is a rare treat. There is a preface by Mr. Aldous Huxley, but it seems to me remote in its detached scientific analogy from the tender and rather child-like spirit in Gorki, the poet.

## MODERN GARDENS

There is a story about a newly-married couple who engaged an aged gardener and told him they did not want lobelia or calceolarias or red geraniums. He gasped in a horrified tone: "Why, you must be Bolsheviks!" That would amuse **Mr. Charles Eley**, who in **Twentieth Century Gardening** (Country Life, 12s. 6d.) discusses fashions in the layout of lawns and beds and borders, and shows how they have changed. But he might admit to a regret that the combination the young couple barred has so completely disappeared to-day in up-to-date gardens. Modern methods do not always please him. He goes over a very wide ground and gives excellent advice, though sometimes it will be hard to follow. For example, he says: "Beware of any plants that are not absolutely hardy." Would he exclude veronicas from gardens in southern England just because they happen to have perished almost everywhere during last winter? He reckons that severe cold occurs every ten or fifteen years. If a shrub lasts that long, and gives pleasure, one can afford to lose it. Mr. Eley rightly considers gardening as a serious occupation, not a mere pastime. His scorn is stirred by people who send five pounds to the local nurseryman and ask him to "plant their garden." He has not much more patience with those who employ a good gardener and give him a free hand. He knows that the greatest joy of a garden is to have made it yourself.