

lection of short stories shows the writer's appreciation of the value of not ending the narrative. Each story is an episode, generally taken from a married life, which, while complete in itself, leaves to the reader the privilege—almost the necessity—of finishing the tale. They are exquisitely done things, sometimes perhaps too ostentatiously decorated with description, and occasionally lacking a nicety in the choice of words, but, for all that, excellent studies. They tantalize because they insist on continuing after the finis mark; they irritate because they are so short; but most of all they charm because they are so real.

Edgar Lee Masters devotes more than half of "The Open Sea" (Macmillan) to a psychological exploration into the mind of Lincoln's assassin to show that behind that murder there was the same decision which impelled Brutus to join in the killing of Cæsar. Almost a score of poems are devoted to this. Before now Masters has shown his admiration for Lincoln, and even here it manifests itself time and again. Because of this admiration, the cold scientific treatment of the historic incident brings a doubt as to the poet's sincerity. He seems to have a desire to surprise and shock. The same tendency is apparent in those verses which tell the other side of New Testament miracles—the business failure of the baker and fishmonger when the multitude was fed, is one of them. Delightful as these poems are, one feels that Masters did write them to jolt the orthodox. But about the "Monody on the Death of William Marion Reedy" there can be no doubt. In this there is sincere expression, such as has brought the worshipers to Masters's feet. The poet, for the most part, seems almost a stranger in this

book, which may, after all, be but an indication of versatility.

After a rambling and confused introduction, Ernst von Wildenbruch does some remarkably fine work in "Envy" (Four Seas). It is not reminiscent of childhood, this story of the two little brothers, it is a recreation of it. The reader too feels the outside world dimly unimportant for the moment, and the intensity and passion, the love and cruelty of children to be the realities. The vividness of its style gives it an Ancient Mariner sort of fascination, and the translation from the German is so well done that one is not conscious of its being a translation at all.

The Bookfellows have published an anthology called "The Poet's Pack", which is meant to represent the best work of its members. The material was assembled by a contest to which more than a thousand poems were submitted. These were pruned down to one hundred and might easily have been made even less. There are few familiar names among the contributors but some promising work from new writers—perhaps a half-dozen poems altogether that make the collection worth while.

With a razored intellectual scalpel, Remy de Gourmont operates on modern thought to remove the growths which hamper clear reasoning. Convention—as a general term, not relating specifically to sex—is the matter through which the incision is made to reach the cancer. Nor, in "Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas", translated by William Aspinwall Bradley (Harcourt, Brace), is there any anæsthetic administered to lessen the pain. For this reason, the

operation is apt to be serious, even dangerous, on those whose conventions are the thickest. But the treatment, painful though it may be, should prove efficacious for those with the temerity to allow the surgeon to cut.

"Simon Called Peter" by Robert Keable (Dutton) is the story of a smug and conventional minister who leaves England for the war and returns transformed by his experience with "publicans and sinners". In most respects the book is typical of the modern realistic school; it brooks no barriers in its endeavors after "frankness" and does not shudder at recounting the most unsavory and most unnecessary details of the life of its hero. The novel is interesting, although in places somewhat tedious; it presents for our inspection characters that are undoubtedly real, although by no means always agreeable; it is valuable chiefly as an authentic record of experiences in the war and as a testimony to the devastating moral effects of the conflict.

Marguerite E. Harrison's "Marooned in Moscow" (Doran) is an interesting, impartial, and exceedingly readable account of experiences in the Soviet Republic. Composed in a straightforward journalistic style, it gives one vivid glimpses of Russia as it is today; of the habits of the people and the workings of the government; of Russian methods of education, amusement, and punishment. The narrative is enlivened with numerous personal anecdotes that make it as entertaining as a piece of fiction. While Mrs. Harrison is by no means communistic in her leanings, she exhibits a tolerance that gives her book distinct value as a criticism of Bolshevism and Bolshevistic institutions.

In his essay on dancing, which prefaces "Poems of the Dance" (Knopf), Louis Untermeyer bewails the conventions which have compelled the metamorphosis of primitive abandon, and so creates an anticipatory delight for verses of unrepressed ages. Edward R. Dickson's anthology, however, is made up almost entirely of the expression of poets who knew nothing of the free bodies of days when neither flesh nor mind was bound in corset, and, to that extent, is disappointing. The sound of jungle music is not heard, nor are interpreting forms enraptured in tribal rites clearly or often seen. There is too much posturing; too little madness.

The quarrel between two great men is explained, if such a thing can be explained at all, in "The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence", edited by Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche (Boni and Liveright). The world looks for things constructive, and a quarrel being the reverse its exploitation is dull. But anything which lifts the veil to reveal the workings of master minds is interesting, and this the book in a measure accomplishes.

A haunting memory of O. Henry seems to persist through "Harlequin and Columbine" (Doubleday, Page)—a story written by Booth Tarkington about ten years ago, and now published in book form. Even a surprise ending is added to throw its weight with the atmospheric suggestion, making recognition of the many-sided Tarkington of 1922 more difficult. It is a delightful bit of a story of exaggerated types from a stage and a once-upon-a-time metropolitan boarding house, with just enough satire varnishing it here and there to keep it from being "sweet".