

have committed his characters to such involved and unwieldy dialogue; there would actually have been more reality in the story if the characters had expressed themselves in a plain, unidiomatic English, and if Mr. Kelllett's astonishingly rich and authentic detail had been allowed to speak for itself.

"SIR!" SHE SAID by Alec Waugh (FARRAR & RINEHART. \$1.00)

IT is somewhat surprising that a writer of Mr. Waugh's talents should have descended not once or twice into the dusty arena known as the Problem Of The Modern Girl; but here he is again, apparently quite content. He tells the story of two sisters, one flighty and pretty and very young, the other sober and somewhat older. The elder sister "sins" and the younger marries respectably; and it all happens in a London which is very nearly the real thing, inhabited by very nearly the real people—"very nearly" being the yawning gulf which is fixed between a good novel and a fair story. Mr. Waugh raises a dollar's worth of dust; but if he has anything really serious to say about the modern girl, he should try an earlier style. He seems to have forgotten that quite a number of people found courage and sincerity and at least the intimations of important writing in *The Loom of Youth*.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

WOMAN UNDER GLASS by Virginia Hersch (HARPERS. \$2.50)

THIS is a biography of St. Teresa de Ávila in the form of a novel. With an agreeable historical fidelity Miss Hersch, who recently novelized the life of El Greco under the title *Bird of God*, has been content to trace over the line of her heroine's career and to take almost no liberties with it. A great many of the speeches of St. Teresa, of St. John of the Cross, and others, are simply copied from their writings. For this reason, as well as be-

cause Miss Hersch writes competently, in a pseudo-poetic manner which is unobtrusive enough, one experiences no difficulty in reading what she has written. At times she is graceful, at times acute. She seems capable simultaneously of detachment and reverence.

Why, then, does *Woman under Glass* convey to the reader so little? Why does it leave him with less of an impression of St. Teresa than he would receive from the barest account in a *Lives of the Saints*? It must be because Miss Hersch has essayed an art-form and has in no way been successful. If one looks closely at her work one detects a deplorable confusion of styles. She borrows but she makes no attempt to assimilate. Here she has drawn upon impressionist criticism, here upon imagist poetry—and here upon the movies! Nothing is passed through a common crucible, nothing is created. And what an author fails to create a reader fails to retain. In the end we realize that even her historical fidelity is not a virtue; it is but the sign of her failure, disclosing *why* she was content to copy. *Woman under Glass* is not a new portrait of St. Teresa; it is a mere tracing with modern embellishments.

UNHAPPY WIND by Nelson Antrim Crawford (COWARD-MCCANN. \$2.50)

FEW readers of this second novel by the author of *A Man of Learning* will fail to observe that it was written in the shadow of Mr. James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. There is a constant similarity to the experiences of Stephen Dedalus, Mr. Joyce's protagonist, not only in what Winfrid Cartwright, Mr. Crawford's protagonist, sees and hears, but in what he feels as well. *Unhappy Wind*, moreover, does not wander from the path established by Mr. Joyce in what it relates of a life from early childhood to early manhood; and the soul of Winfrid, like the soul of Stephen, is made the battleground of sex and religion. Winfrid is an unusually sensitive boy, not appreciated by his

thers. As he arrives at adolescence he arrives at scepticism also, but to please his hysterically puritanical mother he continues to accompany her to the services of the Protestant Episcopal church. Then he meets Marjorie, who is preternaturally High Church and preternaturally libidinous. With her he floats into the environs of Romanism—and into sin. While he is debating whether to become an Episcopal priest the war arrives, putting an end to his affair with Marjorie, to that phase of his life, and to the novel itself.

One of the advertised features of *Unhappy Wind* is its hero's peculiarity of making his emotional perceptions in terms of color. For instance, if his mother is calm the sound of her voice is gray; but if she is annoyed the sound of her voice is red or orange. This phenomenon might be interesting enough if Mr. Crawford did not permit it to degenerate into a crude means of telling what might have been told more simply and more tastefully by direct statement. On the whole, it might be said that he lacks artistry in the proportion that he lacks detachment. Because his book in a bad sense is "personal", even at times descending to pay off old scores, as a work of art it is abortive and raw.

BRIDAL POND by *Zona Gale* (KNOPF. \$2.50)

MOST of these stories are concerned with life in very small Wisconsin towns, and most of their claim to our attention is founded upon the local color they contain. The particular kind of local color which is at once most intensely provincial and most generally interesting is that which has to do with the good housewives of these towns. There may be some connection between the intimate interest that Miss Gale takes in housewifely matters and the fact that practically all of her stories are addressed primarily to women readers. In any case, she is unmistakably most pertinent when dealing with those nasal-voiced Katy Town "ladies" who say

"Well, sir" when addressing other ladies, whose deepest pride is in the cleanliness of their homes and in their cooking, who dream of buying a new carpet for the church, and who pass on recipes from mother to daughter as precious heirlooms.

The title story was included in the O. Henry Memorial collection for 1928. Though some of the other stories apparently come from an earlier period, all of them are the work of a practised, if not altogether conscientious hand. The dénouements are about evenly divided between those which are sentimentally ironic and those which are simply sentimental. One could wish that Miss Gale, who still lives in Wisconsin and whose attitude on the whole is so attractive, had remained a provincial in soul as well as in body; that she had not permitted her taste to be compromised by the dubious standards of the metropolis—particularly by those of the women's magazines.

GERALD SYKES

THESE GENERATIONS by *Elinor Mor-
daunt* (BREWER & WARREN. \$2.50)

THIS novel is written with ease and grace and a competent style. Interest is sustained throughout. The atmosphere of the hacienda in Central America is beautifully done from the engagement party that opens the story to the death of Gran'mère that closes it. Yet the plot is flimsy, and only two of the characters, Gran'mère and her husband Henri de Rochecourt, are clearly etched against the intricate background of the novel. Gran'mère, indefinitely present throughout the book, is the means of holding the interest in the inconsequential happenings in which the other characters are engaged. The granddaughters—Felicia, unnaturally undersexed, Carolina, oversexed, and Anna, intended to be normal—were undoubtedly invented in order that the plot might have characters for its execution. When Gran'mère holds the center of the stage the story leaves little to be desired.