



MARCH COST.

Photo by Dorothy Wilding.

effect of his death on several groups of people. (This last, though episodic, is far the best.) March Cost's style is

The story takes place between sunset and sunrise on a November day. The first book describes the reverie of a surgeon tired after a day's work, in which we are given a vivid and surprisingly complete picture of his life. The second book is his dream, when he has fallen for the last time asleep. The third shows the

supple and efficient. She can present a character precisely in a few lines. But her book belongs to a large and dangerous type. It provides a day-dream. Day-dreaming, especially the standardised day-dreaming of novel-reading and picture-going, has disastrous results. The dreams are manufactured by undisciplined fancy, the play of which, even in this case, cannot be called mysticism. The chorus of praise on the cover, which includes a don, a distinguished surgeon, and a celebrated physician, shows that not only the less educated are becoming addicts.

Only because she is at once more sincere, more able and more aware than they, is it just that March Cost should thus be made a scapegoat for innumerable novelists—these other five for instance—with less than half her talent. If we must buy day-dreams, hers are some of the best. But it is well to remember that they are a spiritual drug with a pernicious effect. Works of art are nourishing; and I believe that March Cost, if she wishes, is capable of making them.

SIX NOVELS BY MEN

Lament for Adonis.

By Edward Thompson. 7s. 6d. (Ernest Benn.)

Grope Carries On.

By F. O. Mann. 8s. 6d. (Faber & Faber.)

Sticky Fingers.

By Dyke Acland. 7s. 6d. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

No Quarter.

By Alec Waugh. 7s. 6d. (Cassell.)

The Rocky Road.

By John Brophy. 7s. 6d. (Jonathan Cape.)

Poor Tom.

By Edwin Muir. 7s. 6d. (Dent.)

There may be no distinctions of border nor breed nor birth—nor sex in the kingdom of art, but the interesting circumstance remains that of these six novels four at least could only have been written by men.

I take Mr. Thompson's War novel first because it illustrates specifically masculine virtues and—I will say—characteristics instead of weaknesses, since the last word is the more debatable. The writer's previous novel, "These Men Thy Friends," has, I see, been described as "Without question, the noblest piece of fiction directly inspired by active service in the War," and "Lament for Adonis" has also that quality of richly poetic idealism which merits the same epithet.

The two young men, Warren Remfry (Bunny) and Martin Chapman, are superb physically and morally, embodying in their persons all the best qualities of the English race: if they lose their tempers they apologise; they are worshipped in the ranks; always they play the game.

The two American girls whom they meet in the safety zone of Jerusalem—the period is that preceding Allenby's last successful break

through—are also thoroughly nice girls. They even leave an informal entertainment because a song is too suggestive for their ideas of what is proper and seemly. But being American, there are certain misunderstandings which have to be overcome: on one occasion Bunny rescues Cynthia



EDWIN MUIR.

By Norah Hoult

from an ex-public school-boy who doesn't behave as well as an ex-public school-boy should.

To be candid, none of Mr. Thompson's individuals ever wins more from us than that respectful attention we are bound to bestow on those whose virtues and courage are so estimable. Perhaps if these masculine Englishmen were not so consciously aware of being Englishmen, of never talking about their feelings and so on, one would get to know them a little better. As it is the story, and also the conversation, which might be chiefly interpreted with the one characteristic sentence: "There was a cheery exchange of greetings and gossip," amounts to very little.

What is impressive in the book is its fine integrity, the stirring description towards the end of Allenby's advance, and the sense that one is in contact with a scholarly and sensitive mind.

When Mr. Albert Grope made his first bow to the public he did not unfortunately come my way. In this book, in which we meet him in the capacity of one of the strong, though not silent, business men who show Civil Servants how to win the War—in the Department of Minor Equipment—he is certainly consistently delightful. The struggle between the Admiralty and the War Office for the person of one, Mudd; the minor skirmishes over typists, carpets and precedence; the masterly (or otherwise) handling of deputations, all make excellent comedy. And the descriptions of Mr. Grope's colleagues show the hand of the genuine creator. There is the gentlemanly Mr. Stuart-Brophy, whose first meeting with Mr. Grope is unfortunate for the latter:

"Oh, you've never heard of Baileyburgh School, haven't you?" he snarled. "A chap like you wouldn't, I suppose? Nor of Eton or Harrow either? No, nor of anything else! Well, don't wear that tie again; that's all! Understand? It isn't done! Not among gentlemen! See! Don't wear it again," he repeated.

Mr Grope's relations with his elderly wife and the two typists, the professional vamp and the more gentle and subtle Alice, are perhaps interpreted a trifle over realistically



F. O. MANN.

Photo by J. W. Maycock.



Author of—

Prose:

- "DEWER RIDES"—a novel.
- "THE JEALOUS GHOST"—a novel.
- "THE GARDEN"—a novel.
- "THE ENGLISH CAPTAIN"—short stories.
- "DON JUAN AND THE WHEELBARROW"—short stories.
- "THE BROTHERS"—a novel.

Verse:

- "DUBLIN DAYS."
- "THE LOWERY ROAD."
- "DIFFICULT LOVE."
- "NORTHERN LIGHT."
- "SELECTED POEMS."

L. A. G. STRONG.
(By Gwen Evans.)



Author of "HIGH TABLE," "ITHURIEL'S HOUR," etc.

JOANNA CANNAN



JANE OLIVER.
Author of "To-Morrow's Woods" (Collins).

to match with the light-hearted mood of the rest of the book. Mr. Grope, indomitably faithful though indomitably pursued, would appear to be more in accordance with the expectations. But this perhaps is a feminine criticism?

In "Sticky Fingers" Mr. Acland introduces us to a world in

which few women are likely to feel much at home. It is the world of big finance, of mergers and speculations with, as a foil, the section of society which gambles with hunters and polo ponies as others gamble with shares. The unattractive business man, Husting, wants more power and more money, and, since he has made a small fortune in the provinces, is given his chance at high finance by a Jewish financier. But he overreaches himself, tries to cheat his masters, and in the end goes to prison.

Meanwhile his wife pursues her own ends. She pays the Honourable Mrs. Yarbury-Lincomb to introduce her to the County, and for a brief while also acquires that lady's handsome and unscrupulous husband. The Yarbury-Lincombs themselves, however, do very well out of Husting's money, and altogether one is inclined to agree with "Mousie's" final summing up: "What a crew, we are—sticky-fingered, every one of us. Mr. Husting was the best of the lot." The values, one might add, are masculine, cynical and robust.

Mr. Alec Waugh usually writes novels which cater for the tastes of women far more efficiently than do most story-tellers of whatever sex. But in his latest tale he has profitably exchanged the hot-house atmosphere of the Riviera and intrigues of married women for a breezy and swift yarn of piracy, slave barter and colonial history.

FIRST NOVELS

Pilate's Wife.

By Jean Damase. 7s. 6d. (Duckworth.)

Snow on Water.

By Merle Eyles. 7s. 6d. (Faber & Faber.)

Alas, Lucinda.

By Seth Baldwin. 7s. 6d. (Archer.)

City Wise.

By Micheline Keating. 7s. 6d. (Barker.)

Wards of the Outer March.

By Kay Glasson Taylor. 6s. 6d. (Angus & Robertson.)

The Solid Man.

By O'Reilly Coghlan. 7s. 6d. (Faber & Faber.)

"Pilate's Wife" is, I think, the most distinguished first novel that I have been privileged to review. That is not to say that it is necessarily the most entertaining or the best written, or that it is likely to achieve anything in the nature of a sales record. I imagine that M. Damase, as he feels his feet more surely on his new literary route, will produce novels that will, from the point of view of literary craftsmanship, knock this one into a cocked hat. Deeply interested though I was in the book, I have to confess that there were times when I, like the lady in the story, was bored by the historical discourses in which Alexandre, the hero, so freely indulges. Nor do I think the author has been true to his original theme. He could not surely, with all his intimate knowledge of the Gospels, have called the book "Pilate's Wife," and have forgotten that Pilate's wife played a rather remarkable part in the Gospel drama; yet the wife of the Pilate of this story has nothing whatever

Starting with one, Roger, who runs away from his peasant home in the South of France in the middle of the seventeenth century to engage in piracy and raids in the West Indies, he takes us through three generations of bold, bad buccaneers. Some of Roger's descendants ally themselves with coloured women; some turn snobs and sit at home enjoying their prosperity; but always there is one of the family, man or woman, who prefers to gamble rather than to become a respectable lady or gentleman. In the end we leave one scion racketeering in Chicago, another juggling with shares in Marseilles. It is all brilliantly done, full of colour and life.

Mr. John Brophy divides his attention between Liverpool and Dublin. While his hero, Anthony Lynch, is in the former place, he is a respectable lecturer at the university, discomposed by the accounts of Black and Tan atrocities in Ireland, but still believing that pacifism is the Golden Rule. And he pursues, rather heavily, a love affair with Catherine Camba, a rich man's daughter.

But Anthony's brother, Brian, goes over to Ireland and throws in his lot with Sinn Féin. Anthony follows in order to protect him, and arrives just in time to see him before he is hanged at Kilmainham. He himself is clapped into the same place: the young lady from Liverpool, disguised as a man, follows him, and in the end they are both killed while trying to escape. The melodramatic conclusion does not however overcome a certain tepid quality about the whole story.

Mr. Edwin Muir's first modern novel belongs to that rare class of book over which one pauses to ponder: a book which is capable of producing mental and spiritual excitement. For here is a subtlety of mind and a fineness of analysis which is rarely encountered.

The story is of two brothers living in Glasgow before the War. The one, Mansie, is successful: neither very sincere nor very intelligent, he makes the best of all his worlds: Socialism and social contacts, Religion and respectability. The other, Tom, losing his girl to Mansie, turns increasingly to drink. He falls from a tram, and after a painful lingering dies from a tumour on the brain. But through his death Mansie makes a step towards a greater understanding. So much for an inadequate summary of a valuable and original book.

By R. S. Forman

to do with the fate of the unfortunate "nabi," who is done to death by the ecclesiastical authorities in Syria, when the local representative of Western Government washes his hands of him at the behest of his superior. True, Madame Benoist-Douville has a part to play in the story, and her amusing (and very French) *affaire* with Alexandre is most entertainingly and skilfully woven into the more vital matters with which M. Damase deals; but it is not the part suggested by the title, nor, I feel sure, the part which the author originally had in mind.

M. Damase has here presented us with a profound and first-hand study of a deeply interesting subject, giving us a novel and highly illuminating sidelight on the centuries-old problem of the clash of East and West. He himself is, as the short biographical note which prefaces the book tells us, very completely equipped to tackle the subject, as he has devoted his life to its study ever since the end of the Great War. The angle from which he looks at it is that, particularly, of a



MERLE EYLES.