

for. But the scope of their art is sadly limited: hair no longer 'curls lovely'; it 'lies well,' or is 'easily mastered.' One day, perhaps, when the war is over and the minor horrors are no longer to be apprehended, we may put razors aside and bring out our tall hats. We do not shave as Alexander's army did, lest the enemy should seize us by the beard; the army orders of to-day are less practical, and the toothbrush moustache has neither use nor beauty.

The Saturday Review

But a nation in the trenches cannot indulge in beards, and flowing locks below tin hats are abhorrent to our taste. Will reaction come in this as in so much else, and peace rejoice the heart of the barber with a new greasier and curlier régime? But whatever happens let's stick to calling him a barber and leave the 'hairdresser' to those whose concern about personal appearance is more appropriate to a woman than to a man.

MR. SWINNERTON'S NEW BOOK*

'BECKWITH' was a small suburban town encircling a common. The men go to 'town' every day; the women form their little circles and occupations. Near the station lives Miss Lampe, an inquisitive, malicious old maid, who observes what train everyone catches, and who walks back with who and what young people seem 'attracted' by each other, and how it was time that this or that girl got married. The other ladies are weaker editions of Miss Lampe except in so far as they have children of their own and become predatory on their behalf. In Mr. Swinnerton's vision nothing big, death or sorrow or ruin, ever enters this chattering world, and, so far, his vision is incomplete. Death lays his icy hand on shopkeepers as often as on other people, and ruin rather oftener.

However, perhaps these things do not specially concern Louis Vechantnor or his cousin Dorothy. Louis is the

son of the Vechantnors, the ruling family of the place. Dorothy is the daughter of William, the descendant of a Vechantnor 'bad hat' of some generations before. William inadvertently sets up as a grocer in the same district as the main branch of the family. Hence a social awkwardness. To call or not to call, that is the question. The occasion is one that causes old Mr. Vechantnor to blurt out against his son the pent-up grievance of years about his outlook, his mentality, his Oxford ways, his thinking himself clever. Louis, who is unconscious of anything special in outlook or pretense, feels as if he had been suddenly struck in the face by his father, with whom he had believed himself on the best of terms. It is the revelation of division and the beginning of a rift. In this mood of hostility Louis goes to visit these grocer cousins, and finds the parents friendly, but the children resentful. The book is the story of three dramas, the effort of Beckwith to glare and stampede the

* *Shops and Houses.* By Frank Swinnerton. Methuen. 7s.

grocer family out of existence, the effort of Veronica Hughes to captivate Louis and make him 'nice,' *i.e.*, conform with the local feeling and 'drop' the grocers, and the battle between Louis and his father. In detailing this last, Mr. Swinnerton seems to have forgotten that he had excepted the Vechantnors from the Beckwith spirit. Emmanuel Vechantnor is as meanly repressive and obstinate as anyone else.

The tragedy, if such a tangle of frustrations, perversions, and furtiveness can be called a tragedy, of Veronica, is well told. The jealousy of the three sisters, the cheap trivial ways, their re-

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pressed instincts, find expression, their hysteria, their inability to shake loose from the unformulated code that holds them, and the appalling vacuity of their conversation have a ghastly truth.

In the end Beckwith triumphs. Perhaps the best scenes in the book are those of the clacking circles round the tea-table. But let us hope that the war at least has begun the doom of the tea-party as a profession, and that Mr. Swinnerton's book will have the value of a historical document. For with the trumpets of peace in our ears, and the long lists of the Roll of Honor in our memory, it is appalling to think of Beckwith rearing up its head again.

IN CAELO QUIES, IN TERRA PAX

BY J. E. G. DE MONTMORENCY

THE news that the beginnings of peace had come, that the German Empire had gone up in flames, that the long struggle against the forces of Antichrist had ended in that triumph for righteousness which faith had never doubted, came to Wiltwater in quite reasonable time, but it spread very slowly. The word Armistice created some confusion. It is not a local word. And the news came early in the week when folk were busy with many things. All were satisfied that things were going very well and did not worry. If Armistice was signed it was likely to be captured, and evidently it was a very important place. Meantime there was ploughing to be done, any amount of it, and some more of the moor had to be reclaimed for food

supply, and there were a good many folk who had not enough wood in and some had left their turf-cutting for a fine November day, a foolish proceeding, and then there were hedges to clear and winter sowing, and all sorts of indoor work getting ready for the winter, and special care of priceless ducks and fowls against foxes, bold and hungry this year. Indeed, what with lack of hands and plenty of fine days, the war was neglected so long as it went along well. So the Armistice was signed and the face of Europe was changed without anyone in the village being much the wiser till the weekly paper drifted in at the end of the week. Dr. Battle, of course, knew all about it, and so did the doctor and the rector of Little Greenmoor, but as it