

vert the devil." And if, "in 1898, the London Society spent £28,439 on the conversion of 28 Jews" (p. 296), the Jewish convert is worth more to his new than to his old co-religionists.

More serious is the apostasy of those who find baptism the only avenue to social or material advancement. But most alarming is the indifference that has become widespread. Judaism is an exacting religion, and when its devotees are emphatically a minority, its observance becomes extremely difficult. In addition, "the decadence of religious feeling that characterizes the world in general has infected the communities of Israel."

To combat this indifference, reform Jews have "Occidentalized" Judaism and made it easier to practice. Yet "all the concessions to the modern spirit" have hardly arrested the disintegration. On the contrary, reform, by abolishing historic customs and minimizing the importance of others . . . facilitates the drift of its members . . . to less exacting cults . . . or to the easy-going world of free thought" (p. 288). So the author thinks that orthodox Judaism is too exacting to survive, while reform Judaism scarcely endeavors to. After proving to his satisfaction that religion is no longer the tie that binds, he offers Zionism, or the national rehabilitation of the Jew in Palestine, as the solution of the Jewish problem.

But I fear he overdraws conditions. Zionism might be the only remedy if Judaism were doomed. But is it indeed doomed? More than half the Jews are still living in an intensely Jewish atmosphere. True, on entering the Western world they may become less devout. But is there not a reciprocal effect? Do they not revitalize the moribund Jewish communities? With the almost endless reservoirs to draw from, and with migration as the disseminating force, Judaism is far from extinction. Zionism should be the supplement of Judaism, not its substitute. In the East it can give new vitality to the religion, and add meaning to the dictum "All Israel are brethren." In the West, Zionism, as its founder, Dr. Herzl, said, can be "the return to Judaism prior to the return to the Jewish land." That, after all, is the best way of arresting disintegration.

In general the author has stated the Jewish position most efficiently. Jewish wrongs he describes feelingly yet not plaintively; Jewish rights he urges insistently yet without servility. He makes statistics eminently readable, and from a multitude of loose details he constructs a unified narrative of the varied experiences and the complex problems of a remarkable people. His is undoubtedly the best and most comprehensive volume in recent years on the Jew.

C. DAVID MOTT.

## Farce by Mr. Wells

*Bealby, a Holiday*, by H. G. Wells. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.35 net.

IT is only fair to put the reader on his guard by confessing that this review is written by a standpatter. My taste in farce is for the old-fashioned technique. When I learn, very early in a Labiche play, that the old gentleman on the stage has lost by theft, every day for twenty years, thirty-seven sous, I am unaccountably pleased. Likewise am I pleased by the economy of an author who reaps, in the last act or last chapter, whatever he has sown in the first. In the structure of a farce nothing can be too posterously neat and tight for my reactionary taste.

These remarks may be an explanation of my dissatisfaction with "Bealby." As farce it is unconscientious and

ragged. No sign of the deductive faculty at play. Given the start, the initial situation, there is no reason why what happened to Bealby should have happened to him. There are coincidences, as many as Mr. Wells wishes, but we are denied the pleasure of watching two separate processions of events marching toward their longed-for coincidence. The book ends by denying us the gratification of beholding a question answered, a logical design completed, a canvas exactly filled.

On the other hand, "Bealby" contains many good things which most farces lack. It contains, for example, a large number of characters described with a sharp amused eye, described so that we see both their peculiarities and the absurdity of their position in this world. And the book contains a decent amount of real Wells. Lady Luxton, recovering in bed from her disastrous week-end, studies "a new and very circumstantial pamphlet by Bishop Fowle on social evils," reads antivivisection literature, and re-reads the newspaper accounts of a colliery disaster.

"To such women as Lady Luxton," says Mr. Wells, "brought up in an atmosphere of refinement that is almost colorless, and living a life troubled only by small social conflicts and the minor violence of" her husband, Sir Peter, "blameless to the point of complete uneventfulness, and secure and comfortable to the point of tedium, there is something amounting to fascination in the wickedness and suffering of more normally situated people, there is a real attraction and solace in the thought of pain and stress, and as her access to any other accounts of vice and suffering was restricted, she kept herself closely in touch with the more explicit literature of the various movements for human moralization that distinguish our age. . . . The counterfoils of her cheque book witnessed to her gratitude for these vicarious sensations."

There are many equally good things, and equally characteristic, in "Bealby." They do not save the book, which isn't long, from seeming longish and here and there a little tedious. Yet I am glad I read it, because I shall forget the tedious places and remember the people, especially the tramp with whom Bealby roams the country.

M. F.

## John Galsworthy Satirizes

*The Little Man and Other Satires*, by John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.30 net.

NEGATIVE words come into one's head as one reads Mr. Galsworthy's new volume. These satires are unbitting, unwhimsical, unenergetic, unenjoying, rather unmalicious. The satire is quiet, a little etiolated, a little obvious, rooted in a generous pity for men and women whose lot would be easier if the amount of unimaginative pitilessness in the world were smaller.

Here and there one comes across beautiful bits of bright color among Mr. Galsworthy's delicate grays. Here is a dancer who comes to the Camp at Fennourès of the Fayoum: "Pretty she is as the dusk, as a tiger-cat, a fire-fly, a flower of the hibiscus, her skin but little darker than our own; her eyes clear agate-green, her teeth whiter than milk, a gold crescent through her right nostril, and her fine chin blue from tattooing." Here is another young woman, a courtesan of Karnak, seen in a lemon grove outside the walls, facing her judges: "Her short broad face, with its pale hair, was pretty and amiable; but the bistre-circled eyes of forget-me-not blue were tragic and furtive, passing from countenance to countenance with a frightened caress."

But the book's own color is more like the color of this passage: "The men are sleeping, huddled with the silent camels in dark clumps on the gray sand." Or of this: "Out beyond the dark excitement of those faces the peaceful sky is glittering with stars; the clear-cut palm-trees, under a moon still crescent, shiver in the wind."

Ten of the satires in this volume are called "studies of extravagance." Mr. Galsworthy gives us ten characters—the writer, the critic, the plain man, the superlative, the preceptor, the housewife, the latest thing, the perfect one, the competitor. They are studies of extravagance, if you like, but it is such a silver-point extravagance! While one reads one grows a little suspicious that the commoner process has been reversed in Mr. Galsworthy's case, that what he feels is newer than what he sees, except when he is seeing landscape or young women, that although his sensitiveness has been exposed to and has winced under particular persons, he has seen them more as not unfamiliar types.

The thing he is most sensitive to is insensitiveness to other people's suffering, to other people's interests and desires. Even his social pity is in this book not quite direct. Egotism and callousness are the most frequent objects of his satire. His attention is more often directed to them than to their causes or to the misery they do not relieve, directed most often to the insensitiveness of persons who don't feel social pity or imaginative sympathy. And there are traces of an inclination to condemn this world as a place which rather frequently condemns those who do feel social pity to a certain rather fine futility.

Nowadays one takes up any new book by Mr. Galsworthy with the same question in one's mind: Has he won free this time? And one puts this book down with this answer: Not this time.

Free from what? It would be hard to say. Only, as often as one comes into fresh contact with his distinguished talent, with its gray beautiful discretions, with his sensitiveness and refined pities, his dislike of egotism and thickness of skin, his gentleness toward age and weakness, his love of youth and fineness and the country and the sky, one waits, so hopefully, for the fire so delicately and reasonably laid to burst into flame. Could life but set a torch to Mr. Galsworthy, some energy imprisoned in him would be liberated. Perhaps his books would lose their fine flavor of inhibition, but they would gain a missing quality which would send a strong current through all the qualities he has already, would substitute something a little like ardor for something a little like constraint.

P. L.

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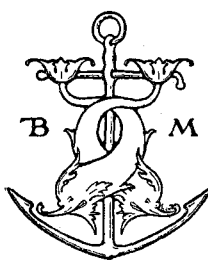
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