

tary upon such picturesque matters as the clap-dish, the blue-coats, tobacco, poisoning, and fashion of ear-rings for men. But these are minor flaws. The very appearance of Mr. Simpson's volume may, one hopes, tempt some people to "have a try at" Jonson who have been repelled by Mr. Smith.

S. C. C.

*Sarah and Her Daughter*, by Bertha Pearl. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

WHEN an astonishing portion of our fiction is intent on achieving qualities of prettiness and cleverness, it is a welcome experience to meet with a novel of American civilization which attempts an honest, factual revelation of situation and character. This much lies at the base of Bertha Pearl's first novel, *Sarah and Her Daughter*. The fact that it is wellnigh impossible for an outsider to know intimately the situation she has drawn, or to become intimate with the characters she has brought together in the story of the lives of the German Jew immigrant Sarah Mendel and her daughter, Minnie, adds another quality to the novel. It does more than present a partially new viewpoint of matters with which we are familiar, it brings a new range of material within our understanding. The book is important because of its competent knowledge of its material, because that material is a vital part of our civilization and not a temporary excrescence, and because it does its work well.

The setting of the story is sordid enough, and, superficially, familiar enough. The East Side is not primarily the situation of a pretty story, although it offers abundant opportunity for endless respectable sentimentalism. The character and life of an immigrant family is not subject to cleverness, although it presents much food for cynicism, but the environment of the industrial struggle turns out the substance of literature. As much tragedy, doubtless, lurks on Riverside Drive as on Second Avenue, but that sinister person is far easier fed on fifty dollars a week than on fifteen, and vastly the major part of our literature has dealt with the more decorative and facile sort of struggle.

Here is no décolleté flapper or flannel-clad youth who is given soul-spasms by his first glimpse of Shaw. Here are no laborious epigrams and extravagant entertainments. Centering around the mother and daughter, Miss Pearl has revealed the harsh, uncontrollable, and inescapable environment which surrounds the East Side Jew. This story of the Ghetto cannot be dismissed as "dismal." That were to misunderstand it as much as we have misunderstood its people. It is, in the first place, concerned with a rather grim business of living, a struggle within which one side is inexorable and the other determined, but the story has kept its human qualities. Here are poignances of humor and pathos, here is the naïvete of ignorance and that of differing standards, the courage of pride and the courage of defeat, here is an American book with a straight-forward story, in the main well told and without sentimentalism.

R. V. A. S.

### Contributors

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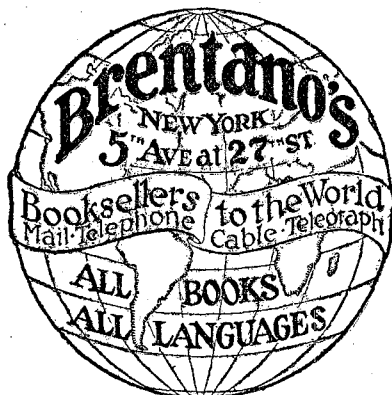
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