

taking. That talent has not failed him here. There are memorable passages of such detail: the Black Friday clash between the Suffragists and the police, Vivie's trial for arson, the judicial murder of Bertie Adams by order of von Bissing. Equally praise-worthy is the fine sense of justice in the author's warm-hearted advocacy of the women's movement. And there are occasional passages of shrewd and witty comment upon the failure of the pseudo-liberals of Mr. Asquith's cabinet to grasp the real significance of the suffrage war. Strangely enough, there is only the most hesitating grudging attention, quickly turned elsewhere, to the central problem posed twenty-two years ago by Mr. Shaw: the problem of Mrs. Warren's profession.

Judged as a work of art the book fails. The structure is stumbling and plodding; the style second-rate journalism. The characterization, with the admirable exception of the redoubtable Mrs. Warren herself (she shows Sir Harry's loving study of Dickens), is singularly superficial and conventional. The running commentary upon men and affairs is that of the average liberal-minded gentleman. His care for strict chronological accuracy sometimes plays Sir Harry false. For example, the Russo-Japanese War did not end in 1904; "twilight sleep" was not being employed so long ago as 1902. The book will probably succeed well in England, where many a prominent Londoner, considering this minor character and that and watching reality peer through the veil of realism, will whisper, Is it I? Is it I? But such methods of insuring temporary vogue seldom win permanent renown. S. C. C.

On the Makaloa Mat, by Jack London. New York: The Macmillan Co.

THE dregs of a genius are often remarkable for some positive quality, but the lees of a journalist's manuscripts are more frequently remarkable only for their mediocrity. This gentle platitude is well illustrated by Jack London's posthumous volume of Hawaiian stories, *On the Makaloa Mat*. The seven tales which make up the book represent some of the author's weirdest confusions. There is the commonplace misapprehension that local color will conceal a poor story; there is the blurring of qualities and characteristics inherent in the rule-of-thumb intellect; and there is a conversational straining which achieves a rare mixture of the King James version and Hiawatha.

As for the first confusion—in literature beyond a certain spectrum most of us are local-color blind. The unknown may pique the interest and lend a legitimate charm to the story, but it cannot do more. The story is fundamental; the overpainting merely a technique which may add brilliance. In these stories the glamour of Hawaii, now a bit threadbare, does not serve to conceal the subterfuge. The stories are originally dull. A mass of overhanging scenery, irrelevant detail, and attenuated suspense only obscures and paralyzes an incident that might be striking if told in a naked and unassuming style.

The medium of the tales is conversational narrative, but the sprightliness of conversation degenerates into guide-book fiction. Some of the description has the true Long-fellow ring, "Shorter than Bella was Martha a trifle, but the merest trifle, less queenly of port . . ." On the whole it is difficult to see why the author boycotts the simple, useful conventions of expression.

"This is probably the last volume of short stories by Jack London to appear. At Mr. London's death there were many unpublished manuscripts, but those that were suitable have now for the most part been issued." So state the publishers—conservatively. R. V. A. S.

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