

the chapter on restoration includes historical records, factual details and considered judgments. The story of the wax bust, Flora, attributed to Leonardo, has not previously (as far as I could trace) been so fully and carefully recorded; the conclusions are considered and supported by authorities.

Unfortunately, nothing links the subjects together except sensationalism, which is contradicted and defeated by the style, so that the book is unsatisfactory.

—John V. Trevor

ENGLISH, AMERICAN AND WELSH

MODERN ENGLISH SHORT STORIES, Selected by Derek Hudson; Oxford University Press. English price 6/- **WELSH SHORT STORIES**, Selected by Gwyn Jones; Oxford University Press. English price 6/- **COLLECTED STORIES**, by V. S. Pritchett; Chatto and Windus. English price 20/- **THE PRESENCE OF GRACE**, by J. F. Powers; Victor Gollancz. English price 13/6.

ANYONE who writes about the short story nowadays is likely to say a word for the traditional. Mr Hudson says it in introducing his World Classics collection of English stories of the past 25 years when he speaks of the dangers of "the era of plotlessness," which (he says) some of our most distinguished writers have seemed bent on establishing. The more important point, surely, is that the best stories read as if they had to be written and have what we generally call a universal significance. Judged by this standard, Mr Hudson's collection does not make me excited

about the English story today. It seldom communicates that mood of "almost hypnotic attention" on which, he says, the success of a story depends; too often the blood is thin or the bones show through. But a handful of stories which includes "The Basement Room," by Graham Greene, and "The Woman Who Had Imagination," by H. E. Bates, shows that there is still hope.

Gwyn Jones in a perceptive introduction claims that the Welsh story has plenty to say and a distinctive voice at a time when "an enfeeblement of imagination" and "a self-regarding cleverness" have reduced many English stories to a high-class whisper. Readers who are to enjoy the earlier stories and the more fantastic in this collection will need a particular sympathy with the Welsh; but the best of the rest are less limited by their regional origins and have all the qualities Mr Jones sees in them.

With a nice feeling for form, Mr Pritchett begins and ends his collection with two of the best things he has written, "The Sailor" and "Sense of Humour." Both show the English story at its lively best. Mr Pritchett's writing (it shouldn't be necessary to say) is vivid and economical, his characters come quickly to life, and while he doesn't lack compassion an infectious smile at the human comedy is never far away. His stories are well-shaped and rounded, too, if that's what you want; but they are not contrived—and

(continued on next page)

NEW ZEALAND BOOKS OF NOTE

DINNER DOESN'T MATTER, by Mary Scott - 12/6

The most popular New Zealand novelist has written a sequel to "Breakfast at Six."

(Also by Mary Scott: **Families Are Fun**, 11/6)

MY FIRST EIGHTY YEARS, by Helen Wilson 16/-

CHEERFUL YESTERDAYS, by O. T. J. Alpers 16/6

These two so different books have claims to be the best New Zealand autobiographies. Each of them presents with freshness and force the impact of a vivid personality. The Danish boy who successively becomes teacher, journalist, barrister and judge, is matched in tenacity of purpose by Helen Wilson, one of New Zealand's outstanding women.

MOONSHINE, by Helen Wilson - - - 10/6

Mrs Wilson's first novel is founded, like all her work, on personal experience. It is an exciting story, well told.

THEATRE IN DANGER, by Bruce Mason and John Pocock - - - 8/6

A brilliant discussion of the drama in general and the theatre, amateur and professional, in New Zealand.

ERIC LEE JOHNSON, with a Biographical Introduction by E. H. McCormick - - 18/6

This, the first book to be devoted to a New Zealand painter, has been warmly greeted.

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