

AMERICAN TYPES

An Alabaster Box, by Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman and Florence Morse Kingsley, is an admirable story of the life of a village made weak by resentment and gossip, even to the point of poverty and death, and then healed and made prosperous by love and unselfishness. The little town could not forgive and forget the banker who had misused the people's savings until, after he had been eighteen years in prison, his daughter went back to make reparation for the wrongs he had done. What she suffered and how she finally won the neighbors are the things the book tells. Two love stories add to the real interest we feel in very real fictional personalities. A healthy American story.

Very well done are the short stories of Rupert Hughes's *In a Little Town*. These stories are human, true to life and to the characters and localities described and full of kindly humor and pathos. The best is "Pop," the story of an American father, whose family, wearing the purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day, has come to believe that "Pop" is too shabby, too behind the times, to be good for anything but the useful service of paying bills. They keep him supplied with these by means of trips and festivities in which he has no share and, finally, cap the climax by leaving "Pop" out of the "family photograph."

A perfectly good girl is the heroine of *Lydia of the Pines*, by Honoré Willsie. To be sure she is not so good as the always too glad Polyanna, for Lydia has a few redeeming faults. She is a very real person, capable of deep affection, of clear, steady thinking, of practical action. Her sense of responsibility makes her, even as a child, a power for good in the lives of the men and boys she knows and her triumphs over poverty, her sweetness maintained, in spite of the burdens life brings her all too soon, win our affection and respect.

Aurora the Magnificent, by Gertrude Hall, is a warm, mellow, interesting love story. Aurora is that rare thing in popular

fiction, an individual, a new personality who becomes the friend of the reader. When we have read the book we have met Aurora. We have seen her in the art galleries of Florence making faces at the old masters, and we have seen her on the streets patting the heads of dirty little urchins and giving large presents to beggars. We have enjoyed her cake walk at the charity bazar and her lapses into slang and her frank, unconventional, warm-hearted behavior toward all mankind. And, best of all, we have been refreshed by her freshness and verve, by her directness of character, her patient maternal kindness to the lover whom she nurses thru a severe illness.

An Alabaster Box, by M. E. Wilkins-Freeman and F. M. Kingsley. Harper & Brothers. \$1.50.
In a Little Town, by Rupert Hughes. Harper & Brothers. \$1.35. *Lydia of the Pines*, by Honoré Willsie. F. A. Stokes Company. \$1.40.
Aurora the Magnificent, by Gertrude Hall. The Century Company. \$1.40.