

some companionship. Then comes a day when, through a series of blunders that lead her to believe her husband has learned the truth, she confesses her love for another man. The husband's sudden anger, stoically controlled, throws too great a strain upon his nervous system, brings on serious heart trouble, and is followed by catalepsy, and apparently death. Here begins the second part of the story, highly imaginative, strange to the point of uncanniness—the experiences of a liberated soul in its first glimpse of life beyond the grave. As a sheer bit of speculation, a brilliant juggling with words, the episode refuses to be forgotten. But sober second thought makes it clear that all such speculation is quite futile. The end of the story comes with a grim swiftness. The man, as it happens, is not dead, merely in a trance, and after a few hours he struggles back, but the irrevocable has already happened. The foolish, wayward wife, who through all her folly has secretly loved her husband and no one else, is overwhelmed with remorse, when she feels that it is her confession which killed him. And when he opens his eyes on the world again, she has already swallowed oxalic acid, and is beyond all medical aid. A strange story, but one from which no one would ever infer the power to produce a novel of such real importance as *The Old Wives' Tale*.

*The Glimpse*, by Arnold Bennett, although not to be put in the same class with that author's strong, big, and rather grim "The Glimpse" volume, *The Old Wives' Tale*, is none the less a work of distinct originality. Whether it was really worth doing is quite another question. There is nothing striking about the opening chapters; simply the usual commonplace situation of an unhappy marriage; a man and a woman hopelessly incompatible, drifting steadily apart, he finding solace in intellectual pursuits, she driven, through sheer restlessness, into more and more venture-