over; at last one came to the door, and asked Who was there?" Now our featured traveler is Gulian Eyre. Scion of an old and aristocratic New York banking family, he has avoided trammels of business by life abroad. A poet, he has dabbled in diplomacy. He is the rare American able to loaf and invite his soul. And he is a sentimentalist of the impersonal order, as well as keenly receptive in personal contact.

Not completely emancipated, he comes back to the postwar New York, to take a place in its treadmill and be one of the pack. We see New York society through his eyes, and somewhat share his perplexity with the younger delegation, with its theories that it does not put into operation, and its faculty of doing infinitely more harm to the generation just above it than it does to itself. And most we are impressed by the exhibit of women who, as Mr. Burt puts it, "have lost the ability to find adventure in subjective things that used to be adventurous to them, and are reaching out blindly towards subjective adventure they know nothing about". And somehow such questions almost always involve the male and femaleness of creation.

Incisive commentary on the social order by no means clouds the tale. Gulian's transient entanglement with a beautiful hedonist he almost miraculously, and one might say unfortunately, escapes, and his slow approach to complete understanding with Lael Satori, a girl at first projecting a puzzling impression of youth and age, at once cynical and infantile, carry in their train other interests and persons of considerable vitality.

Here is a brilliantly written novel, and one rarely rich in reflective interest. While Mr. Burt might pick up

A FICTION TRIO

By Sidney Williams

IN pointing a moral few adorn the tale. We have a happy exception in Struthers Burt's novel, "The Interpreter's House". It is at once elaborately motivated and absorbing fiction. That its sheer narrative charm has the support of poetic feeling and easy elegance of style is no surprise. For while this book is Mr. Burt's first novel, he long since won his spurs as a writer of verse and short stories transcending the obvious.

Here the title is drawn from "Pilgrim's Progress": "Then he went on till he came at the house of the Interpreter, where he knocked over and

his pace a bit by less philosophizing, he has written nothing one would gaily throw away. "The Interpreter's House" will be much discussed.

From his first novel on, Stephen McKenna's satiric impulse has been strong. It is so in "Vindication", another mordantly conceived and cleverly executed study of decadent English society. Coolly written, it is more scarifying from its lack of moral earnestness. With McKenna's attitude of a surgeon goes the instinct of the novelist. The result is a story that, despite faulty motivation and the somewhat incredible seductiveness of an English Don Juan, generally commands close interest.

Here meet again the impoverished aristocracy, with poor success trying to keep its head above water, and prosperous invaders. But they clash only as individuals. Four leading characters. . . Gloria Britton, the handsome daughter of a Spanish dancer and a well born roué who manages to live on his winnings at cards and the bounty of soft hearted women, must market her charms to keep a place in smart society. Clear headed and adroit, she bestows affection at her command on Norman Cartwright, a young baronet of slight imagination and inflexible integrity. He personifies the stability her life has sadly lacked. Yet she breaks their unannounced engagement to marry Freddy Kendaile, the fabulously rich and unaffectedly dissipated son of a parvenu banker. Not to be outdone, Cartwright takes for his bride the young and innocent child of a rich man in the foreign trade. And the two families settle in the country as neighbors.

Personal complications intensify rivalry incident to opposed social interests of the old order and the new. Here, and in dissection of feminine impulse, McKenna is highly acute. Further, the curve of character is followed in the resolve of Freddy Kendaile that, having taken Cartwright's fiancée, he will also possess his wife. The pursuit of woman is his passion. But there is no valid explanation of Lady Cartwright's immediate surrender. She is a young woman of pure character, and loves her husband. For that matter, one fails to understand Freddy's reputation. Great amorists may be ugly. The most distinguished of living poets, a man undersized and homely, is a famous conqueror of the fair. But he has lyric genius and a fiery spirit. Freddy seems nothing but a good looking waster, with a conciliatory smile and a knack of drumming the piano.

As to "Vindication", where is it when all are in secret disgraced? None the less, Mr. McKenna has written a sound and absorbing story. It bites deep.

Storm Jameson's narrative of "The Pitiful Wife" will be caviar to the multitude. Almost without exception its characters are extraordinary: persons wild and wilful, their nervous organization remarkably delicate. Thus things they think, and do, and say are incomprehensible to the unimaginative. One and all too strange to run in the mold of type.

First there is John Trude, occasionally glimpsed from days of his riotous youth when he breaks heads and burns barns with great gusto, to the huge wreck, so sinister and yet somehow childlike, who sits in the ruin of his great house, wrapped in furs and drinking mightily. "I ha' been born out of time", says he. "I should ha' worn steel and sworn quaint oaths by the wrath of God. There were giants on earth in those days. I cannot stomach these puling moderns."

The student of eugenics would never countenance marriage between Trude's child, sensitive, fairylike little Jael, with her father's ruthless will, and Richmond Drew, who has something elfish in his heart, and a rarely mettlesome spirit. Naturally, their child David is a bundle of nerves, and psychic almost beyond belief. Last, Jael's brother, Jude, slim and restless as a cat, a flame in a frail body. He is quite commonplace compared to the others.

Our story has largely to do with the young married life of Jael and Richmond, its ecstasy, its revulsions; the pride and suffering that was in each heart in estrangement, when Richmond was found unfaithful. The end is high pitched reconciliation achieved by their child's suffering.

A neurologist will best understand these people. For the rest, their surface effects are vivid. But one does not quite receive them in intimate interest. As she has previously demonstrated in "The Clash", Storm Jameson writes well. What she needs most is closer contact with common life.

The Interpreter's House. By Struthers Burt. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Vindication. By Stephen McKenna. Little, Brown and Co.
The Pitiful Wife. By Storm Jameson. Alfred A. Knopf.