"The Javelin of Fate," by Miss Jeanie Gould Lincoln, is distinguished from the mass of current fiction by the technical skill with which it presents a plot that has in itself real movement and vitality. It is a Civil War story, its action centering in that hot-bed of rebellion, Baltimore. But it begins twenty years before the war, in a little mountain cabin in Virginia, where a distracted young mother deserts her child amid the pro-

phetic imprecations of the old mammy in whose care she leaves it. For years she escapes the nemesis of fate, but throughout her brilliant career there is one motive behind her social activities and political intrigues — the wish to punish the man who spoiled her youth and robbed her of the capacity for happiness. At last her opportunity arrives, but old instincts and old affections assert themselves. She forgives the man and goes to find her child. Then the javelin strikes her. This is the main thread of the narrative, which is skilfully interwoven with others less sombre. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

In "Miss Desmond" (Macmillan) Marie Van Vorst has made a long stride toward the writing of significant fiction. She has evolved a situation that Mr. Henry James would revel in; and without resorting to Mr. James's familiar method, she has brilliantly suggested, if she has not always developed, its subtleties. Her heroine, Miss Desmond, is a middle-aged recluse, a Bostonian Puritan, who has sacrificed her youth to an exacting old mother and has just awakened to the conviction that she has never really lived. In this mood of tentative, half-frightened dissatisfaction and longing she is suddenly summoned to chaperon a niece,— the sophisticated but unspoiled daughter of a thoroughly disreputable sister,— on a Swiss tour. A week later the object of the sister's latest love-affair comes by chance to their hotel. He finds in Miss Desmond the bodily appearance of the woman he had left in disgust, united to a spiritual beauty that he is in a mood to appreciate by contrast. The development of the theme is dramatic, though at times a little unsure; and the characterization is uncommonly delicate and significant.

"The Passport" (Harper), by Mr. Richard Bagot, is a rather slow-moving story of love and intrigue, in an Italian setting. A parish priest with a mysterious past is the ruling character. He has an interest, dating back to the time when he was a canon at Rome, in the young hero and heroine; and he finally manages to convince the girl's step-mother that young Rossano and not the gambling Belgian baron, d'Antin, is the more suitable husband for her charge. The baron has a coadjutor in the person of the Abbé Roux, as great a scoundrel as himself, but not so clever. Peasant revolts add an element of variety to the plots and counter-plots of the villains. Mr. Bagot's style is clever and finished, and one wonders a little why his book does not make more of an impression. It may be safely recommended as a good story, likely to carry the reader pleasantly to the end of its four hundred closely-printed pages; but it lacks a definite, clear-cut motive that should give it force and value.

Mr. W. W. Jacobs's latest book, "Captains All" (Scribner), is named after the first story in a collection of tales, only three of which are really nautical. But any disappointment that the reader may experience on this score is soon forgotten in his enjoyment of the author's humor. Mr. Jacobs makes the doings and sayings of a certain type of English low-life irresistibly funny in the telling. His sailors ashore, his constables, night-watchmen, small shop-keepers, pigeon-shooters, and their wives and friends, are delightful studies, depicted with the same penetration and the same joyous appreciation of the comedy of life that distinguish all Mr. Jacobs's work. It is hard to pick out any stories deserving of special mention, for the workmanship is very even; but certainly none are better than "The Constable's Move," which tells how Policeman Evans's worst enemy unwittingly got him made a sergeant; and "The White Cat," the story of a strange legacy that brought as much trouble on its various owners as the proverbial white elephant.

"Land Ho" (Harper) is the title chosen for a collection of Mr. Morgan Robertson's sea stories. In several of these are told the adventures of Scotty, an original old fellow forced by circumstances to be deck-hand on a freight barge in New York harbor, but leading a life full of interest and excitement none the less. The sea, as Scotty and the rest of Mr. Robertson's heroes know it, is a hard mistress, exacting a heavy toll of labor and sorrow and making little return; and as a whole Mr. Robertson's book does not make cheerful reading. A strange case of somnambulism is the theme of "The Cook and the Captain"; "The Lobster" and his friends are only amateur sailors, and a few stories at the end of the book have no connection with the sea or its folk. It is a pity that Mr. Robertson does not occasionally choose to exploit a thoroughly pleasant theme. His style is powerful, but his insight is always exercised on gruesome situations.

Mr. Charles Major's new romance "Yolanda" (Macmillan) resembles "When Knighthood Was in Flower" more than it does any of this author's other books. There is a piquant and spirited heroine who braves everything for the man she loves, and the hero is satisfactory enough, though distinctly subordinate in the reader's interest, as was Brandon. The love affair leads the pair through many extraordinary perils and dilemmas, but in the end the prince marries the princess exactly as their parents had planned, though the step is by no means taken out of deference to parental wishes. For some unexplainable reason Mr. Major has chosen to have the story related by Count Maximilian's tutor — a method which has its disadvantages when a passionate, and let us hope a private, love-scene is to be confided to the reader. In spite of this mistake, however, Mr. Major has written another good story, which his public will be glad to welcome.

Miss Margaret Sherwood's new novel, "The Coming of the Tide" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), has much of the choice pastoral quality of her earlier book, "Daphne." This latter tale was so charming that it helped to set a fashion in fiction-writing; and perhaps it is only the host of perfunctory imitations that have come between to dull our appetites that makes "The Coming of the Tide" seem a little commonplace by comparison. It tells the story of a summer on the Maine coast, whither the heroine, a Southern girl, goes to forget a great sorrow. The plot, which is very simple, involves a study in heredity. The hero, a dreamy philosopher, is morbidly conscious of his inheritance of ancestral traits and ancestral quarrels. But the girl from Virginia makes him feel the joy of living, and understand the song of the tides. The charm of the book lies largely in Miss Sherwood's delicate humor, delightful fancy, and carefully finished, but never coldly classic, style.

Like all of Mr. Arthur Henry's stories, "Lodgings in Town" (A. S. Barnes & Co.) is more fact than fiction. It tells how the author came to New York with a clean collar, eight dollars, and a poem, what he found in the city to hold his interest, and how he finally chose the obscurity of a mountain farm, in preference to material advancement in town. Much of the interest of the story springs from the keen analysis of New York's peculiarities, as Mr. Henry, fresh from a strenuous career in the Middle West, interpreted them. But the core of the

book is its philosophy. If a man works not for money or for himself, but, "searching events for the soul of them," takes unaffected pleasure in what he can do for other men, he can be happy anywhere — and most easily perhaps in a Baxter Street tenement. The intimate, straightforward, and lively style in which Mr. Henry writes, and his large and convincing optimism, make a strong appeal to the reader's sympathy.

The success scored by "In the Bishop's Carriage" lends special interest to Miss Miriam Michelson's new novel, "A Yellow Journalist" (Appleton). Like its predecessor this is a novel with a heroine; and the new heroine, Rhoda Massey, has a strong individuality — a pluck, perseverance, and a certain feminine charm beneath her masculine energy — that suggests Nancy, minus the curious moral attitude that made Nancy so unique. Rhoda finds newspaper work as intoxicating as most girls do cotillons, and thinks of nothing but pleasing her chief and "scooping" her rivals. Reporting in San Francisco seems to furnish an abundance of sensations, but the reader is not surprised when Rhoda gives it all up to marry the reporter that she had always secretly admired, though professionally they were at swords' points.

After these many years Mr. Rider Haggard has written a sequel, or rather a continuation, of "She." It is called "Ayesha" (Doubleday, Page & Co.), and is the story of the further adventures of Mr. Holly, the real author of "She," and Leo Vincey in the mountains of Tibet, whither they went to seek the wonderful Spirit of the Mountain. This time the token of verity which Mr. Holly sends with his manuscript is the sceptre with which Ayesha was wont to rule the shadows in her mountain temple. The story opens with an account of a vision in which the lovely Ayesha tells her mortal lover how to return to her. The adventures of the travellers are of no ordinary kind. Seven years of awful hardship are dismissed in a brief paragraph, and only the last crucial moments of the search are detailed. It will be interesting to see how the new "She" strikes twentieth century tastes.

Mr. Rupert Hughes, the author of "American Composers" and "The Love-Affairs of Great Musicians," has turned his insight into the emotional make-up of the musician to account by writing a novel. He calls it "Zal," which is a Polish word signifying the hopeless homesickness of the exile. The hero is a Polish musician, named Ladislav, who wins a slow recognition and then an overwhelming success in America. But it is his love affair with a rich American girl, rather than his concert career, that engrosses the reader's attention. As a study of the artistic temperament "Zal" is very interesting, but Mr. Hughes makes a mistake in forcing his hero to choose between saving his mother or his sweetheart from drowning. Such an episode cannot be satisfactorily handled in fiction. Otherwise, particularly for a first novel, "Zal" shows very good workmanship. (Century Co.)

"Lady Bobs, her Brother, and I" (Putnam) is already familiar to readers of "The Critic," where it appeared serially. Miss Jean Chamblin has followed a passing fashion in using the letter form for her story, and in supplementing plot interest with animated accounts of life and scenery in the Azores. Her protagonist is a young actress, who, being tired and so impressed with the futility of her dramatic efforts, goes off to rest in a far corner of the earth and finds there most of the people she has particularly wished to get away from — including the inevitable lover. It is a pity that Miss Chamblin has felt it necessary to resort to meaningless slang and cheap humor in order to enliven her heroine's letters. In these days there is surely no good reason why an actress should not be represented as a cultured woman, exercising good taste in the choice of a vocabulary as in other matters.

"Child of the Stars" is the mystical title of a somewhat mystical tale by Mr. Robert Valentine Mathews. The narrative altogether lacks unity, but at certain points it has decided charm in spite of its annoying inconsecutiveness. At first it purports to be the autobiography of a man who began his life as a foundling in a Jesuit orphanage. Running away one day, not because of unhappiness but merely to explore the neighborhood, he found a little girl playing by the river. After this the story is more hers than his, and the title is the name of a famous picture which her faithless husband painted. The picture, again, is in no sense the pivotal point of the story. Mr. Mathews has some interesting material at his command, but he must either learn plot construction or else avoid altogether the novel form. His "Child of the Stars" is a confusing hybrid,— neither novel nor simple narration. (Edwin C. Hill Co.)

Mr. Herman Bernstein, already known as the author of several novels of Jewish life, in "Contrite Hearts" (A. Wessels Co.) presents still another picture of the simple yet picturesque manners of his people in Russia and New York. Mr. Bernstein's tale is sincere and quite devoid of artifice. It tells the story of two Jewish girls, the apostate daughters of Israel Lampert, cantor and reader of the law in his village. Both girls love Gentiles and are cast out from their father's house. They go singly to New York, meet there by chance, and in the end renounce the new thought that is disturbing their people's ancient beliefs, and become reconciled to their old father. The story has a curious interest, as an interpretation, from the inside, of a theory of life utterly foreign to the average reader's ideas.