

himself in a middle-class *milieu* of that century as little known as it is absorbing in its interest. As Mr. Paston says (p. 225): " . . . we cannot but be struck by the almost total absence of documents dealing, at first hand, with the trading and labouring classes of the period." He might have added that we know too little of those mediocrities who had not the *entrée* to Strawberry Hill. Is there anything in all Horace Walpole's letters more discerning or more humorous than Mrs. Grant's account of her visit to some relations at Perth (p. 258)? She complains that her hostesses were

too civil to let us alone, too desirous of entertaining to hold their tongues for a moment, too observant to let us look serious without asking why we were so dull, or out of the window without taxing us with being wearied of them. In short, we did not *get our elbows on the tea-table* while we stayed.

The Meaning of Good. By G. Lowes Dickinson. (Maclehose. 3s. 6d. net.)—This little book sets out with a rich old-fashioned programme that reminds us of "Friends in Council" or of William Smith's "Thorndale." A number of old friends, some of whom have not met for years, come together in a Swiss hotel and discuss philosophical problems on its terrace. Their theme is the meaning of good, and they try to discover it by dialectics. Every point of view is represented except the orthodox. The Idealist, the Biologist, the advocate of Hegel and pure Reason, the disciple of Walt Whitman, the practical man, the Utilitarian politician, and the Cynic who believes in nothing but physical sensation—all these are to be found among the company. They centre round the Socrates of the party—the man who marshals and sifts their thoughts and ends by giving them his own creed as the best answer he can find to the problem they are debating.

In turn he carries the thought of each to its logical conclusion. The Hegelian, with his abstract good, gives him the most trouble; but perhaps he is at his best when he disposes of the Cui Bono theory, or of the Utilitarian's conception of good as the greatest happiness of the greatest number. On