

WIND ALONG THE WASTE. By MAUDE ANNESLEY. William Rider & Son.

I CONFESS to having expected a very flatulent novel. Judge of my surprise to find a novel of Paris as it is! The heroine (a rich Englishwoman) is robbed by apaches, and proceeds to paint their leader. She then seduces him, and joins the band.

This is life. Most English and I suppose all American women go to Paris in order to fornicate freely with the lower classes. When I was first in Paris for any length of time, the rage was all for professional bicyclists. These pallid heroes, after panting round the velodrome for God knows how many hours, would fall from their racers into the arms of the stalwart vampires who had annexed them.

The best known of England's "heroic widows" at that time kept a tame but half-witted giant with an enormous black beard; the whole of his body was, I was told, as hirsute as a bear. A daughter of the nobility contented herself with more lyric loves than these. A well-to-do girl from Calcutta practised sheer promiscuity; an exquisitely beautiful woman of the middle classes did worse, and actually married a most hideous dwarf.

To-day things are very much the same.

A very celebrated dancer from America never goes on the stage without previously dragging a stranger—a man from the street, a stage carpenter, it matters nothing—to her dressing-room. One of our best known women art critics haunts the lowest brothels of the Bd. St. Germain in search of adventure; a very distinguished poetess of the nobility supports a burly negro from North Africa and a Belgian boxer; one of our highest artists in music roams Paris every midnight in search of stray milliners' apprentices.

The English and American women in the Café du Dôme solidly, stupidly drunk, dribble curses when their maquereaux "American sculptors" are late; the peace of

the Avenue des Champs Elysées is broken by the wild-beast howls of the harlot harridans who, driven from Chicago and Denver by the police, despair of finding such products as prairie air and cow-punching can alone supply.

Who doesn't remember the supper to 100 of her lovers given by an ex-Princess, when, only 89 turning up, she gathered 11 strangers from the street and made out their diplomas while the others waited?

I could say more, much more, indeed, but my only object is to justify the ways of Maude Annesley to the British public.

Her story, moreover, is exceedingly well told, up to the point of the hero's death. The sequel appears to me somewhat an anticlimax, strained, artificial, and boring. (At least I would rather she had carried out the vendetta by killing the son, as her lover had killed the father.)

I suppose it is the publisher again. Yes, what a nice story! Now if you'll add 40,000 words of dialogue about love and make the story end happily perhaps we might do something."

A publisher offered to take my *Ercildoune* if I'd pad it to 150,000 words!"

Well, Maude Annesley, ma môme, you're a very luck child to get your novels published at all in this rotten country, and if the homage and devotion of a colleague who has no such luck can serve you, command it!

Be wary, though, and never stir a step from your own ground. You have (for the first time in English) got French slang correct; but you clearly don't know India, and some terrible old bore has planted the worst and feeblest form of a very stale cobra story on your innocence.

There are several mistakes in these few pages—climate and natural history in particular.

Figure to yourself that this bit of the book reads to me almost as *Trilby* reads to you!—

A.C.