

to write of a "sawdust doll," and so may parry the charge that her characters are not of flesh and blood, but only projections of sentimental fancy which she has dressed up to wile away an idle hour. But sawdust dolls are unsatisfactory things to play with when "childhood's years are passing o'er us;" in fiction as in life we put away childish things and choose a nobler company.

Mrs. de Koven's story, in its reflection of humdrum society life, may sometimes seem inane and heathenish, but it is at least respectable and does not outrage one's sense of decency, as her brother-in-law has succeeded in doing in *Two Women and a Fool*, which is as gross a piece of pseudo-realism as we have yet seen in American fiction with any pretence to that title. It is a pity if this is indicative of the way the new literary currents are tending in the West; one must lament to see real ability and cleverness prostituted to such degrading ends. For Mr. Chatfield-Taylor, unlike his literary relative, has considerable wit, a modicum of wisdom—of a worldly cynical sort, it is true—and much wickedness. But it all has a Dead Sea fruit taste, and the apple of lust and lies, so inviting to the eye, is rotten at the core and turns to ashes in the mouth. It is an insult to one's moral sense to be expected to find any interest in the liaison of a Bohemian artist with a music-hall beauty, and to enjoy the confessions of a slave to passion's whim. Messrs. Stone and Kimball deserve credit for their excellent artistic taste in the mechanical portion of these books, but one could wish that they had not sullied the lustre of their growing literary reputation with the responsibility of at least one of them.

INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES.

By F. F. Montrésor. New York: D. Appleton & Company. Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cts.

Miss Montrésor has achieved a great popular success without consulting what is generally supposed to be the popular taste of the day. Perhaps unconsciously she has divined more correctly than most what the popular taste really is beneath the morbidities and frivolities that froth on its surface. In any case her success is deserved, for she has done some rather unusual things, has written a religious book, for instance, that will interest and attract non-religious persons, and has made us believe that an event with al-

most certainly unhappy consequences—the marriage of a woman to a man of markedly inferior rank and culture—turned out happily in the end. There is no good trying to approve altogether of the construction, and perhaps the fact which, having already been published, may be mentioned here, that the story was curtailed from an earlier and lengthier version, may account for some defects. Even the description of special incidents—though the scenes in the jail are vigorous and vivid—does not show the writer's special talents. Her first novel gives promise of a quite unusual understanding of varied human types. She has her characters so clearly in her mind that, whether their actions are perfectly or only doubtfully convincing, we know them with intimacy. We except Mrs. Russelthorpe, who, with her abnormally jealous love for her brother, puzzles us; and the heroine's personality is not always clear. But Barnabas Thorpe, the man of faith, of little logic, and of invariable rectitude, a quixotic hero, hiding his quixotries heroically; the clever, sharp-tongued, penetrating Tom, with the kind heart shining through his cynicism, and his boundless admiration for his idealist brother; Deane, the selfish, guileless, careless, cultivated enthusiast, are all admirable. Miss Montrésor has, in our opinion, shown her best power in *George Sauls*. It is quite improbable that for all his hardness he would have ever let the woman he loved so passionately plead so long and desperately for her husband's and his rival's life. But he is a very real man all the same, this Jew with the passion for success, the keen mind, the dominating will, his delight in fighting the world with its roughest weapons, in driving hard bargains, and who yet kept two sanctuaries in his mind inviolate. It is perfectly certain that the creator of *George Sauls* knows human nature well enough to be a creator of many more living men and women, and we wait confidently for their acquaintance. Miss Montrésor has written a novel of character, but her warmest desire was perhaps to make us glow with gratitude to those who are willing to risk all and contend to the uttermost for their ideal. And she has not failed.

PRINCE ZALESKI. By M. P. Shiel. Key-notes Series. Boston: Roberts Bros. \$1.00.

Prince Zaleski was a glorified Sher-

lock Holmes. "The victim of a too importunate, too unfortunate love, which the fulgor of the throne could not abash," took to meditation on the past and future of mankind, and when some one brought him the chatter of the daily newspapers, which he scorned to read, he would deign to light up the mysteries of the present with his magnificent mind. If only he could have been wiled from his gloomy palace to watch the sordid wickedness of the world, not one crime would have gone undetected. But he was probably not much interested in the detection of crime; only in the philosophy of the motives, and in the illustration crime affords of the strange workings of the human soul. We can imagine him saying, with a yawn, to an ordinary baffled Scotland Yard officer, "Oh, there is nothing in that. Show me something more difficult." Indeed, Mr. Sheil had to invent impossibly difficult puzzles for him, otherwise he would not have dared to approach so magnificent a creature at all. "He lay back on his couch, volumed in a Turkish *beneesh*, and listened to me, a little wearily perhaps at first, with woven fingers, and the pale inverted eyes of old anchorites and astrologers, the moony greenish light falling on his always wan features." His *mise en scène* is magnificent; an open sarcophagus with the mummy of an ancient Memphian, palæolithic implements, gnostic gems, fretted gold lamps, fumes of *cannabis sativa* make part of it. Plainly, only crimes of a poetic order could be brought for detection here. And yet a terrible thing happened. Europe had been convulsed with an epidemic of suicide and murder. The murderers had left, as their mark, a scroll with hieroglyphics on it. These puzzle pictures would have driven any one else mad. Even Zaleski's great mind was severely taxed. But surely his soul must have revolted when part of the interpretation resolved itself into a pun—a hideous pun, by which a male and a female figure are made to form the word Lacedæmon. We refuse to humiliate our readers by saying how. The murderers were a high-minded band, whose motives he approved. Yet he did not join them, or endow them with any part of his vast wealth. He said they were "ill-advised," but we have a shrewd guess it was their vile pun that rankled

in his solemn soul. Mr. Shiel's mysteries are very good, if a trifle laboured, and he has put them into literary form. But as he has not quite got us under the mystic spell, we are not able to maintain a constant gravity before his gorgeous prince.

NEIGHBOUR JACKWOOD. By J. T. Trowbridge. Boston: Lee & Shepard. \$1.50.

Messrs. Lee and Shepard have launched *Neighbour Jackwood* on a new voyage of delight after considerable overhauling. Mr. Trowbridge, who has had this old pioneer of New England fiction in the dry dock for some time, has revised the old scenes and introduced some new ones into the story. We question the wisdom of such a course; in the first place, it is taking a liberty with what has become for a long time public property, and again one sees things through other eyes "when one is old," and the perspective of a work of fiction is apt to be thrown out by an intellectual obliquity. Although we may not agree with John Burroughs, who declares without stint that it is "like a novel of Scott, and that its characters would shine in any page Scott ever wrote," *Neighbour Jackwood* has genuine merits of its own which will keep the good craft afloat for many a day yet. A portrait of the author and a picture from a photograph representing the characters who acted in the play in the Boston Museum in 1857 are given; but that which is worth buying the book for alone is an extremely interesting chapter of autobiography which Mr. Trowbridge published in a recent *Atlantic Monthly*, and which he has incorporated in the new edition of his novel. *Inter alia* he tells us how he came by his title. "The story finished, I had great trouble in naming it. I suppose a score of titles were considered only to be rejected. At last I settled down upon "Jackwood," but felt the need of joining to that name some characteristic phrase or epithet. Thus I was led to think of this scriptural motto for the title-page:

"A certain woman went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves."

"Which suggested the question, 'Who was *neighbour* unto this woman?' and the answer, 'Neighbour Jackwood.' And I had my title."