

*The Fortunes of the Landrays.* By Vaughan Kester. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Co. \$1.35.

At first sight this novel with nearly 500 pages of closely printed matter frightened us. It took us back to the three decker days of fiction, when novels were not to be skimmed but provided entertainment for many leisurely hours. But plunging boldly within the covers we found to our surprise that we swam buoyantly. In spite of its diffuseness, its constant change of scene, its long-winded sentences, it is a story to be marked. Not for its characters, none of whom make any lasting impression, except the drunken Gibbs, but for its vivid picture of growth and progress of the country. The story concerns the three generations of Landrays, a family of Benson, Ohio; Stephen and Bushrod, who perished on their way to the goldfields of California; Bushrod's son, Stephen, and later the young Stephen. The two characters who run thru all the pages are Virginia, wife of the first Stephen, and Jacob Benson, the family lawyer, whose love for her led him to wrong her in his conduct of the estate. It is rather he, than the Landrays, who is the central figure in this contribution to American history.