

The City of Sarras. By U. Ashworth Urguart. [Henry Holt & Co. \$1.00.] *The City of Sarras* is quite disconnected with the book to which it supplies a name, save by a chance allusion in its opening chapter. The speaker is Dorotheus, a calm young Christian philosopher, who speaks in exalted paradox, and has—oddly enough—established his academe in the purlieus of “The Summer Palace”—of what king or kingdom is left unnamed. The other characters are Morgan, a beautiful court lady with a restless heart, Daimen, a courtier, Noel, a misshapen but all-powerful influence, who plays the violin, disbelieves in virtue, and marries Morgan, *et omnes alii*, as unreal as these. The story is, in fact, an extravaganza with a morbid conscience at the heart of it. We can understand the extravaganza, but in no wise the conscience. It reminds us in its touch of Mrs. Spofford, and again of the author of *Charles Auchester*, but it lacks the passionate picturesqueness of the latter. It is but an echo, which reminds us distortedly of a strong street voice, and what it means to say we do not quite make out.

Palm and Pine. By Moncure D. Conway. [Henry Holt & Co. \$1.00.] There is an old-fashioned quality to this novel which reminds one of Mrs. Lydia Maria Child and her congeners, the leaders of the anti-slavery revolt; and the days when all enlightened fiction was expected to subserve the cause of moral truth. The scene of *Palm and Pine* is, first Cambridge, afterward Virginia, Harper's Ferry and Kansas. Its brace of heroes belong respectively to New England and Virginia, and after exchanging challenges and very many shots in behalf of the “institutions” of their different sections, may be said to exchange minds and opinions as well; for the Southerner becomes a determined opponent of slavery, and nearly loses his life through an indirect participation in John Brown's raid; and the Northerner, from experience with the South, learns to realize that slavery is often an inherited curse rather than a deliberate crime, and is sometimes co-existent with noble qualities of mind and heart. Such a plot would seem to put the hands back on the dial of time a long ways, but the story has interest and a distinct flavor of its own.