

At Daybreak. By A. Stirling. [J. R. Osgood & Co. \$1.25.]

Rating the poorest novels at zero and the best at 100 this one ranks at least 50. There is no important fault to find with it, and it has some points for commendation. It is a fair story of a rather unusual course of life, with on the whole a predominant freshness. Its scenes shift between Lyme, which may be Lyme, Connecticut, and Copenhagen, and the author knows the latter city and its boggy surroundings. Its characters are chiefly members of two Scandinavian families, the Karlsens and the Brands, who have settled down in Lyme side by side. Axel Brand and Betty Karlsen grow up together from childhood, and are destined for each other, but the fortunes of Axel interpose and postpone the consummation. He goes to Copenhagen to study, and is there — "entrapped," his father will have it, by Frederika Lindholm, whom he marries, and with whom he settles down over the seas; and it is not until after she dies that he returns and marries Betty at the old Lyme home. Meanwhile Betty's sister Christina has married a Frenchman and gone abroad, and the Frenchman too has sickened and is supposed to have died somewhere in India, and Christina has taken it for granted that he is dead, and has hurried off home. Lyme now has a new stone church, and an English clergyman for rector, a Reverend Roderic Musgrove, who conceals yellow-covered novels and greasy cards in his study, and turns out to be a scoundrel in disguise. While Christina is engaged in a flirtation with this interesting specimen of a clerical impostor, her French husband whom she thought she was rid of turns up, she commits suicide, detectives appear with a requisition for the Reverend Musgrove, and that gentleman, *alias* Crafts, disappears in a glory of hair dyed red. The author handles her materials with ease and composure; we understand this to be her first book; and it promises well.