

Dickson—The Ravanel. By Harris Dickson.
Illustrated by Seymour M. Stone. Lip-
pincott. \$1.50.

The promise in Mr. Dickson's "Black Wolf's Breed," is here more than fulfilled. "The Ravanel" is even better than his first novel. It is a tale of the post-reconstruction period, and to those of us who do not know Southern life from actual experience, it presents a life-like picture of what we believe the South to be. The interest turns on what in Italy is called the vendetta. The trial of young Ravanel for the supposed assassination of his father's murderer is as thrilling as a detective story, and the skill with which the case is worked up shows the hand of the lawyer. After all, there is nothing much more engrossing than a good detective story ably written. The print is clear, and the publishers have added to the superficial interest of the novel by attaching to review-copies the author's photograph and a brief biography.

Hewlett—Fond Adventures. By Maurice Hewlett. Harper. \$1.50.

Four tales in which Old Italy, Old England, and Old France are recreated with all Mr. Hewlett's wealth of color and mastery of style. It is hard, while reading them, to

believe that pilgrimages to Canterbury and beds between great Florentine houses are things of the past, so vividly are they pictured, and so skilfully are the threads in the glowing canvas woven. Mr. Hewlett is at his best in these short stories.

Mathews—The Marquise's Millions. By Frances Aymar Mathews. Funk & Wagnalls Co. \$1.00 net.

In this novelette Miss Mathews proves that her late incursion into New York political and social life did not mean a permanent abandonment of the more conventionally romantic paths in which she has trodden hitherto. The present story is of the "Zenda" type, but with a difference. The reservation of stage rights forebodes its early appearance on the boards.

Merriman—A Self-Made Man's Wife. Her Letters to Her Son. Being the Woman's View of Certain Famous Correspondence. By Charles Eustace Merriman. Putnam. \$1.50.

A cup of cambric tea is this book. "Doses of philosophy and liberal portions of sweetmeats in the form of anecdote."—So the writer describes her letters in one of the sixteen effusions sent to her son. She writes on all subjects supposed to interest a young man from his honeymoon to the arrival of the first baby; but her wit is not homespun. It reminds one of the after-dinner jokes of the revered Mr. Chauncey M. Depew. Mr. Lorimer can read this second piece of stolen thunder with much inward satisfaction.

Opal, The—A Novel. Houghton, Mifflin. \$1.25.

This anonymous novelette is the study of a character, sketchy and slight. Edith Dudley is a thousand women in one, with "some intelligence, no character, no beliefs, no convictions," to quote her own statement. She is a prism, "waiting for the sun of outside personality to shine on her and scatter her colors," to quote her best friend. Naturally her life involves herself and others in tragedy, but this inevitable conclusion is not foreshadowed very perfectly in the frontispiece portrait, "from a painting by J. H. Gardner-Soper," which does not represent a woman of opaline traits. The best bit is the comment of a Boston spinster on learning of the Opal's defection: "I have often noticed that girls who have not been brought up in Boston are very apt to do something queer sooner or later."

Shafer—Beyond Chance of Change. By Sara Andrew Shafer. Macmillan. \$1.50.

A healthful story of child-life along simple village lines. Rachel's Puritan conscience occasionally recalls Elsie Dinsmore's ethical struggles, but she is not a prig; on the contrary, she is a normal, mischievous child with a keen sense of honor. The atmosphere of the story is of the village days when the arrival of the *Tribune* was the great event from the

outside world for the elders, when there was leisure for fireside stories and companionship and confidences. The contrast between the city life of children now and village life of years ago causes a pang, as one reads these quiet, poetical descriptions. Other days, other children, it may be. Yet, is it possible that the present generation enjoy life as the past did? We were not blasé over luncheons. We rode on hay carts and played in the fallen leaves.

Silberrad—The Wedding of the Lady Lovell and other Matches of Tobiah's Making. By Una L. Silberrad. Doubleday, Page, & Co. \$1.50.

It is evident why Miss Silberrad loves to take long walks alone. She meets ghosts and they tell her strange tales which she records. There is an element of mystery and mediævalism in the six stories forming her last book. "The Dower Chest of Ann Ponsford" is particularly suggestive of the days when brave knights wedded fair ladies.

Smith—At Close Range. By F. Hopkinson Smith. Illustrated. Scribner. \$1.50.

Text, typography, and illustrations in F. Hopkinson Smith's "At Close Range," give a rare combination supremely to be desired. The leisureliness of the leaded pages made up of short paragraphs invites the reader. For this reason alone, the book would be chosen from among twenty others struggling under the burden of closely printed, block-like pages, with never a niche to take a breath. If publishers only realized how much attractive type has to do with the sale of a book!

The chief characteristic of these nine short stories, tales of "the road," is realism described with a poetic touch—a rare power found only in a person possessed of a strong dual nature. The humor is so infectious, the personality so ingratiating, that the man's opinion on a pile of sawdust would be not only interesting, but valuable. The style has that ineffable something-or-other which holds the attention, whether the author is describing his labors as first aid to a scrub-woman in a Western town, or as a diner at Sherry's. There is the same sense of exhilaration and pleasure as when one is rowed on the Thames with swift, sure strokes, through scenes of enticing loveliness.

For the most part, the stories are of the West, and the actors are drummers, chorus girls, railway employees, etc. Perhaps the best tale in the book is "A Medal of Honor," an incident on a Fall River boat.