We have more than once spoken of Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Master of Ballantrae* in the course of its publication as a serial. Our judgment that it would rank with the very best of his work is confirmed by a re-reading of the story in its book form. It is a tale of extraordinary originality, brilliance, and subtlety of character analysis. As a well-proportioned novel, many readers may prefer "Kidnapped," but in the dramatic force of certain passages—notably in the account of the duel between the Master and his brother, and in that of Mackellar's wild attempt to kill the Master on shipboard—and in the delicate niceties of style by which the contrast of character between the prominent figures is constantly maintained and brought sharply before the reader in a hundred different ways; in the keenness, also, of the analysis of the working of pride, ambition, and total absence of moral sense on a mind of great intellectual strength and admirable natural capacities—in such points as these, we say, the "Master of Ballantrae" is on the very highest level of Mr. Stevenson's genius. It is to be compared in these respects with the best work in some of his earlier short stories, such as that of "A Night with Villon," that called "Sieur de Malotroit's Door," and with "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde," rather than with "Kidnapped" and "Treasure Island." Here, as in the first-named stories, the study of the action and reaction of evil upon moral character has great fascination for the writer, and the depth of his conception and rendering of the struggle between crime and conscience is remarkable. In the "Master of Ballantrae," as in most of the author's books, there is—oddly enough in a tale of romance and adventure—no woman of more than slight importance as a character. The two figures round which the main interest centers are those of the Master—proud, unscrupulous, selfish, brilliant, deep, almost diabolical in cunning and tenacity of evil purpose—and of the Scotch steward Mackellar, who is made most cleverly to show forth in his own narrative his shrewd, homely, common-sense character; and the continual clash of purpose and nature between the brilliant and subtle scoundrel and the dull and faithful family retainer makes one of the best-executed bits of fiction in our literature. The scene shifts twice from Scotland to America; and the Master's adventures on the high seas, in the depths of the forests of the Adirondacks, and in the interior of Hindustan follow one another with a rapidity and variety which show the author's invention and ingenuity to be still his ready servants. The conclusion of the story is startling, rather horribly so, and many readers will find it unsatisfactory. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)