

terious way wins a livelihood for herself and her grandparents. Captain Le Mesurier wins the heart of the heiress but is himself devoted to the penniless sister. Ill-natured gossip and even suspicion of theft do not make him swerve from his loyalty, nor can his cynical old uncle coerce him into worship of the heiress. The plot is really well conceived and well worked out, and the tyrannical uncle blossoms into a first rate fellow. Philip Cartwright, the rector, is one of the most powerful characters in the book, and his gardener, Clutterbuck, adds a refreshing touch of quaintness. The conversation is as brilliant as in *Isabel Carnaby*, but we are not sure that its sharpness does not sometimes run a little too far. It is a scintillating book which no one will find it easy to put down.

1. *The Black Douglas*. By S. R. CROCKETT.

2. *A Modern Mercenary*. By K. & HESKETH PRICHARD
("E. & H. Heron.")

(London: Smith, Elder & Co. 6s. each.)

1. Mr. Crockett has developed a strange taste in fiction. This book is by the same hand as *The Lilac Sun Bonnet*, and it is more uncanny and horrible than *The Red Axe* itself. The demon of the story is the Marshal de Retz, who murders little children and drinks their life blood to find the secret of eternal youth. The lady Sybilla falls under his terrible influence, and lures young William Douglas and his brother to their fate in Edinburgh. The book contains much good fighting, some rather weak love-making, and a succession of horrors that one finds it dreadful to read and hard to forget. The opening of the story promises better things, but no one who has weak nerves should touch this volume.

2. *A Modern Mercenary* is a striking piece of work. John Rallywood, a young Englishman who has lost his fortune, takes service in the army of the little independent Duchy of Maasau, and after nearly six years on the desolate frontier is transferred to the Guard stationed in the capital. He has to win his footing in that exclusive regiment, and is mixed up in many State intrigues and plots, but comes well out of his testing and marries Valerie Selpdorf, the Chancellor's daughter.