

the fortified residence of the French family, in the course of which we are introduced to Diane, the chief heroine, and also to a very companionable New England girl, named Lydia Longby, who has been taken captive by the Abenakis. She is made to play an important part in the story, and her character is admirably contrasted with that of Diane. In any novel worthy of the name the characters in their types should be exhibited with fidelity, force, and the finest sense of dramatic effect. The description of Nanon and her lovers is, I hold, one of the most captivating parts of the whole book. Novelists deal extensively with the passion of love, probably because their readers desire it; but why their readers desire it, is what Rudyard Kipling would call "another story." The other personages, even the minor ones, are touched in with remarkable firmness and truth to nature. The rural scenery and changing sky are depicted with a poetic genius that undoubtedly found its inspiration in the author's love and study of out-door life. The whole story shows that its author made herself thoroughly acquainted with the—allow me to speak plainly—entirely stupid but picturesque era of the Old Régime. Much has been written of this period, and among the works of fiction it has called into being this new romance deserves a foremost position.

RAOUL AND IRON HAND.

The secondary title of this fiction is, "Or Winning the Golden Spurs," and it serves to indicate the work belongs to the category of out-and-out romances, which is the fact. The author is May Holsey Miller, and the book is published by the Harpers. The scene is laid in France at the time that Edward III. was trying to establish his claim to the French Crown. In treating an antique theme, such as this, there must be no inconsistencies of time and place to shock the intelligent reader, and one should rise from the perusal with satisfaction, feeling that the same events might reasonably have been expected to arise under similar circumstances. Again, interest is the very greatest quality a story can possess, as without it all other qualities go for nothing, since the reader either throws down the book as insufferably dull, or goes to sleep over it. If my untutored judgment is not amiss—it is an open question—this romance rises superior to both these tests, trying as they undoubtedly are.