

and the cart-ruts into beauty. Mr. Stevenson has two distinct claims upon the treasury of Fame, and should posterity, outgrowing the taste which has welcomed his tales with such avidity, refuse to honor the draft of the story-teller, it can hardly deny him the meed due the singer.

**

**

The Tale of Balen. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

A rhymed version of a story by Sir Thomas Mallory, in which Mr. Swinburne's lofty muse makes a companion piece to "The Idylls of the King." The story follows the history of two knightly brothers, Balen and Balan, and the crude texture of the old tale of wars and fighting is interwoven with the poet's usual splendor in imagery and verse. The book is delightful at any season, but will be read with special pleasure "While April suns grow strong." The poem opens with the coming of Balen to Camelot in the riotous beauty of spring-tide, when

"The world is sweet in sound and sight,
Glad thoughts and birds take flower and flight,
The heather kindles toward the light,
The whin is frankincense and flame.
And be it for strife, or be it for love,
The falcon quickens as the dove,
When earth is touched from heaven above
With joy that knows no name."

From this felicitous opening, the romance runs smoothly on to the last fateful contest between the two brothers. Never does the reader's interest falter, and always the wonder grows at the charm and beauty and finish of the verse.

Without Sin. By Martin J. Pritchard. Chicago: Hubert S. Stone & Co.

The book is not without interest, being cleverly written; but serves no purpose, either ethical or artistic.

**

**

An Introduction to the Study of American Literature. By Brander Matthews. New York: American Book Co.

While scanning the pages of this most interesting volume one grows quite envious of young readers who are to gather therefrom their first impressions of American literature. It is designed for use in schools and colleges, and while meeting all the requirements of a textbook, affords delightful reading to those who feel they have yet much to learn about a subject of perennial interest. Mr. Matthews' method is original and comprehensive, is suggestive rather than exhaustive. The book is primarily devoted to biographies of the fifteen best known and most representative American writers, and there are four general chapters which treat of other prominent authors, and which consider the past and present conditions of American literature as a whole. Each biography closes with reading references and suggestive questions for school use, and at the end of the book is a complete chronology of the best literature from the colonial period down to the year just past. The intrinsic merit of the book, the strength and ability of the writer, should be known at first hand and are not to be intimated in a paragraph.

