

AMELIA RIVES' ROMANCE, The Witness of the Sun.

Those who said that "The Quick or the Dead" was powerful and interesting but not well written, now have an opportunity of reading another story by the same author, which is strong, absorbing, original and exquisitely expressed. It is called "The Witness of the Sun," and is published in book form.

Whether Miss Rives has read the most intelligent of the criticisms about "The Quick or the Dead," and profited thereby, we do not know. Most of the criticisms were not intelligent. They were the offspring of ignorance, prejudice, conventionality, puritanism and hypocrisy. All defects of style and all crudities and affectations granted, there was enough in the book to prove that the author possessed an original and gifted mind and a rich and extraordinary temperament.

This was confirmed by the remarkable tragedy of "Herod and Mariamne," which showed the author to be a poet and dramatist. She lacks, indeed, the technical knowledge of the dramatist who writes for the stage; but in the splendid expression of superb thoughts in dramatic blank verse she distances all other American authors of the day.

Her capacity for improvement in the mere matter of style is most triumphantly evinced in "The Witness of the Sun." Here she shows herself intimately familiar with all the legitimate devices that rhetoric presents, while at the same time making use of every opportunity that belongs to the poet and the sensuous lover of the beautiful.

We have not space to-day to recount the story in full. It must suffice to say that Ilva, the heroine, is an Italian, and Nodrovine, the hero, is Russian. They love. His mother disapproves of it. In order to bring it to an end she contrives matters so that he shall see his mother passionately embraced by Ilva's father, Count Demarini. A duel between the two men results. The Count is killed, though by an accident.

The young man, taking for granted that Ilva will never wed the slayer of her father, enters a monastery, under a vow of perpetual silence. Thence he is sent on an errand of mercy to the cottage of Vandebec, near the sea. On the sands he encounters Ilva. A reconciliation is effected. All at once he is called to rescue Ilva's little cousin, the child Lotta, who is sinking in a neighboring quicksand. Saving the child he is himself engulfed. Lotta runs to procure aid. Ilva, perceiving the death of her lover inevitable, jumps into the quicksand beside him, and wreathing her arms around him they sink together—the sun the sole witness.

In delineation of character, in thoughtful and poetic comment, in exquisite beauty of description, in the construction and consecutiveness of powerful and dramatic scenes, in the exaltation of devoted and unselfish love as one of the supremest boons of life and possibilities of experience. "The Witness of the Sun" is a very remarkable romance, such as could emanate only from a writer of great and original powers.—*New York Morning Journal*.

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