

IONE MARCH 120  
READ ALL ABOUT IT.

The Reviews were mixed. Crockett was by now an established bestseller which meant that even more than before, critical responses to his work were based as much on the leanings and business dealings of the reviewers as on any 'real' merit. It's the same today, think of any bestselling or 'celebrity' author (I mean the ones who write their own books!) and you'll find there's often a gap between the critical and popular view of the work. Although today there are many more outlets to 'puff' work and the 'system' has become perhaps more extreme - ever more adept at blanket bombing the consumer with 'hype' and at the same time the literary elite even more entrenched in their version of authoritative 'quality.' You can't beat forming your own opinion, and the reviews below are given more to offer you a sense of contemporary context rather than as any endorsement or other of a view on how 'good' the novel was and is.

**Literature 'The Graphic' July 1899.**

Mr Crockett has shaken the dust of the Kailyard from his feet before writing 'Ione March,' But for one Scotchwoman, mitigated by residence in London, and an Irish husband, who mentions 'laverocks' and 'linties' on page 138, the style is a well of English undefiled. The heroine is a charming American. The preface is dedicated to Mr Crockett's 'earliest and best American friends' and testifies to his 'deep and sincere love for America.'

There are some distinctly lively and convincing folk in the book, and more than one caricature. We do not feel the extraordinary Seer and Seeress to be either convincing or necessary to the story; the widow's amatory advances to the hero are *vieux jeu*; and the sprightly Idalia is overdrawn, if amusing. But Ione herself is a success - good but not goody, full of pluck, without effrontery, and her adventures when she faces London alone, discarding the shelter of her father's millions, are natural and interesting. There is a slight tendency to sentimentalise over the deserving Jane Allen and her love troubles, but a healthy attachment to the Scotch landlady's son promises to relieve the reader's heart of any oppressive pity. Nor are our feelings over-harrowed when Ione develops pernicious anaemia. We know Mr Crockett will not have the heart to kill her, nor has he. The artist, Mr Frank Richards, has given us some uncommonly clever sketches of the various male characters, but his female subjects differ from themselves in every fresh illustration. Compare Jane Allen on page 108, a gaunt woman of fifty, with Jane Allen on page 247, a coquettish-looking, fashionable girl of twenty or thereabouts. However, the lavish illustrations help to make the book as good to look at as the author has made it pleasant to read.

## The Bookman July 20th 1899

In a note on one of the fly-leaves, Mr Crockett tells us that 'portions of this story appeared in the 'Woman at Home' under the title of 'The Woman of Fortune.' The book has been not only enlarged, but entirely re-written, and connoisseurs in texts and first editions will find absorbing employment in comparing the novel in its serial form with the book as it now appears. We are not ashamed to confess that we spent the greater part of a hot afternoon collating the two. The only complaint we have to make is that the Jay family of the magazine should be the Judd family of the volume. Jay is a pretty word; Idalia Jay was a charming type of American girl; but Idalia Judd - we do not like our rose by any other name. Who can mention the word 'Judd' without thinking of inks and dyes and gold and silver paint?

Mr Crockett's splendid fertility as a romancer has never been more conspicuous than during the last two years. 'The Black Douglas' and 'Joan of the Sword Hand' are more than equal to 'The Raiders.' The July installment of 'Joan' in the Windsor contains some of his finest writing. There may be readers here and there who cannot understand why a busy Londoner in this burning weather should rejoice to know that the Red Lion flies at Kernsberg and that Conrad of Courtland has not yet become my Lord Cardinal, but the great public loves the man who can open the golden doors of the past and bring us into the company of knights and ladies of ancient days. The pavement of Ludgate hill is cooler because the stream flows under the walls of Plassenberg. But Mr Crockett knows other seas than the Baltic and Solway, and his literary horizon is not bounded by the hills of Galloway or the plains of Central Europe. His prefatory letter to Mr and Mrs George L Jewitt of New York, proves that America has a warm place in his heart, and that he finds the American girl of to-day as charming a heroine as the Joans and Margarets and Marjories of the Middle Ages. As for Kearney Jay, or Kearney Judd, Mr Crockett offers an explanation. 'The mean American I had never heard of nor yet read of, till we three met him together under the glittering stars of the winder Engandine.' So Kearney Jay, alias Judd, was a real personage, and Mr Crockett remembers 'with joy your own pregnant reply to that young gentleman's boast.'

'I am not often taken for an American', he said and smiled.'

'When you are, for heaven's sake don't give your country away,' said one of you; and the young man stopped smiling.'

In *The Woman at Home* 'Ione March' delighted many thousands of readers, and this beautiful volume should find thousands of purchasers. The Alpine chapters are as good as Leslie Stephen or Mr Whympier; it is a holiday to read them.'

More reviews to come in August...