

OUR LADY OF THE BEECHES. By The Baroness Von Hutten.

ALL in all, "Our Lady of the Beeches" is an exceptional book. Its subtle psychology of falling in love, its passionate situations, and its tender, disturbing sentiments make it a book to be taken up and read "reverently, discreetly, and advisedly."

But that is just what you cannot do. I read the first page, and then it gripped me. I read it all the way from town, and tramped eight blocks from the cars, bumping into lamp-posts, trees, cows, and people, but never once closing the book. And when the last page was reached, I put it down with a pang that I could not forget it and start it all over again.

But the story! There are only four people in it, and no villain. But what of that?

"In tragic life, God wot no villain need be! Passions spin the plot. We are betrayed by what is false within."

The lover is a bachelor physician, slightly over the meridian of life. He is an author of note, and he has a laboratory, or as the woman described it, a place where he made "Nasty messes in crucibles and soap-bubbly things that explode."

The Lady of the Beeches was one of those unusual women who could no more help attracting men to her than a magnet to steel filings. And she had piquancy, that saving grace of heroines and mortal women. No wonder the Doctor fell in love with her. Any mitigation of feeling on his part would have been inexcusable.

But—she was married. True, her liege-lord wandered all over the world and left her alone in the Beeches; true her weary soul was stifled with too much masking, but nevertheless it was a very shabby trick for the sly godling, Dan Cupid, to play the lovers, and it was not to be wondered that the two plucked out his arrows with resentment.

Without a doubt, it was highly improper for our hero and heroine to slip into an adoration that was warmer than it was wise, but then people who are not all ice and immaculateness sometimes do highly improper things.

But this was all. There was no cup of flame, just one kiss, and a parting forever.

—And sorrow, too, but quoth the woman, "It is a sorrow sweeter than all the happiness in the world."

Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

THE BATTLE WITH THE SLUMS. By Jacob A. Riis.

TEN years ago, Jacob Riis wrote a remarkable book, entitled, "How the Other Half Live." "The Battle with the Slums" is its sequel. As we turn its pages, and eagerly follow the moving story of how the slum denizens of New York have been "druv into decency," we realize more vividly than ever that he is a brave man who dares say anything is impossible.

And Jacob Riis knows the slums. He was born in them. He tells us this incident about his boyhood. "It is in the retrospect that one sees how far we have come, after all, and from that gathers courage for the rest of the way. Thirty-two years have passed since I slept in a police-station lodging-house, a lonely boy, who was robbed, beaten, and thrown out for protesting; and when the vagrant cur that joined its homelessness to mine, and had sat all night at the door, waiting for me to come out,—it had been clubbed away the night before—snarled and showed its teeth at the door-man, raging and impotent, I saw it beaten to death on the step. I little dreamed then that the friendless beast, dead, should prove the undoing of the monstrous wrong done by the maintenance of these evil holes to every man and woman who was without shelter in New York; but it did. It was after an inspection of the lodging-room, when I stood with Theodore Roosevelt,