

A PLUCKY WOMAN

A WOMAN'S PART IN A REVOLUTION.—By *Mrs. John Hays Hammond. Longmans, Green & Co.*
\$1.00.

WHAT gives this little book its value, quite apart from the humor, vivacity, and tenderness Mrs. Hammond has thrown into it, is its air of reality. The study of history would be a very different thing if at every crisis a clever, sympathetic woman were at hand to jot down its leading incidents in Mrs. Hammond's easy and natural style. She gives us, of course, merely the outside husk, the casual personal trappings of the Johannesburg revolt. The book does not profess to sum up the Transvaal situation, or to give any narrative of the events which led up to the formation of the Reform Committee and made an appeal to arms both just and necessary. It is simply a record of what Mrs. Hammond saw and did and endured during those exciting months in the first half of 1896. Few women could have suffered more, and fewer still could have borne themselves through it all with such admirable courage. Quite unconsciously Mrs. Hammond shows herself to be one of those rare women that men like to have around when there is serious work to be done. "A woman's part in a revolution," says Mrs. Hammond at the end of her book, "is a very poor part to play. There is little hazard and no glory in it." We should prefer to have Mr. Hammond's opinion on that point.

After a capital description of the arming of Johannesburg and the consternation produced by Dr. Jamieson's defeat, Mrs. Hammond comes to the day when her husband, with the three other leaders of the Reform Committee, was arrested, and thrown into the Pretoria Prison. "The four leaders were put into a cell 11' x 11', which was closed in by an inner court. There was no window, only a narrow grille over the door. The floor was of earth and overrun by vermin. Of the four canvas cots, two were blood-stained and all hideously dirty. They were locked in at 6 o'clock—one of them ill with dysentery—and there they remained sweltering and gasping through the tropical night until 6 of the morning. For two weeks they remained in this cell. Meanwhile I knew nothing of my husband's plight, being mercifully deceived by both him and our friends; every day Mr. Heath bringing to Parktown telegrams from my husband, assuring me of his good

treatment by the government, and imploring me not to worry." Mr. Hammond's health completely broke down and acute symptoms of dysentery developed. At the end of a fortnight Mrs. Hammond received permission to remove him into a cottage, with a Boer officer and a guard of thirteen men to keep strict watch over them. "Efforts to induce Mr. Hammond to take a little exercise in the garden I soon gave over. After a few steps (a guard only two feet behind him) he would be utterly exhausted, and would almost faint away on reaching his chair again. Under these petty irritations my husband showed an angelic patience and fortitude that alarmed me. It was so unlike his normal self. I longed to hear him cuss a cozy swear; it would have braced us both. But he was gentle and appreciative of little kindnesses; so, to keep from weakening tears, I took to swearing myself." Leave was at length granted to move Mr. Hammond to his own home in Johannesburg. Thence he was allowed to go on to Cape Town. An untimely sea-bath brought back all his serious symptoms, and the journey to Pretoria, where he insisted on returning sooner than break his parole, was one long torture. Two days later he was sentenced to be hanged, by a judge especially imported from the Orange Free State for that purpose, and in defiance of a definite pledge that the Reformers should not be tried by the old Dutch code, which punished treason with death. The President's failure to promptly commute this vicious sentence roused the whole of South Africa against him. What Mrs. Hammond suffered during this intolerable delay may be guessed from one pathetic sentence: "The day was without hours to me—a dry, aching stretch of time; I had no tears to shed!" Scarcely less hard to bear were the seven wearisome weeks that followed, the prisoners still in jail and the President putting off from day to day his promise to pass a final verdict. There is a very bright and amusing description of the wholesale smuggling practiced by the Reformers' wives. "Mrs. Solly Joel as she passed daily through the prison gate was a complete buttery. The crown of her hat was filled with cigars; suspended from her waist, under her dainty summer silk skirt, hung a bottle of cream. Tied to her back, by way of a bustle, was a brace of duck, or a roasted fowl wrapped neatly in linen. She said this gave her a slightly out-of-date appearance, but she did not mind that." Ultimately Mr. Hammond was released on the payment of a fine of \$125,000, and after pledging himself not to interfere in Transvaal politics again. Our own opinion is that the trials he and his wife underwent were cheap at the price of this brisk and excellent book. But that, as Mrs. Hammond would say, is "a man's view." It is a reviewer's also.

