

....*The Bloody Chasm*, a novel, by J. W. De Forest (Appletons), is a romance which deals with the prejudices entailed by our war and has the merit of being short, which, by the way, is becoming the rule with American stories and may be carried so far as to discourage the writing of the larger novel, in three volumes, like "Vanity Fair" or "Henry Esmond," supposing that we are ever to have in this country an author capable of such works. The plot of the present story is not new. It turns on the alienation of a Northern man and his Southern wife by the force of political prejudice, the man's courting the wife after marriage and winning her *incognito*. All this is managed well by Mr. De Forest, with considerable descriptive power and acquaintance with Southern society. It must be a recent thing, however, if the Southern Negroes address gentlemen as "Boss." We had supposed that this was a kind of torment reserved for gentlemen in the North. Certainly, well-bred servants in the "Beaufort family" would not be guilty of such a Dutch vulgarity. "General Hilton" is a fine character, well and truly drawn. "Virginia" has the irrational, blind, and petulant passion of her race, without the superb counterbalancing qualities which are required to make her a Southern lady and to save her from the charge of being unnatural. "Nora Macmorran" is a nice girl, who shows the hot-house influence of the Roman Catholic training in the loss of individuality and in that kind of *morbidity* which was so much complained of by "Sister Augustine." The funeral marriage is a sentimental device which the book never recovers from. And as to Underhill, his virtues and attractions, such as they are, are due to verbal attribution. Considerable pains has been taken with the dialect of "Aunt Chloe." Looking at this novel in another light, it would seem to be a pity if the "bloody chasm" cannot be bridged over in this country without taking the parties to Paris to do it. If that consummation is ever achieved (and we think it is rapidly approaching), it will be by means that lie in our own system, and not by calling in the French, as if we were all back in the Yorktown days, a hundred years ago. The business of the novelist who undertakes this theme is to solve it on the soil by an American solution, and not to turn tail the moment the problem grows difficult and run off to Paris. The conclusion we draw from this manœuver is that the author has played a trick on us in the name given to his book; that he really has on his mind no deep political and social problem to solve, but only two people to be married.