



BY "THE SAGE."

MESSRS. UPTON AND CO. forward me Rider Haggard's new historical romance, *Lysbeth*, published in Longman's Colonial Library. The author takes the Netherlands for the scene of his story, and to quote from his author's note, "by an example of the trials and adventures and victories of a burgher family of the generation of Philip II. and William the Silent, he strives to set before his readers of to-day something of the life of those who lived through perhaps the most fearful tyranny that the western world has known. How did they live one wonders; how is it they did not die of very terror, those of them who escaped the scaffold, the famine and the pestilence?" This is certainly one of Rider Haggard's best books. He handles his subject with a masterly hand, and his characters live and move. Lysbeth van Hout, the daughter and heiress of a deceased Leyden shipowner, and her lover, Dirk van Goorl, were at the skating carnival on the frozen moat at Leyden. Each contestant in the principal sleigh race of the day is permitted to select a lady to ride with him. Count Juan de Montalvo, a Spaniard, invites Lysbeth to ride the race in his sleigh, and through the dilatoriness of her lover, circumstances compel her to accept. With the masterfulness of an oppressing race, and many treacherous machinations, the Spaniard manages to work in such a way that Lysbeth is forced into a false marriage with him, and it afterwards appears he has another wife. Lysbeth bears a son, Adrian. The count

gets into trouble, and is condemned to the galleys, and Lysbeth's old lover, Dirk, marries her, and acts a father's part to her son. The horrors of the Spanish Inquisition are at their height. Brant, an old friend of Dirk's, who is also of the new religion, writes commending his daughter and the fortune he has accumulated and left "for the defence of our country, the freedom of religious faith, and the destruction of the Spaniards," to his care, as he knows he himself will be a victim to the cruel Spaniards. Dirk's own son, Foy, and Red Martin, a Frisian giant, in Dirk's employ, go to the Hague, and under incredible difficulties carry off the casks containing the treasure, and with the help of Martha the Mare, the water-wife (whose wrongs have driven her to wreak vengeance on the Spanish tyrants whenever opportunity offered), manage to successfully hide it in the Haarlem Mere. Montalvo again appears in the scene in a different character, and is determined to secure this treasure for himself. For an account [of how he speeds and the complicated details of his treacherous schemes, which involve his son Adrian, I must refer the reader to the book, wherein will also be read with interest the machinations of his assistant spies, Hague Simon and Black Meg, the doughty deeds done by Red Martin and his great sword, which he tore from the hands of the headman who was about to execute him, and the siege of Leyden, and the subsequent defeat of the tyrannical Spaniards.