

European settlers in Rhodesia are unanimously of opinion that assaults on white women by Kaffirs must be put down with a strong hand, and the vast majority agree with the suggestion of the *Bulawayo Chronicle* that a Bill should be introduced into the Legislative Council making such offences punishable by death. The outrage, which led to the recent attempt to lynch a prisoner at Bulawayo, was the last of a long series which has established a sort of reign of terror among the suburban dwellers. Those who blame the attitude of the Rhodesian settlers in regard to the treatment of the criminal element among the natives forget that the Rhodesian Kaffir, unlike the negro of the Southern States, has not been disciplined by decades of servitude. It is the one crime which in our opinion more than any deserves death; but lynching must be put down with a stern hand, and the majesty of the law respected.

A Book of the Week.

THE FOUR FEATHERS.*

In this story Mr. Mason has broken fresh ground altogether, and written a wholly original tale—original in matter and in treatment.

His hero, Harry Feversham, is one of those highly-strung, nervous beings who mistake their own vivid imaginings for cowardice. They shrink from deeds which the heavy common-place soldier would do quite calmly, not because they are afraid, but because they realise what he fails to do—the result of failure. They are most like Kipling's elephant, in the delightful dialogue between the various Indian baggage animals called "Soldiers of the Queen." It will be remembered that the elephant there explains that he cannot be trusted to draw the guns into action, "because he can see quite plainly, inside his head, what will happen if a shell bursts"; while the stupid oxen, who love their lives every whit as well as he, will walk fearlessly up to the very cannon's mouth through sheer lack of imagination.

Harry Feversham is the only son of a soldier, and the last descendant of a family of soldiers; that he should enter the Army is a foregone conclusion. He is, *au fond*, a young man of the most strenuous and exalted courage, but the strength of his imagination prevents him from realising that this is so. He becomes engaged to be married to Ethne Eustace; and almost immediately on the engagement his regiment is ordered upon active service.

Hereupon Harry sends in his papers, and his reason for doing so seems to be precisely this: He is not afraid; but he is afraid he may be afraid, and though he could face this possibility for himself, he dare not risk the risk of being afraid, in his capacity as Ethne's lover, since he thinks his extremely hypothetical dishonour would be reflected on her. It is a strained position, but a perfectly possible one, as everyone who has had the training of highly-strung children will be quick to recognise.

But Ethne Eustace is apparently no psychologist. While in her company Harry receives a little cardboard box, containing the visiting cards of three of his fellow-officers and three white feathers. Ethne demands an explanation, and Harry gives it at once.

* By A. E. W. Mason. Smith, Elden and Co.

Wholly failing to see that the man who has the courage to own the truth—such truth—frankly, to the woman whose good opinion is more to him than all the world besides, can be no coward, even though he may be a trifle foolish, Ethne has the inconceivable brutality to break a white feather from her own fan, and hand it to Harry with the other three, in token of complete dismissal.

By this action the heroine completely alienates the sympathy of the reader, who, of course, sees from the first that Harry is the reverse of a coward; and this the more when he promptly goes to his father and relates all that has passed, his father receiving him with the same uncomprehending contempt as his betrothed.

By what herculean labours and demonstrations Harry succeeds in vindicating his courage to the dull and unsympathetic young woman who has put such insult on him must be learned from the pages of the book itself. Durrance, Harry's great friend, is a delightful person, also enamoured of the self-satisfied Ethne. The part concerning the blindness of Durrance, and the resulting extraordinary sharpening of all his faculties, is quite admirable, and forms perhaps the most interesting part of the book. One wishes that Harry had a better reward to which to return after his struggles; but if he was satisfied, doubtless the reader should be so also.

G. M. R.

Other Times, Other Manners.

Girls were unmuscular and meek
When they were drawn by Mrs. Gaskell,
Not yet with driver nor with cleek
Did they propel the bounding Haskell.
They did not live alone in flats,
Play hockey, shoot, and swim like otters,
Evince surprise by crying "Rats!"
Or call their male acquaintance "rotters."
—*Punch Almanack.*

What to Read.

"A Week in a French Country House. By Adelaide Sartoris.
"Italy and the Italians." By Edward Hutton.
"Celebrities and I." By Henriette Corkran.
"Kitwyk: a Story." By Mrs. John Lane.
"Reflections of Ambrosine." By Elinor Glyn.
"Youth: a Narrative." By Joseph Conrad.
"Three Years' War: October 1899-June, 1902." By Christian Rudolf de Wet.
"His Majesty Baby, and Some Common People." By Ian Maclaren.

Coming Events.

December 6th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. The Winter Social Gathering will be held in the Medical School Library, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 4.30 to 6.30.

December 8th.—Meeting at St. Andrew's House to discuss State Registration of Trained Nurses, by the kind permission of Miss Edith Debenham. Speakers—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss Isla Stewart. Mrs. May Dickinson Berry, M.D., will preside, 8.30.

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