

## A Book of the Week.

## SIR MORTIMER.\*

Everyone who has read Mr. Mason's story which he called "The Four Feathers" ought to read "Sir Mortimer." For the underlying idea of the book, spite of the Elizabethan trappings in which Sir Mortimer Ferne makes his bow to us, is essentially the same. A man wrote the first-named book; a woman wrote the second; and now mark the difference of treatment. In both books the man comes to the woman he loves, and who loves him—the woman, who is his betrothed—and to her with his own lips confesses himself coward. Mr. Mason's hero had shirked a campaign; Sir Mortimer had, under torture, betrayed his friends to the Spaniards—a far more heinous crime against honour and manhood than that a young man, newly engaged, should shrink from leaving England and all he loved.

But the woman, in the man's story, has only contempt and scorn and repudiation for her lover. All is over between them; she echoes the cry of "Coward!" which his brother officers have fastened on him; her love gives way under the strain.

What says the woman in the woman's story?

"I know that thou goest forth—I know that thou mayest never, never, never return. . . . O my God! If thou mightest only make me thy wife before thou goest!"

"He arose and drew her into his arms. 'The story is true,' he whispered; to which she answered—

"I care not! Sayst thou, 'A thing was done.' Say I, 'Thou didst it!' And high above the deed, I love thee still."

"My dear love, it cannot be," he says, in answer to her entreaties that he would take her with him. "Flower of women! Didst dream that I would leave thee here blasted by my name, or that I would carry thee where I must go? Star of my earth, to-day we say a clean farewell."

"Then God be with thee," she said brokenly.

"And yet again he asks her, 'Forget me not when I am gone.'

"When thou art gone!" she cried, "when thou art gone, with all my mind I'll hold myself thy bride! In those strange countries beneath the sun if bitterness comes over thee"—she put her hand to her heart—"think of thy fireside here. Think, 'Even in this wavering life I have an abiding home, a heart that's true, true, true to me!' When thou diest—if thou diest first—linger for me; where a thousand years are as a day, travel not so far that I may not overtake thee. Mortimer, Mortimer, Mortimer! I'll not believe in a God Who at the last says not to me, 'That path he took.' When He says it, listen for my flying feet. Oh, my dear, listen for my flying feet!"

Here is the love with which women redeem men; here is the faith which can remove even the mountain of dishonour. And at the end of the story, the burning faith of the woman who loved Mortimer Ferne through evil report and good report is amply justified.

The story was somewhat marred to me by a curious printer's blunder on page 114, by which several lines, or even pages, seem to have been omitted. What is

By Mary Johnston. (Constable.)

left out made a good deal of what follows somewhat obscure to me. It seems incredible that a proof-reader should not have seen that something was missing; for we are in one line reading what the English officers said one to another while awaiting their Spanish guests, and in the next line they appear to have been some time at table, and Mexia answers a speech which is not recorded. From the blunder occurring in the middle of a page, it seems as though it must exist in all the copies; and in a future edition it should certainly be looked to. G. M. R.

## Words.

Words are great forces in this realm of life,  
Be careful of their use. Who talks of hate,  
Of poverty, of sickness, but sets rife  
These very elements to mar his fate.

When love, health, happiness, and plenty hear  
Their names repeated over day by day,  
They wing their way like answering fairies near,  
Then nestle down within our homes to stay.

Who talks of evil conjures into shape  
The formless thing and gives it life and scope.  
This is the law: then let no word escape  
That does not breathe of everlasting hope.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

## What to Read.

"New Poems." By Ronald Campbell Macfie.

"Eleanor Ormerod, LL.D., Economic Entomologist." Autobiography and Correspondence. Edited by Robert Wallace.

"The Faith of Men." By Jack London.

"The New Era in South Africa." By Violet R. Markham.

"The Coarsening of National Ideals." By John Watson, D.D.

## Coming Events.

May 31st.—Costume Ball at the Royal Albert Hall, in aid of the Charing Cross Hospital Improvements Fund.

June 3rd.—The Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales give their patronage to a Concert organised by Signorina Giulia Ravogli at the Queen's Hall in aid of the Appeal Fund of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

June 6th.—English Nurses entertain American Nurses at Dinner, Miss Isla Stewart presiding.

June 8th.—Princess Henry of Battenberg attends the Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association, Sunderland House, Curzon Street, Earl Grey presiding.

June 8th.—The Duchess of Connaught opens a grand bazaar at Prince's Skating Rink in aid of the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth.

June 12th.—Hospital Sunday.

June 13th to 18th.—Opening of the International Congress of Women in the Philharmonic, Bernburger Strasse, Berlin, 9 a.m.

June 17th.—Meeting of the International Council of Nurses in the Victoria Lyceum, Potsdamer Str., Berlin, 10 a.m.

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