

abundant evidence. The Treasurer of the appeal fund is Colonel Francis H. Welch, F.R.C.S., 8, Brandram Road, Lee, S.E.

A stirring account is given by the *Morning Leader* of a greatwhale hunt in the island of Yell, one of the northern islands of the Shetland group, mainly conducted by the women of Basta Voe. The men of Basta Voe are nearly all away during the summer months selling their herrings; and consequently from June to September the whole district is left in charge of the lassies, with just the laird and the clergyman, and perhaps a shopkeeper or two. In the beautiful clearness of an early summer morning, with never a ripple in the bay, the sea suddenly began to move in a strange manner, as though somebody was stirring it up from down below. Little jets of water shot up into the air, and there soon arose a mighty splashing and flapping. Basta Voe was awake in half a minute. "Whales! Whales!" was the cry. Close in to the shore were nearly 100 sportive leviathans, having a very merry time of it. Out came the boats, "manned" by the women, stealing off seawards to cut off all ways of retreat, and to hem in the unsuspecting whales. The deadly cordon of the women of Basta Voe drew closer and closer in, and the whales began to get anxious. The shouts of the few people remaining on the beach, and the shrill cries of the hunters in the water, filled the whales with consternation, and the leader of the shoal made a sudden dash for the open sea. He was turned back, however. Meanwhile the whalers had been joined by the schoolmistress, who, hearing of the gorgeous excitement going on in the bay, gave her children a holiday at once, ran to her boat, and headed the attacking party. The second attempt at escape on the part of the head whale proved disastrous. In his bewilderment he "swam blind" and stranded himself in shallow water. If a whale hunt is to be successful, it is absolutely necessary to "draw blood" as soon as the first victim is driven ashore. There were no weapons in the boats; but a young Yell girl solved the difficulty by rushing up-shore and returning shortly afterwards with a large pitchfork. She plunged waist-deep into the sea and stabbed the luckless whale in the side. With their leader dead, the rest of the whales gave up very quickly. In twos and threes they were driven ashore, until over eighty were successfully and safely beached. At least three score whales were killed, and the only weapons used were the Yell maiden's pitchfork and an old and rusty bayonet.

Under the Agricultural and Technical Instruction Act more than eighty women are now employed in Ireland as Poor Law inspectors, sanitary and school attendance inspectors, and as organisers and lecturers in hygienic cookery and domestic economy. One of the most recently appointed is Miss C. O'Connor Eccles, well known in this country as a writer. Miss O'Connor Eccles will spend some months in Ireland lecturing to her compatriots on how to make the home healthy, comfortable and beautiful, and organising schemes for the benefit of Irish women.

It is announced that by an imperial ukase recently promulgated in St. Petersburg women who wish to practise medicine are placed on exactly the same footing as men. The way is freely opened to them to obtain not only a licence to practise but the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Women who have obtained the title of

doctor at a foreign university are admissible at once to the Russian State Examination. For admission to the Institute for the Education of Medical Women, the possession of a leaving certificate of a recognised girls' school and the passing of a "not too severe" entrance examination are required. The candidate must not, however, be a Jewess, and she must not be less than nineteen nor more than twenty-eight years of age. A Jewess can be admitted only if the number of co-religionists in the institute does not exceed 3 per cent. of the whole number of students. Applicants for admission to the institute who have neither home nor relations in St. Petersburg will be compelled to live in a hostel specially established for the purpose.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE SOVEREIGN POWER.\*

Miss Simpson is a writer who made a very promising *début*. Her "Bonnet Conspirators" had a smack of originality, combined with a directness and brevity of diction which, while sometimes approaching the bald, had at least the merit of never being tedious. Her present effort is on a far more ambitious scale; and in a style so different that one hardly can believe its authorship to be the same.

The faults of it are far more obvious, far more numerous, than those of her former book. The greatest and worst of these is the intolerable verbosity with which, this time, she has elected to enwrap her meaning. In the opening scene—the yard of an inn—she takes six closely-printed pages to tell us that the place was crowded, that there was to be a review, that people were fighting for places on the coach, and that the innkeeper and his staff were very busy. On page 4 we have a sentence of fourteen lines in length, and several of from eight to nine lines. And this fault of unnecessary and obscuring verbiage pursues her throughout the book. Notably, on page 225, in the midst of a thrilling love scene, the young man asks a question which the author permits the heroine to reply to on page 227—after two long pages of wholly superfluous explanation of her state of mind.

But, if Miss Simpson had been fortunate enough to have a critic who could have persuaded her to cut out at least fifty-eight pages of her total 358, and if the same critic could have carefully read her proofs, corrected such things as "*Vites, mon cher*," and "*nicht wüßr*," and eliminated all the specimens of the Chevalier's broken English, we should have had a very readable, exciting romance.

The scene is laid in the times of the threatened Napoleonic invasion. Two conspirators are in the south of England, plotting a *coup*. One of these is a young Scottish Jacobite, with a life feud against the house of Hanover. The other—as complete a villain as you shall meet in the pages of fiction—passes as a Frenchman, but is in reality a renegade Englishman, one Beau Mont Temple, supposed to have died on the guillotine during the reign of terror. The heroine is Lucilla, daughter of the said scoundrel, and as perfect an angel as daughters of scoundrelly fathers are wont to be in fiction. She lives in England with her stepmother—they are refugees from the Terror.

Lucilla's beauty makes everyone her slave. She is

\* By Violet Simpson. (Smith, Elder, and Co.)

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