

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE LONG ROLL." *

This volume tells, with a wealth of detail, the history of the American Civil War.

"I've thought and thought," said Allan; "people mean well, and yet there's such a lot of dreadful tragedy in the world."

"I quite agree with you there," quoth the miller, "and I certainly don't deny that slavery is responsible for a lot of bitter feeling. For some suffering to negroes, too, and for a deal of harm to almost all whites. And I, for one, will be powerful glad when every negro man and woman is free. . . . But it isn't an easy subject, look at it which way you will."

The description of how the Declaration of War reached Greenwood is dramatically told:—

"In the Greenwood drawing-room after candle-light they had a little dance. Negro fiddlers, two of them born musicians, came from the quarter. They were dressed in an elaborate best; they were as suavely happy as tropical children, and beamingly eager for the credit in the dance as in all things else of 'de fambly.' Down came the bow upon the strings; out upon the April night floated 'Mohly Musk.' All the furniture was pushed aside; the polished floor gave back the light. The night was mild, the windows partly open, the young girls dancing in gowns of summery stuff. . . . The laughter swelled, waves of brightness went through the ancient room. . . . From the porch came a burst of negro voices.

"Who dat comin' up de drive? Who dat Gelert?"

"Dat's Marster."

"Go 'way, 'ooman. Don' tell me; he in Richmond'."

"Dat's Marster!"

"The reel ended suddenly. There was a sound of dismounting, a step upon the porch, a voice. A minute later the master of Greenwood entered the drawing-room. Behind him came Richard Cleeve. From the two men, travel-stained, fatigued, pale with some suppressed emotion, there sped to the gayer company a subtle wave of expectation and alarm. Miss Lucy was the first whom it reached. 'What is it, brother?' she said quickly. Cousin William followed 'For God's sake, Cary, what has happened?' Edward spoke from behind the piano. 'Has it come, father?' 'Yes, it has come, Edward,' said the master of the house."

The desperate enthusiasm of all classes and of both sexes for the comfort of the soldiers and the relief of the wounded is described with forceful examples of self-sacrifice:—

"It was hard to get mattresses enough. So many hospitals, and everyone has given and given. So at last some one thought of pew cushions. They have been taken from every church in the towns. See! Sewn together they do very well.

* By Mary Johnston. (Constable & Co. London.)

. . . . Look at this pile, too, from town. Tarlatan dresses cut into nets, and these surgeons' aprons made from damask table cloths! And the last fringed towels that somebody was saving, with the monogram so beautifully done. Look! I'll scrape lint in my sleep every night for a hundred years.' She indicated a pair of crutches, worn smooth with use. To one a slip of paper was tied with a thread. On it was written: 'I kin mannedge with a stick.'"

One is compelled to admiration of the splendid work done by the women who volunteered to tend the sick and wounded in the awful surroundings of an era when sick nursing was but a rough and ready art.

"The ward was long, low ceiled, with brown walls and rafters. Between the patches of lamp-light the shadows lay wide and heavy. The place seemed one groan, a sound that swelled or sank, but never ceased. The shadows on the wall, fantastically dancing, mocked this with nods and becks and waving arms; mocked the groaning, mocked the heat, mocked the smell, mocked the thirst, mocked nausea, agony, delirium, and the rattle in the throat; mocked the helpers and the helped, mocked the night and the world, and the dying and the dead. At dawn the cannon began again."

There are, beside these ghastly incidents of the war, the love story of Judith Cary and Richard Cleeve, and passages describing peaceful domestic scenes. In all these the writer excels, but it is the war that calls forth her very best, and it cannot be gainsaid that her best is very good indeed. It is a book that has deservedly gained distinction on account of its unusual vigour and power.

H. H.

READ.

"While Caroline was Growing." By Josephine D. Bacon.

"Her Husband's Country." By Sybil Spottiswoode.

VERSES.

Trust him little who doth raise
To one height both great and small,
And sets the sacred crown of praise,
Smiling, on the head of all.
Trust him less who looks around
To censure all with scornful eyes,
And in everything has found
Something that he dare despise.
But for him who stands apart,
Stirred by nought that can befall,
With a cold, indifferent heart,
Trust him least and last of all.

—*Adelaide Ann Proctor.*

COMING EVENT.

September 6th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Weekly meeting of Standing Committee on National Insurance Bill. 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 8 p.m.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)