

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"FIRE IN STUBBLE."*

No lack of interest or plot or charm is there in this latest work of Baroness Orczy. Intrigue and love, when skilfully mixed, make very pleasant reading, and the pen which sets them forth is an adept in both these matters.

The story sets forth how that Rose Marie, the only and lovely daughter of M. Legros, the wealthy Court tailor, had, in infancy, been espoused to one Rupert Kestyon, himself a child of tender age. Fortune's wheel, in his case, turned from poverty and obscurity to wealth, and the honourable position of Earl of Stowmaries. He had not seen his child-bride since his espousals, and on reaching manhood conceives the dastardly plot of freeing himself from this union, by persuading his cousin Michael to personate him when he is called upon to ratify his engagement, and claim his bride. He then purposed to get his marriage annulled, on the score of his wife's faithlessness. Therefore, it may be seen, that there is ample material of interest.

The mock nuptials are concluded with a dance in the workshop of M. Legros, tailor-in-chief to His Majesty the King of France.

The couples fell back one by one, panting against the wall, while only one pair remained in the centre, now twirling and twirling in a cloud of dust. The man's head was bent, for he was over-tall, and towered above every one else in the room. He was a head taller than she was, but he looked straight down at her, as he held her, straight into her eyes—those beautiful blue eyes of hers, which he had thought so cold.

"How it all happened afterwards she could never say. She had been dancing with her lord, looking up into his face, glowing with ardent love. She was still so dizzy, with the frantic whirl of the dance, that she hardly remembered being lifted into the saddle, and landed safely in the strong arms of her lord. In the forefront were papa and mamma, half laughing, half crying, waving hands and mopping tears. . . . No other ride had been just like this one. Just one slight shifting of her lissome body, to settle more comfortably—one little movement, which seemed to bring her yet a little nearer to him.

"Is it well with you, my snowdrop?" he asked." Wild and lawless Michael, who had undertaken this base deed for gold, is caught hopelessly in the toils of sweet Rose Marie, but he is yet determined not to lose his prize. "I am a man, and what I do I do." Papa Legros, on being informed of the trick that has been practised on his child, pursues the couple hotly, and brings back his idolised daughter the same evening.

So Michael's punishment begins. His love for Rose Marie transforms him from a reprobate to a chivalrous gentleman (rather too miraculously

we are inclined to think). After a series of events of the most exciting character, we cannot help being somehow glad when they are once more re-united, though, at the same time, we feel that it is all quite wrong that a man of Michael's character should be whitewashed in this romantic fashion. His trial as a Papist and traitor is most dramatically told, and Rose Marie's evidence that he was with her on the dates in question saves his head from being exhibited at Tyburn.

Michael, frantic at this public smirching of her fair name, with a cry as that of a wild animal wounded to death, bounded forward to where his snowdrop stood.

"My lord, my lord!" he cried, 'will you not stop this desecration of the holiest thing on earth?' He had sunk on one knee, his arm still around the form of his beloved. No one would have dared to touch him then, for he was like a wild beast defending its mate. . . . The splendid blackguard, the reckless adventurer was only a humble lover now." H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

April 23rd.—Nurses' Missionary League. Tenth Annual Conference and Meeting, University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C. 10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m.

April 23rd to 26th.—Nursing and Midwifery Conference and Exhibition, Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W. Opening ceremony, 12 noon; conferences 2 to 4 p.m., 5 to 7 p.m., 8 to 10 p.m. daily. Exhibition open from 12 noon to 9 p.m. daily.

April 25th.—Annual Meeting, Association of Inspectors of Midwives, Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W. 11 a.m.

April 25th.—Special meeting of members of the Nurses' Social Union to consider the desirability of change of title. All nurses welcome. 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C. 4.30 p.m.

April 26th.—Guy's Hospital Nurses' League. Tenth Annual Meeting and Fourth Annual Dinner. Annual Exhibition Nurses' Photographic Society.

April 26th.—Men's Society for Women's Rights. Public Meeting, "How Votes for Women will Affect the White Slave Traffic." Chairman, Mr. Joseph Clayton; Speakers, Miss Abadam, Dr. C. W. Saleeby, M.D., F.R.S.Ed. Grand Hall, Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, W.

April 26th.—Northumberland and Durham Midwives' Association. Lecture on "Ethics in Midwifery," by Dr. H. Kerr. Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 7.30 p.m.

April 29th.—League of St. John's House Nurses' Meeting and Social Gathering, 12, Queen Square, W.C., 3 p.m.

April 29th.—Central Midwives' Board Examination, London.

May 6th.—Medico-Psychological Association. Preliminary Examination.

*By Baroness Orczy. Methuen & Co., London.

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