

in reply to a question in the House of Commons the Home Secretary stated that no appeal had been made to Scotland Yard from local authorities to try to discover the murderers—nor had any reward been offered for their apprehension.

Poor little Cuckoo Flowers!—if only they had been a stolen bauble, or a forged note—what a hue and cry there would have been over the sanctity of property! But, concerning a poor child's honour, or even her life, a Home Secretary states without shame that he feels it undesirable "to interfere with the province of another officer" who apparently is not capable of performing his duty.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

CEASE FIRING.*

We have in this volume the sequel to "The Long Roll," a heartrending record of the struggle between the North and the South in the American Civil War, when we "tramp, tramp, tramp" in their weary, ceaseless marches with the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee. When outnumbered, starved, and ragged these men made the most gallant struggle which history will ever recount. When the South literally "bled to death," and we weep with it as the bells are set "tolling, tolling, tolling," as the last grey troops or remnant of heroes pass from their old capital of Richmond over Mayo's Bridge, firing it behind them, the tattered "Stars and Bars" still flying, to the sound of "Dixie," and listen to the growing sound from afar, the sound of marching men, of hurraing voices, of bands that played "Yankee Doodle" and "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"Flowering fruit trees and April verdure and a clearing sky. On and on down a long, long vista . . . *Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp!*"

"Way down South in a land ob cotton,
'Simmon seed and sandy bottom.'"

But to hark back, we owe this work of genius to Miss Mary Johnston, who maintains a pitch of enthusiasm for her subject, which is truly marvellous. War! war! war! and always war, runs with unabated ardour and vivid description from cover to cover.

Her exquisite style is somewhat detached yet never disjointed. A stirring incident, a tender love scene, a pregnant conversation, and lo! we are face to face with a situation entirely apart. A series of literary snapshots, so skilfully blended that even while we are wondering why this or that was introduced, the picture as a whole begins to take shape and form. There is no hint of slovenliness. The work shows an amazing grip, a painstaking method, a clear foresight which is not to be excelled by any present-day novelist. It cannot be denied that it is a somewhat difficult book to grasp, owing to the introduction of so

* By Mary Johnston. Constable & Co., Ltd., 10, Orange Street, W.C.

many characters, some of whom have figured before in the "Long Roll," and of such varied scenes.

Edward Cary's first meeting with Désirée was during an inundation by the Mississippi River.

"Edward listened to the wind and the rain.

"'What's to hinder it from higher yet?'

"'Nothin' sahr.'

"The young man got up, moved to the door, opened it, and looked out. He shivered and then laughed. 'Noah must have seen something like it when he looked out of the Ark.' He closed the door with difficulty." It was when the inundation was threatening her home, Cape Jessamine, that "he looked and saw Désirée Gaillard. She was standing high beneath her heaped logs, behind her the night. She had clasped round her throat a soldier's coat. The wind raised it, blew it outward, the crimson lining gleaming in the torchlight. All the red light beat upon her, upon the blowing hair, upon the deep eyes and parted lips, the outstretched arm and pointing hand, the dress of some bronzed and clinging stuff, the bent knee, the foot resting upon a log and higher than its fellow.

"When she saw the soldier beside her, her eyes opened wide in a moment's query, after which she accepted him as an item of the storm and of the night."

He loved her at once; and in the stress of those troublous times, married her. After three brief days of happiness together—

"The signal shots awakened them. Before he was dressed, there came the sound of the beaten drum in the street below. 'The long roll,' he said. 'I must hurry; good-bye, love, good-bye, love.' He was gone; with a sob in her throat, she fell back outstretched on the bed, face down, her hands locked above her head."

An inspiring account is given us of the work of volunteer nursing in the various hospitals.

"Fore-noon, afternoon passed. The nurses dressed and bandaged wounds, bathed and lifted, and gave the scanty dole of medicines, brought and held the bowls of broth, straightened the beds, told the news, filled the pipes, read and wrote the home letters, took from the dying lips the home messages, closed the eyes of the dead, saw the body carried out, turned back with cheer to the ward, dealt the cards for convalescents, laughed at all jokes, helped sick and weary life over many a hard place in the road, saved it many a jolt."

One more word picture.

"As always on the eve of battle, there was going on a certain redding up. Those who had haversacks plunged deep within them, gathered certain trifles together, and tied them into small bundles with pencilled directions. Diaries were brought carefully and very neatly up to date. There was a habit, too, of destroying letters received and garnered. Here and there a man sat on a log, and tore up into little bits old treasured sheets. The flecks lay like snow on the earth of the wilderness. . . . A soldier, hearing his

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