

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## THE RED MIRAGE.\*

The scene of this story is for the most part in the East; it is written with a blaze of colouring and a wealth of stirring incident. It tells of the old eternal warfare between East and West; of the pitiless cruelty, of dark intrigue, of hopeless passion, of sad loves, of separation and death. It cannot be said to be a cheerful book, but it is never dull, never without incident that stirs the imagination.

Richard Farquhar, or as he is afterwards known in the Legion as Richard Nameless—quixotic perhaps, but a devout and generous lover, even though his lady was faithless—took on himself the disgrace and dishonour of the man she preferred to himself, and disappeared from Society and from civilisation. 4005—Richard Nameless—served under the harsh, relentless Colonel Destinn, who recognises in him his own son, though this is not brought out until the close of the story.

Lovely, shallow Sylvia was not in any sense worthy of the sacrifice Richard had made for her, but she married Captain Arnaud, in ignorance of his dishonour, and of Richard's generosity. It is perhaps a little inartistic that the whole of the persons concerned should be transferred from England to the East, to carry on the tragedy already begun. Little Miss Smith, for instance, seemed out of her proper setting, though we are quite glad really that she came. Through her quiet, courageous love poor Richard found safety and at last happiness.

The terrible account of the sand-storm is perhaps one of the most exciting descriptions in the story.

"In that first moment Farquhar reeled forward instinctively, fighting the galling storm with the fierce physical madness of a body goaded by intolerable torture, then he quietly dropped on his knees and waited for the end. He was acutely, terribly conscious. The sand in his lungs was on fire, he could feel the flames mounting his throat to his eyes, his brain. He threw up his head, facing his own torture with dogged resolution. A fierce triumph. This was the end. He set his teeth on the pain, grinding it to a cruel satisfaction. The yellow darkness was blotting him out, blotting out his memory. He knelt there and waited, feeling the rising flood mount to his waist. He prayed in agony: 'O God, make an end.' And the sand rose higher."

Afterwards, when the sirocco was past, it was found that they had been fighting it for ten hours, and of the army only one hundred remained alive.

It was then that the smouldering hatred of the men for their Colonel broke out, and mutiny seemed inevitable.

"They flung themselves upon him. But for one swift moment Farquhar had met Destinn's eyes. What had passed in that lightning recognition he

did not know. He broke through the circle of madmen, beating up their weapons, and flung himself recklessly between the lonely man and death.

"In a few moments they were all around him, sobbing, laughing, shouting like children. They called their allegiance to him in a dozen half-forgotten tongues, they gripped his hands and kissed the hem of his tattered coat in fantastic worship.

"We'll follow you, Englishman; do with us as you like; we trust you."

There are many other as dramatic situations in this book, and always does Richard in the end command respect and honour.

After his stormy career, little Gabrielle Smith (which really wasn't her name at all) promises to give him a haven of quiet, strong love.

"You saved my life twice," he said, "and you saved something greater than my life—my faith."

H. H.

## THE TRUANTS.

Ere my heart beats too coldly and faintly  
To remember sad things, yet be gay,  
I would sing a brief song of the world's little  
children  
Magic hath stolen away.

The primroses scattered by April,  
The stars of the wide Milky Way  
Cannot outnumber the hosts of the children  
Magic hath stolen away.

The buttercup green of the meadows,  
The snow of the blossoming may,  
Lovelier are not than the legions of children  
Magic hath stolen away.

The waves tossing surf in the moonbeam,  
The albatross lone on the spray  
Alone know the tears wept in vain for the children  
Magic hath stolen away.

In vain: for at hush of the evening  
When the stars twinkle into the grey,  
Seems to echo the far-away calling of children  
Magic hath stolen away.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

From "Peacock Pie."

## A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

The world which shall be hereafter—ay, which shall be! Believe it, toil-worn worker—God made you love beautiful things only because He intends to give you your fill of them . . . in the world to come, that fairyland made real "The new heavens and the new earth" which God has prepared for the pure and the loving, the just and the brave, who have conquered in the sore fight of life.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

\*By J. A. R. Wylie. (Mills & Boon, London.)

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