

"water ducks," splendid pedestrians, and adepts at ju jitsu, why may we not have markswomen as well?

Anyway the object of the Women's Volunteer Defence Force is to prepare a body of women who would, if necessity arose, be competent to act as a skilled and trained Defence Force with a knowledge of marksmanship and with some military training.

1. To organise, under competent instruction, regular drills every evening in the week.
2. To arrange and carry out route marches.
3. To provide a class of instruction in signalling.

It is proposed to form Centres immediately in the various London districts (and later on in the counties) where recruits can enrol and where the above training will be carried out.

A small enlistment fee of 1s. per head will be required to defray initial expenses.

Those desirous of enrolling and anxious for further details may apply to the Hon. Secretary, Women's Volunteer Defence Force, Old Bedford College, York Place, Baker Street, London, W.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE WALL OF PARTITION."*

A fortnight before Christmas, Rodney Steele the writer arrived back in England after an absence of many years. He had mailed the final proof of his signed book by a shorter route before starting homeward. But there was an anonymous book of fiction, also the fruit of his brain, published at the same time, that of the two was in far greater demand.

The young salesman at the Charing Cross bookstall was all enthusiasm.

"'The Great Divide,' that's the book for you, if you have not seen it already. Our boss says it's worth all Mr. Steele's stories put together."

"Who is Max Romer?" asked Rodney Steele slowly.

"Can't say, sir," replied the youth. "I believe it's a nom de plume, and I have heard that it's a lady, but I doubt that."

Rodney Steele had years before been jilted by the woman he loved, and he had never made good his loss. His homecoming was unattended by the usual welcomes, and he was driven straight to his friend Billy's flat, to spend a lonely but comfortable Christmas. Now Billy was the brother of Rodney's faithless love, and that same love, recently widowed, was occupying the adjoining flat.

Poor Billy, having clumsily attempted to explain the position to Rodney had been sternly shut up. That chapter in his life was closed, and the information that Lady Hilary instead of, as in his imaginings, far away in India with husband and child, was free and close at hand, was not allowed to pass Billy's lips. Madge,

*By Florence L. Barclay. Putnam's Sons, London.

on the other hand, was in full possession of the facts, and begins an ingenious conversation over the telephone with the lover of her youth.

She begins by apologising for calling the wrong number. Rodney politely furnishes her with the one she requires. Next day she is very sorry, but she quite forgets the number he gave her. Rodney Steele falls enamoured of the voice that faintly reminds him of the past, and yielding to loneliness he asks the "kind voice" to ring him up each evening at the same hour.

The rest is easily guessed at, and Rodney Steele and Madge restore the years that the locusts have eaten.

Billy's wife Valeria affords a good deal of episode in this story.

Billy is a healthy good-looking young fellow, with not too many brains and a good deal of money. Valeria married him solely for the latter asset. But Billy worshipped her blindly.

It was certainly unfortunate that Valeria should conceive the idea of intimating to her friends that she was the author of the anonymous work that was making so great a sensation. She tells Rodney Steele with dramatic effect:

"I am Max Romer, author of 'The Great Divide.'" Steele walked over to the writing-table. "In that case, Lady Valeria," he said, "it will add to the exquisite humour of the situation if I show you the original manuscript of the book."

"It is an impudent forgery," she whispered. "I will expose it. How came you by the manuscript, and what right have you to require anything in the matter?"

"Merely this right," said Steele, "the manuscript is my own."

The unfortunate Valeria shortly afterwards burnt and disfigured her hands, of which she was inordinately proud, and in consequence took an overdose of opiate which ended a very foolish and unpleasant life.

This story is veritably a romance of the telephone and there is a good deal of "Hullo, are you there?" in connexion with it.

Mrs. Barclay's many admirers will without doubt welcome this her latest work.

H. H.

TO ARMS!

'Tis not the women's part to sit and weep—
Such times are gone (if ever they have been)—
Though on their knees hard vigil they must keep,
Their souls unflinching to the summons lean.
Proudly they speed their men to face the foe,
Eyes shining up to eyes, one flaming thought
Filling their hearts . . . The morrow?

It must go,

With poverty or worse, it matters naught!
Let others quail who have no sons to give,
On whom no sacrifice its toll will lay;
Better to lose your best and loveless live
Than not to answer to the call To-day! . . .

With steady hands the bitter cup they drain—
And find Christ's sweetness under all the pain.

LILIAN STREET,

—The Observer.

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