

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "THAT WOMAN FROM JAVA."\*

She was emphatically *that* woman.

The really attractive features in this story are the charming descriptions of the Dutch East Indies. Some of the character drawing, too, is quite excellent. On the whole, it is quite above the average and worth reading. Hanna Van Doot was a *young* Dutch lady of about forty summers, with a flavour that so often accompanies out-of-season luxuries. She was the most inveterate gossip of the place, and resented any more youthful charms which happened to be in evidence. That Mrs. Hamilton was a very attractive young woman who appeared from nowhere and settled at Laroot. There was a mystery about her that Hanna was unable to unravel. The regrettable part was that Mrs. Hamilton had never once offered to solve it. If she was aware of the gossip she made no sign.

A year had passed away and Mrs. Hamilton, contrary to all expectations, had done nothing out of the ordinary. True, she went about a good deal, and laughed and flirted a good deal, and one seldom saw her without a man in attendance.

Hanna, looking out of her window, exclaimed suddenly in her sharp voice: "Wilhelmina, come and look."

Up to four o'clock all self-respecting and sun-respecting inhabitants are snoring peacefully in dim shuttered rooms or in the wide shaded verandahs that are a feature of all Dutch houses in Java.

It was all the more distressing then that this Mrs. Hamilton, in her white gown and a scarlet parasol shading her hatless dark head, should be, to use Miss Hanna's expression, "flaunting" herself around Laroot at an hour when every other respectable woman was indoors. To crown her offence she was walking with the new missionary that Miss Hanna thought of with hopes that always centred round every male newcomer.

"Do you think, Hanna, that Mr. Royston has forgotten that this is our day?"

But Mr. Royston fulfilled his obligation manfully, and a few minutes later found him in Miss Van Doot's drawing-room, endeavouring to steer the conversation away from *that* woman. He evinced an interest in the parrot.

"It belonged to dear Pa," Miss Wilhelmina informed him. "Sometimes when you are in another room you might almost think it was Pa."

Nurses will be amused at the little picture of the Dutch assistant matron at the sanatorium, where Mrs. Hamilton goes to visit her good-for-nothing husband, the non-appearance of whom had given Miss Hanna so much malicious enjoyment.

A stout, strong Dutch woman came out on to the tiled verandah and smiled pleasantly.

She, too, wore the loose cotton jacket and she yawned as if just roused from an afternoon siesta.

\* By E. Hardingham Quinn. London: Hurst & Blackett.

"I am glad the summer is passing over," she remarked. "I envied you when I saw you coming up the path, you looked so cool and slim. And in a few minutes I shall have to pack myself into a uniform like a tinned sardine, because the doctor is coming. He is a new man and has a bad habit of popping in unexpectedly. It is most annoying, especially on a day like this. A uniform doesn't help to cure the patients."

Mrs. Hamilton's husband died unexpectedly, while she was at a ball, which was the event of the year for the inhabitants of Laroot. The stout matron, clad in blue satin, was also enjoying herself, when the telephone announced the death of her patient, and Margaret Hamilton's husband. This reference to a journey is a good example of the descriptive power of the writer.

"The train was in. The native porters were, with much noisy chattering, stowing away boxes in a little guard's van that looked ridiculously like a child's painted toy.

"It seemed as if all the heat of the summer had concentrated itself into this day. The stout figure of the matron, in a white linen gown and a long veil flaunting from her green-lined sun helmet, bustled up and down making final preparations. They passed station after station, through groves of palms and huge magnolias, blazing pink and white on either side of the track, where little painted boats plied up and down.

"I think," remarked the matron once, "the lid is off Hades to-day."

A story that can bring the glamour of other countries around us is, in our opinion, generally worth reading.

H. H.

## THE SHIPS TAKE WING.

The snow has passed, the crocus blooms,  
A swelling tide of life returns;  
Green lights invade the forest glooms,  
All nature wakes and yearns.  
The breeze lifts and the ships take wing  
To havens which we long have known;  
And yet—and yet I dread the spring,  
For fear you may be gone.

Life gives us sweet delights and then  
Gathers them back and buries them deep.  
Oh! wanton hearts, that kill them when  
They do not tire or sleep.  
The breeze lifts and the ships take wing—  
Be with me through the spring.  
—From "The Great Valley," Edgar Lee Masters.

## WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The War depends upon food."  
—Mr. Prothero, at the Albert Hall.

## COMING EVENTS.

March 22nd.—Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives. Annual Meeting, 9, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, W., Major A. P. Luff, R.A.M.C. (T.), presiding. Address on "Midwifery and Government Subsidies," by Dr. George Reid, D.P.H. 3.30 p.m.

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