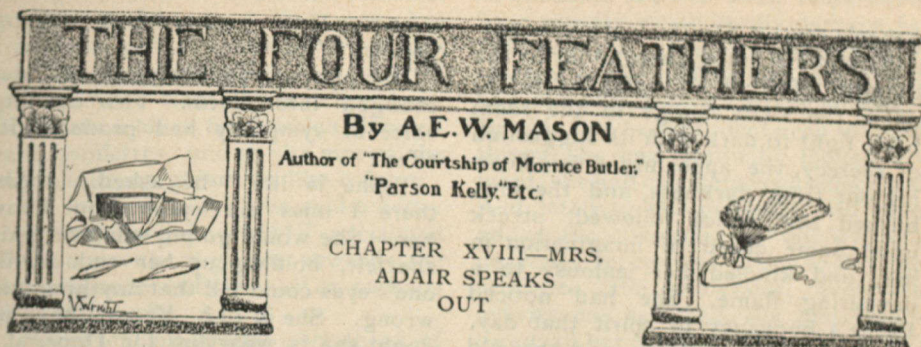




RESUME OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS: Harry Feversham, son of General Feversham, of Surrey, is a lieutenant in an English regiment. On becoming engaged to Ethne Eustace, daughter of Dermot Eustace, of Ramelton, Donegal, Ireland, he resigns his commission. He announces this at a little dinner at which Captain Trench, Lieut. Willoughby and Lieut. Durrance, who himself cared something for Ethne, were present. Just after his resignation, his regiment is ordered to Egypt where Durrance also goes on General Graham's staff. These two friends have a last ride together in Hyde Park—Durrance sails for Egypt and Feversham goes to Ireland, where there is to be a ball to celebrate the engagement. On the evening of this great event, Feversham receives by post a box containing three white feathers and three resigning cards bearing names of brother officers. They had deemed him a coward who would resign his commission on the eve of war. Feversham talks of the affair with Ethne, explaining that all his life he had been afraid that some day he should play the coward. For that reason, and because of his engagement, he had resigned. She returns the little box of feathers to him, and lo! he finds she has added a *fourth* from her fan. The engagement is ended and Harry Feversham disappears, but not before communicating to his mother's friend, Lieutenant Sutch, that some day he hopes to win back his honour.

After three years' service in Egypt, Durrance returns to London and is surprised to hear of the broken engagement and of Harry Feversham's disappearance. Under the circumstances, he feels free to visit Ethne Eustace at her home in Donegal. He does so, and presses Feversham is learning Arabic in Upper Egypt.

Another June comes round; Durrance returns to England for another furlough, but makes no progress with his suit. He goes back to Egypt.

Still another June comes round; and two letters cross in the Mediterranean. One is from Ethne to Col. Durrance, saying that she has reconsidered the matter and will marry him upon his return to England. The other is from Col. Durrance to Ethne, in which he tells her that a sunstroke has deprived him of his eye-sight. Ethne had learned of Durrance's misfortune by cablegram from a friend of his and immediately sent her letter, thinking Durrance would not know of the cablegram.

The self-sacrificing fiancée meets her lover, on his return to England, at the home of their mutual friend, Mrs. Adair. Shortly afterwards Capt. Willoughby brings Ethne one of the four feathers with a strange story of how Harry Feversham has redeemed it by a gallant deed in Egypt. Her old affection and regard for Harry is thus awakened, and even her blind lover notices the change in her. His blindness makes him all the more susceptible to changes in tone and spirit. He tells her of meeting Harry at Tewfikieh on the Nile, disguised as a musician and attempting to play a zither. The tune was a mere memory of Ethne's favourite piece, the Musoline Overture, and was wretchedly played.

FOR Mrs. Adair, like Durrance, burned her boats that night. She had not deliberately planned this hazardous experiment. Deliberation, indeed, would have warned her to silence, as it had done on many days during the last two months. But that calm, pale face of hers hid the quick passions of the South; she had been racked by them to the limits of her endurance. Events, moreover, had

occurred this morning which seemed to offer an opportunity; so that little more than a trifle was needed to break down her reticence. And it was the merest trifle which did break it down. Sitting out upon the terrace after dinner, and not very far from the open window, through which the moonlight shone, she had seen Ethne turn out the lamp before she played the overture upon her violin. She did not understand