

Stories of war

The novel *The Four Feathers* (1902) by A.E.W. Mason is about a British officer, Harry Feversham, who resigns (si dimette) from the regiment when it is going to Sir Garnet Wolseley's 1882 expedition to Egypt to suppress the rising Pasha. Considered a coward (codardo) by his comrades he is delivered (gli vengono consegnate) three white feathers (piume) signs of despise (disprezzo). Also his fiancée, Ethne Eustace, presents him with the fourth feather and his best friend in the regiment, Captain Durrance becomes his rival for Ethne. When Harry hears about the first dramatic reports of the British battles, he decides to help his friends. He leaves for Egypt and Sudan, where in 1882 Muhammad Ahmed has proclaimed himself the Mahdi (il prescelto) and has started a Holy War. He is saved by a Sudanese Arab, Abou Fatma, and makes his best to help his friend Durrance, blinded (accecato) by the blow of a gun (scoppio di un fucile). The other friend, Castleton was killed and Trench is kept as a prisoner. Harry succeeded in rescuing Trench. Back to England he goes to see Ethne for one last time as she has promised herself to Col. Durrance. But Durrance goes to Germany to seek cure for his blindness and leaves Ethne free to marry Harry. Many film adaptations have been inspired by the novel. Among the most famous are the films *The Four Feathers* of 1939 by Zoltan Korda, *Storm over the Nile* by Terence Young and Zoltan Korda, Two more recent adaptations with the same title, *The Four Feathers* were shot (furono girate) in 1977 by Don Sharp and in 2002 by Shekhar Kapur

Famous and historical British wars were fought for the conquest of South Africa.

In 1874, Sir Henry Bartle Frere was sent to South Africa as High Commissioner for the British Empire to conquer the land. The main obstacles were the presence of the independent states of the South African Republic and the Kingdom of Zululand and its army. The Commissioner presented an impossible ultimatum on 11 December 1878, to the Zulu king Cetshwayo with which the Zulu king could not conform (accettare). The war started and was notable for several particularly bloody battles, and some terrible British defeats (sconfitte), namely (precisamente) at Isandlwana and at Rorke's Drift. However the war eventually resulted in a British victory and the end of the Zulu nation's independence (1879). The film *Zulu* (1964) tells about the defeat at Rorke's Drift (1879), after the Battle of Isandlwana. Rorke's Drift was a missionary station which a company of the British Army, a Welsh regiment, used as a supply storehouse (magazzino) and hospital for their invasion force across the border (confine) in Zululand. They received news that an army of 4000 Zulu Warriors were advancing their way, and they knew that they could not outrun (vincere) the Zulu army, so decided to fortify the station and made a barricade. When the soldiers saw the Zulu approaching (si avvicinavano), they started understanding their situation, but still resisted. Wave after wave (ondata dopo ondata) of Zulu attackers were kept away (respinti), but the Zulu set fire (danno fuoco) to the hospital and went on attacking during the night. The following day the Zulu overcame (prevalgono su) the exhausted British forces. *Zulu* was directed by Cy Endfield; *Zulu Dawn*, its prequel shot in 1979 about the historical Battle of Isandlwana was directed by Douglas Hickox with the screenplay was by Cy Endfield.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was an English nurse (infermiera) that became famous for her work during the Crimean War (1853–1856) – a war fought mainly on the Crimean Peninsula between the Russians and the British, French, Ottoman Turkish, and the army of Sardinia-Piedmont to prevent (far sì che la Russia non esercitasse la protezione) Russia from exercising protection over the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultan. Nightingale reported about the horrific conditions for the wounded (feriti) during this conflict. On 21 October 1854, she and the staff of 38 women volunteer nurses that she trained (istruito), were sent to the Crimea camps where the British soldiers based (avevano base). Nightingale witnessed (testimoniò) that soldiers were not cured because of the overwork (troppo lavoro) of doctors in camps. The situation she found was serious: lack (mancanza) of medicine, lack of hygienic, no equipment to process

food for the patients and mass infections (infezioni). She sent a request to The Times for a government solution and the British Government commissioned Isambard Kingdom Brunel to design (diede l'appalto per costruire) a prefabricated. It had to be built in England and then shipped (mandato) to the Dardanelles. The result was Renkioi Hospital. The rate of death (tasso di mortalità) was reduced from 42% to 2% Yet (eppure) illnesses (malattie) such as typhus, typhoid, cholera and dysentery killed many soldiers due to (per via di) poor nutrition, lack of supplies (rifornimenti) and overworking. Nightingale showed before the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army, that most of the soldiers at the hospital were killed by poor living conditions and the last part of her career was turned (fu volta) to the sanitary design of hospitals. She was called "The Lady with the Lamp" (la signora con la lampada) as sh, at night, visited wounded soldiers who needed help. Nightingale laid the foundation of professional nursing with her nursing school at St Thomas' Hospital in London (1860), the first secular nursing school in the world, now part of King's College London