

It was when she looked at her second son, Nicky, that something caught her breath and held it."

Mrs. Jervis (for whom Frances was sorry because her boy looked clumsy as contrasted with her own sons) looked wistfully at the young men as they played.

"What do you do," she said, "to keep your children with you?"

"I do nothing," said Frances, "I do not try to keep them, I've never appealed to their feeling for my own purposes, or taken advantage of their affection, that is all. They know that if they want to walk out of the house to-morrow, and stay out, they can. Nobody will stop them. Nicky," she said, "walked out, but he came back as soon as he was in trouble. Michael walks out every year and goes abroad, but he comes back again. Dorothy walks out, but she never dreams of not coming back."

The bitterest moment in Frances's life was when Michael held back from offering himself to serve his country. "And neither Frances nor Anthony realised that Michael was afraid, not of the war, but of the emotions of the war, the awful terrifying flood that carried him away from his real self and from everything that he cared for most. Patriotism was a fine thing, but the finer thing it was the more it got you—it got you and you were done for."

But Michael, being made of the right stuff, made good in the end to the extreme limit. Dorothea was a fine character, she was too obsessed with the burning questions and needs of her generation to give herself wholly over to the joy of being loved. She appeared one day in the uniform of the Women's Service Corps. She had really a chance of being sent to Belgium before the end of the month.

Meanwhile she conveyed Belgian refugees from Cannon Street Station. Her mind was like the station, a dreadful twilight terminus into which all the horror and misery of Belgium poured and was congested. She thought "I can't look at a Belgian woman without wishing I were dead."

When her lover Frank appeared suddenly, and asked her "Will you marry me on Friday if I get leave and a licence? We shall have three days."

"Three days." She seemed to be saying to herself that for three days—no, it wasn't worth while.

"For God's sake don't say you're going to make conditions. There isn't time for it. You can say what you like and think what you like, and wear anything—wear a busby—I shan't care if you'll only marry me."

"It's too late. My hands are all dirty. So's my face—filthy—you musn't."

"I don't care; they're your hands, your face." The chin-strap, the absurd chin-strap, fretted his mouth.

But alas! it was too late. Frank was recalled on the eve of his wedding, and, like Michael and Nicky, offered the supreme sacrifice.

This book is, of course, extraordinarily clever and well worth reading from many points of view, but chiefly for its able analysis of character.

H. H.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

THE IRISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for December 29th, p. 425, under paragraph headed "The Danger of a Monopoly," you state that the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was the only Society to petition the Privy Council on the subject of the proposed amalgamation of the College of Nursing with the Royal British Nurses' Association.

I would like to point out that at the Annual Meeting of the Irish Nurses' Association on March 17th, 1917, a petition was drawn up objecting to this amalgamation and was forwarded to the Privy Council. We received an official answer on November 5th.

Yours faithfully,

AGNES FRENCH,

Secretary.

[We are pleased to give prominence to this communication and to learn that the Irish Nurses' Association realised the danger to the independence of the Nursing Profession of the proposed constitution for "The Royal British College of Nursing" and helped to avert the danger.—ED.]

CLOSE UP THE RANKS AND STAND FIRM.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—In answer to Miss Paterson, allow me to say no one feels more strongly than we do the necessity for co-ordination and co-operation between nursing societies in order to obtain unity of purpose and avoid overlapping. Consequently we, *i.e.*, the National Union of Trained Nurses (the only self-governing National Society for Nurses in England), the Scottish Nurses' Association, and the Irish Nurses' Association have a definite agreement for federation entered into last year. The original plan had been to arrange for an automatic transference of members and badges when moving from the area of one society to that of the other; but it was found that this was too complicated an arrangement to attempt for war time, and so it was postponed for the present, but each society has representatives on the Governing Body of the N.U.T.N., and the N.U.T.N. has representatives on the Governing Bodies of the others. We have also instituted a valuable interchange of information and co-operation in publications, delegations and other similar matters and members of one society are invited to the meetings of the others when known to be within their radius.

Miss Paterson's letter, however, shows clearly that something more definite and universally known is required, and I personally welcome the suggestion that members of one society should be honorary members (without votes) of the others,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)