

**Hic et Ubique.** By Sir William Fraser, (Sampson, Lowe, Marston & Co., Limited, Fetter Lane, E.C.) Some few months ago the advisability of establishing in every Hospital a readable and up-to-date library was propounded in these columns. There cannot be two opinions as to its advantages to both nurses and patients, particularly the former. And as it is the cheapest and most widespread form of amusement, it will be our great pleasure to suggest from time to time books, not necessarily bearing upon Nurses and Hospitals, which would form useful and pleasant additions to such an institution. Sir William Fraser has already contributed two valuable and readable additions to anecdotic biography, "Words on Wellington," and "Disraeli and His Day"; but in the pretty but modestly sized volume, "Hic et Ubique," now under consideration, the author confines himself to no particular celebrity, recognises no chronology, and no geographical barrier between place and place. Indeed, his motto from Hamlet, "Hic et Ubique (Here and Everywhere): then we'll shift our ground," is a singularly felicitous one, though perhaps at first sight somewhat obscure to many of us. Lest the rapidity with which anecdote after anecdote is dropped from the author's facile pen should satiate the reader, bon mots, word derivation, curious traditions, refutations of accepted theories, are diffused throughout the pages; the whole forming a literary hotch-potch, very tempting to the mental palate in these days of the triumph of the paragraph system. It is recorded, for instance, of Chancellor Bethel that once on leaving a country hotel, he declared to a friend, "I came down here for change and rest. I found that the waiter kept the change, and the landlord the rest." A lady of great beauty is described as "The Destroying Angel," which all will acknowledge is an apt piece of terminology. In another place, a sarcastic remark is made, that

'A little Learning is a dangerous thing';

is a sentiment which will always be popular with those who possess none at all." Then the author explains that did it apply to learning in general, Pope would have placed the line in his fine "Essay on Man;" instead of that it is to be found in the "Essay on Criticism," and obviously refers more particularly to the Critic. Sir William Fraser has taken much pains to discover the actual room in which the historic Waterloo Ball, given by the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, on the night of June 16th, 1815, was held. There is a large Hospital in close proximity, one of the rooms of which, now the Refectory of the Hospital Sisters, has been suggested as the immortal room. Sir William, after careful examination, however, declares it to be too small; but he gives us a glimpse of the unique character of the apartment. "The walls bear a pathetic record of the past. Each Lady Superior has been painted; but after death—

'Before Decay's effacing fingers  
Have swept the lines where Beauty lingers,'

that is the Beauty of Age, and Holiness."

Many of the anecdotes and remarks in this little volume are exceedingly quaint, and no doubt have close affinity to the personality of the author. We proceed to give a few examples. "Leech's death was quickened, if not brought about by his sensitive to noise. The philosopher Schopenhauer says, that a man's intellect may be measured by his endurance of noise. He adds, that he never knew a man with a barking dog in his back garden who was not a fool." Speaking of Doré, the author declares, "He gave me the impression

of a mind haunted, as are all men of Genius, with the spirit of Melancholy," and "I never saw him laugh." To this same artist, Sir William once said that "marriage could never be desirable for a man of Genius; that Idealisation, the accompaniment of Genius, must always bring sad and lasting disappointment; that neither the wife, nor, what is more important, the children, could ever come up to the Ideal; and that Worship, if in a rare case, it should be paid to Genius by a man's own family, would not be discriminated, nor valued by him amidst the more enthusiastic clamours of mankind." Our readers may be interested to know that Sir William is a bachelor:—

"A woman, a dog, and a walnut-tree,  
The more you beat them the better they be."

"As to the first, and the last," says Sir William, "I know nothing; but certainly the poor dog is foully wronged."

The author is extremely fond of animals, and has a profound belief in their reasoning powers. Thus he expresses himself:—

"I find it difficult to argue calmly on the subject; and I am afraid a conversation on it has occasionally ended by my saying, "You have completely convinced me, sir, or madam, that there is one animal that cannot reason." Exit sir or madam!

No short review could give a comprehensive idea of a book of this description, where on every page there is something entirely different in character to that which is on the page preceding or following it. One's only chance is to read it. In a few telling anecdotes we are given a clearly defined picture of that unhappy novelist Lord Lytton; of his foibles, his sententiousness; his effeminate conceit. "Then we'll shift our ground" and Campbell the poet is with us; again we shift, and we find a sketch of Cruikshank; a page is turned, and Thackeray, or maybe Dickens, are sympathetically described. Sir William as a dilettante is betrayed in his picture of Doré; as an authority on music in his conversation with Sir Julius Benedict. And the charm of the whole is that the writer was an 'eye-witness'; he formed an integral part of the brilliant circles—social, literary, political, artistic—which he portrayed; nothing is due to obtrusive, and clamorous hanging on. Had Sir William only kept a diary from day to day of the sayings and doings, changing characteristics, and lively sparkling conversations, of nineteenth century celebrities with whom fortune had thrown him in contact, we should probably have a book rivalling the French one of the brothers de Goncourt, the chronological arrangement of which would be of inestimable advantage to the future historian. As it is a liberal array of entertaining information is not so much communicated to the reader as scattered broadcast without any pretence at order. Nurses cannot fail to enjoy it; and, at any rate, there is that in which is abundantly suggestive of subjects for table talk.

## Replies to Correspondents.

*Miss Isabel Cochran.*—We should advise you to get into Princess Christian's Home of Rest for Nurses, 12, Sussex Square, Brighton, if you can possibly do so. You had better write at once to the Matron, as it is usually difficult to get a room in this most popular and beautiful Home.

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