

a small capacity, so that the thoughts that fill her mind can find no outlet in expression. Upon this character, Mrs. Atherton has lavished all her skill and creative power, and the result is, a very deep sympathy with, and comprehension of Magdalena, from the reader's point of view.

Magdalena, reserved, conscious of deficiencies, and never getting on well with strangers, meets John Trennahan, than whom, a more pitifully, contemptible figure never filled the central space allotted to man in fiction. This man is represented as worn out with dissipation, having exhausted the pleasures of life, and having come to the wilds of California with the desire to find, if he can, some mental stimulus that shall make life again endurable, he finds Magdalena interesting and appreciative, and although she does not appeal to his senses, he thinks she could make him happy, and asks her to marry him. Magdalena loves him with the best love of a fresh nature, and unquestioningly accepts him, only to be ignominiously jilted the moment that the man sees a woman who appeals more strongly to his aesthetic consciousness. He sees for the first time. Helena, the lovely friend of Magdalena, who has been away in Europe. Their eyes meet with the same frank, barbaric consciousness of sex that animated Siegmund and Sieglinde in pre-historic German myth. And all is over with Magdalena's claims.

Then comes a clever turn in the story, which is unexpected, and yet most dramatically fitting. When Helena learns something of the absolutely degraded past of the man, who has taken her heart by storm, she breaks her engagement with him. He goes away, and so for a time passes from the lives of both girls.

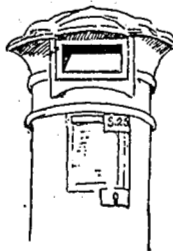
The story of the death of the American, Polk, and the curious effect of his death upon Don Roberto, of the awful life lived by Magdalena with her unsympathetic mother, and the final madness and death of the Don, is as powerful as anything in the book. We leave Magdalena about to renew the relations with the contemptible Trennahan; and I cannot help thinking that a most tragic story might be made of the girl's married life; since Trennahan seems to be the kind of man who might "carry on" with the housemaid, or otherwise drag his wife's name through the dirt. I have never read a book by this author in which there was the character of a good man; but it is upon men like Trennahan that women like Magdalena do pour forth the riches of their steady friendship and undying love; of that there is little doubt. G. M. R.

WHAT TO READ.

- "The Dreyfus Case." No. 1 of Current Event Series. By Georges Guyon.
- "Catherine Gladstone: Life, Good Works, and Political Efforts." By Edwin A. Pratt.
- "The Life and Work of Lady Butler (Miss Elizabeth Thompson)." By Wilfred Meynell.
- "We Women and our Authors." Translated from the German of Laura M. Hansson.
- "Nigel Ferrard." By G. M. Robins.
- "Sea Urchins." By W. W. Jacobs.
- "Tony Drum, a Cockney Boy." By Edwin Pugh.
- "Via Lucis." By Cassandra Vivaria.
- "The Palmy Days of Nance Oldfield." By Edward Robins.

Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES. &c.



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 RED CROSS SOCIETY IN RELATION TO NURSING.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War,

5, York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.,
London, 26th October, 1898.

DEAR MADAM,—I have before me a copy of the NURSING RECORD, of the 22nd inst, in which you reproduce this Society's letter of the 27th of July last, in reference to the subject of the desirability of organising a Corps of Nurses for active service in Foreign Wars as discussed at a Meeting of the Matrons' Council.

I am not authorised to add anything to that letter, but in regard to your remarks which follow it, you will, perhaps, allow me to express regret that you have inadvertently fallen into some errors which would have been avoided had you made inquiries previous to inserting the remarks in question. Will you permit me to inform you.

1.—That it is well-known that this Society has by no means restricted "its duties to the provision of care for sick British soldiers and failed to extend its beneficent work to the sick and wounded of other nations," and a reference to the British Red Cross work in the Franco-German, Turco-Servian, Russo-Turkish, and Servo-Bulgarian wars, will establish this fact.

2.—That this Society does not *assume* the work of the Red Cross. Its affiliation with the International Committee of Geneva could have been established by you if you had an opportunity of referring to the official organ of the Geneva Committee viz.: "The Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix Rouge."

That this Society, instead of "merely sending £1,000 after the war (between Turkey and Greece) was at an end," has actually expended over £5,600 in Turkey and Greece, under the able superintendence of H. M.'s Ambassador at Constantinople and his Agents, and H. M.'s Minister at Athens and his Agents, in rendering very valuable, although perhaps unostentatious, aid to many of the sick and wounded and to thousands of starving Thessalian Refugees by the establishment of soup kitchens, distribution of clothing and in other ways; after official enquiry had been made as to the most beneficial form in which the Society's aid would be acceptable.

4.—In regard to your reference to the nurses selected for plague duty in India, I need hardly point out that this matter is not one connected with this Society, although your remark on the subject may be taken by some of your readers as part of your criticism relating to its work.—I am, Yours faithfully,

JAS. G. VOKES Secretary.

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