

Deprived of all the surroundings of civilisation, man deteriorates, and the dog, who is the imitator and friend of man, reverts to his primitive condition of savagery. Where the struggle for existence is purely physical, the "Law of Club and Fang" is the only rule of conduct. No mercy for the dog who goes down! That is the lesson learnt by Buck early in his career as sledge-dog.

Buck is kidnapped from his sunny home in the Santa Clara Valley, and taken to Klondyke, with Government mails. He is a magnificent animal, and one of the few who survive the rigours of the North. The story tells of his fight and victory for the leadership of the team, and of his other vicissitudes, with never one ounce of false sentiment, never one deliberate appeal for sympathy or tears from the reader. It is like an epitome of the countless generations of men that rolled away in the dark ages, unconscious for the most part of their own misery, unknowing of better things, and "with no language but a cry."

The only thing that holds Buck back from savagery is love for one man—John Thornton; and the crown of all the book is the story of how he won for his master a bet of 2,000 dols., by drawing, alone, a sled loaded with twenty fifty-pound bags of flour—the proper load for a team of ten dogs. The betting was three to one against him, and the enthusiasm and excitement over his victory were beyond bounds. The artistic close to the book would, perhaps, to some minds, be here; but the author leads us on, unrelenting, to the death of the beloved, and the final lapse to wildness of the great dog.

The book has some wonderful touches. The three would-be gold-seekers, Mercedes and her brother and husband, and the bitter grief of the dying team-dog at being taken out of harness, are two instances of the acute observation and the real power which lie beneath the author's simple language. G. M. R.

A Little While.

A little while, and then we'll understand
Just why it was that grim Death's icy hand
Clasped in its cold embrace the one we loved;
Took from our midst the friend whom we had
proved.

Robbed of the home the mother love so sweet,
Hushed the glad sound of baby's pattering feet.
Turned joy to sorrow; wrung our hearts with pain,
And caused the tears of bitterness to fall like rain.
Ah, well! Life's hour-glass shows the fleeting sand,
A little while and then—we'll understand.

FRANK J. ANGEL, in the *Somerville Journal*.

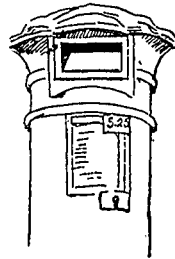
Coming Events.

October 26th.—The Duchess of Albany lays the memorial stone of the new buildings at the Royal Waterloo Hospital, 3 p.m.

October 27th.—The Marquis of Zetland opens the new wing of the Mount Vernon Hospital for Consumption at Hampstead.

November 3rd.—The King lays the foundation stone of His Majesty's Sanatorium for Consumption at Lords Common, near Midhurst.

November 3rd to 6th.—Conference of the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland at Cheltenham and Gloucester.



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 VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—In these enlightened days of nursing reform, when the necessity for a three years' certificate of general training is so widely advocated, and, indeed, compulsory in many hospitals, one does not expect to find nurses complacently choosing some hospital where they enter into an agreement for a two years' training and certificate. Unhappily, this is frequently the case. There are still several hospitals which are willing to take nurses for two years, or less, and, the shorter term of service appearing more delectable than the longer one of three years (the goal being so much nearer), candidates are not difficult to find.

For lack of wise friends who would advise them professionally, it sometimes happens that candidates are really not in the least aware that at the end of the two years—two years of honest hard work and faithful endeavour—they will be launched on the nursing sea with credentials which are entirely inadequate for their profession, and which will not qualify them for appointments either in the Naval and Military Nursing Services, for the post of Superintendent Nurse under the Local Government Board, or for appointments in connection with the Colonial Nursing Association. Added to this, all the best private nursing institutions are also closed to them. Perhaps some nurses who discover their mistake after a time, and who would give a great deal to be able to do even the whole of their training over again, simply cannot afford the time, and so are handicapped from the very start.

I speak as one who knows, for, having entered a general hospital for a three years' training, I left before I had quite completed one year, and was then foolish enough to enter another hospital for two years. This I believed to be distinctly politic, and quite my best move.

The hospital trained nurses for varying periods of three years, two years, and eighteen months. Of course, my eyes were opened long before my training was completed, partly from reading and partly from discussing the question. I realised the immense value of a three years' training, and grasped what State Registration was doing in other countries to raise the standard of nursing, and bitterly regretted my mistake.

Because I would save anyone from committing the same error, I would urge all who intend to take up nursing as a profession to *beware*, to seek advice and information from the Matrons' Council, which has the good of the whole profession so much at heart, and to consider any training short of three years in a general hospital as absolutely futile, and a sheer waste of energy, time, and endeavour.—I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
ONE WHO IS HANDICAPPED.

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