

with arms and legs. It is the End of the World, and he the Last Man left. The first conscious sensation of Adam was fear; it will be the last and most powerful in the human heart that beats in the latest of his descendants."

This, surely, is very good. But the superstructure seems to the present reviewer flimsy in the extreme.

Basil Daymer, a young artist studying in Paris, has a devoted friend named Charles Rackenham. This young man seems likely to fall into evil courses, and Basil finds that he is contemplating leaving Paris in the company of a lady of doubtful reputation. Basil says that, sooner than allow him so to degrade himself, he will fight him. They go to Fontainebleau, and Basil shoots his friend through the heart, and apparently, for all we are told to the contrary, leaves him lying where he fell. His first action, on returning to Paris, is to paint a portrait of his dead friend. He next proceeds to send his portrait to the English Academy exhibition, entering it in the catalogue as the work of Charles Rackenham himself. Having thus drawn public attention to the murdered man and his art, he proceeds to seek out Charles's sister, and to get her to say she will marry him, so that she can be heiress of the large fortune bequeathed to him by her brother by will. His intention is to marry her, to immediately desert her; and then to go and get killed somehow, so that she may be rich and free.

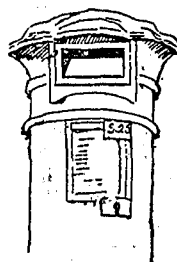
Fate, however, brings the lady's feelings into the question. The writer having apparently hesitated halfway through the book as to whether Nettie shall be "nice" or "nasty," finally decides to make her nice, and so complicates the situation. The scenes between the fanatical Basil and the loving woman are simply excellent, and would grace a book of a high order of merit. The art of conversation is distinctly amateurish, and bears marks of unexpected immaturity. And the reader's ideas of probability are too highly strained, notably in the absurd idea that a man who was a good shot would deliberately aim at his best friend's heart in a duel, or challenge attention by sending his portrait for exhibition. In a somewhat hysterical preface, the author begs us not to say that her story is impossible. As a story it is best described as preposterous; but the writing goes far to make one forget and forgive. G. M. R.

Eternal Womanhood.

O Mother-God—for surely there must be
A Mother Godhead unto whom we may,
We women, in our need, reach out and pray;
A tender, pitying spirit that can see
Into our soul-deeps, with rich sympathy
Each heart throbs echo, and in full repay
The spendthrift love poured forth in woman's way—
Our womanhood's thrice blessed Trinity.
O Mother-God, to Thee I lift mine eyes,
Burned with hot tears, tears only women know,
Tears wrung from secret sorrow unexpressed;
The mother-pain, the lone wife's stifled cries—
Misunderstood! I am so tired; oh,
Fold Thou thine arms about me; let me rest!

What to Read.

"Under the Care of the Japanese War Office."
By Ethel McCaul, R.R.C.
"Sunny Sicily." By Mrs. Alce Tweedie.



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.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I agree most heartily with Miss Mollett that nursing should be a "restful, quiet, gentle performance of duties," and I also believe in the point of view of your correspondent "A Hospital Sister," who says that "many poor hospital patients are so used to noise and close quarters that they do not mind a bit of a rush, as more fortunate and better-off people do." It seems to me that where we can justifiably rush is over the ward work. There are in the early morning only a few hours in which to get through what anyone outside a hospital would consider a good day's work. We must scurry. Only let us scurry in the right place. Lockers, window ledges, tins, taps, and door handles are not sensitive, they are even the better for hard scrubbings, and rubbings, and polishings. But when we come to human "material," and sick material at that, the case is different. To a patient it makes all the difference if he is handled gently and without obvious hurry. I say obvious, because it is quite possible to keep the need for haste well in the forefront of one's own mind, without communicating this need to the patient.

"Now, Mrs. 19, here's your water, hurry up and get washed, because I want the screen; besides, it's full day, and the doctors will be here at ten. Just call out when you're ready to have your hair done."

Poor Mrs. 19, only recently promoted to washing herself, and still unable to "do" her hair, makes an effort to respond. But she fumbles, and the process is a slow one. "Nurse, she don't mean nothing; she wur real good to me when I wur bad. But she do fluster me so when she speaks so sharp, and she do tweak my hair, she's in that hurry to get done. Now, there's that there night nuss, they don't seem to make no account of her; but she don't never drive you. Always a pleasant smile she has, and she speaks so kind. I get done quicker when she fetches my water, just because I know she won't get cross. Warms yer nightgown and yer towel, too, she do. She's a rare good sort, she is, and no mistake."

I think the mistake many nurses make is, that they nurse the ward instead of the patients. At least, the ward comes first and the patients a long way second. Surely this is wrong. Wards must be spick and span, we know; moreover, we take a natural pride in keeping them so. But if we spend a disproportionate time over the inanimate things that show, and which secure for us perhaps valued approbation, and fail to perform the one-hundred-and-one small things of which no one is probably the wiser but the patients, we have missed the whole spirit of our calling. We shall never be good nurses, though we may become good organisers and slave-drivers. That, at least, is the view of—Yours faithfully, A HUMAN PERSON.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)