

was perched a nightingale, which was pouring forth a song almost unearthly in its sweetness. In Algeria the nightingales often begin to sing at four o'clock in the afternoon. The boy sat there immovable as a statue. But every now and then he would clasp the bird against his breast with a gesture of tenderness."

Then Hafsi spoke.

"Did I not say well? The child is a marabout."

The pathetic death of little Kadouijah, who was supposed to have been cured of sickness by his touch, and who afterwards drowned herself because "she did not wish to wear a veil, to be Bon-Hassan's wife. She wished to go to a Christian school, to learn to pray as Mr. David prayed,"—all this made the influential Arabs regard the boy with mingled envy and distrust, and led to the exciting incidents which follow his capture.

The book teems with interest from cover to cover, and should on no account be left unread.

H. H.

#### COMING EVENTS.

*July 5th.*—The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. General Meeting in Clinical Theatre. 2.30 p.m. Tea, Social Gathering, and Tennis match 4 p.m.

*July 5th.*—The King reviews the London Division of the Territorial Force, Hyde Park, 5 p.m. Members of the Territorial Force Nursing Service in uniform will be provided with places in the enclosure.

*July 5th.*—Opening of Health Exhibition in connection with the Royal Sanitary Institute's Congress, Exeter.

*July 7th to 12th.*—The Royal Sanitary Institute Twenty-eighth Congress and Health Exhibition, Exeter.

*July 18th.*—Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses. Annual Meeting. Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. 4 p.m. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will preside. Address by Sir Victor Horsley, F.R.S., F.R.C.S.

*July 23rd.*—Central Midwives Board. Penal Cases. Caxton House, S.W. 2 p.m.

*July 24th.*—Meeting Central Midwives Board, Caxton House, S.W.

*July 25th.*—Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland. Quarterly Meeting. Bournemouth.

#### A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Happiness, grief, gaiety, sadness, are by nature contagious. Bring your health and your strength to the weak and sickly, and so you will be of use to them. Give them, not your weakness, but your energy, so you will revive and lift them up.

—Amiel's Journal.

The best kind of sympathy is that which lends a hand.

No one is useless in the world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.

#### 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 OVERSTRAIN OF HOSPITAL MATRONS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad to note in your last issue a letter on the "Overstrain of Hospital Matrons"; there is no doubt it is a very real evil in the country—in London my experience is the majority who have assistants have a very good time. Overstrain in the country is the result of expecting one woman to be Jack of all trades, and then not giving her the support she ought to have from those in authority. This is a fair specimen of my working day as a Matron of a hospital of some 80 beds, which has a training school for nurses.

7 a.m.—rise, breakfast; 8—office, letters; 8.30—night sister's report; 8.45—kitchen; 9—store-room, give out stores; 9.30 linen-room, arrange work; 10—inspect wards, bath-rooms, kitchens, and nurses' home; 11.45—supervise sending up patients' dinner; 12.30—preside staff nurses' dinner, carve; 1.15—preside probationers' dinner, carve; 1.45—get lunch; 2.30—help in theatre; 4—tea; 4.30—see new probationers, visitors, letters to catch post; 7—dinner; 8—probationers' classes or keep books, lists, more letters; 9—see night sister and cook, for next day's orders; 10—odd jobs; 11 or 12—bed. It will be seen, therefore, that I was housekeeper, with charge of stores, linen, dressings and supervision of food, book-keeper and secretary of nursing and domestic department, principal of training school, teacher of probationers and supervisor of nursing in wards and theatres, hostess, to receive and placate visitors, and general oiler of wheels. Sundays one was on duty, though work reduced. The hospital was understaffed; there should have been an assistant matron, to help with domestic work and nursing classes—there was none. There should have been some man to keep discipline amongst the young house staff; there was only the secretary, who as a lay man could not maintain order in the medical department. All the disagreeables about food, late hours and flirtations fell to my share; any country matron knows what that may mean. It meant constant worry, what to see and what not to see was reduced to a fine art. Committees of men hate worry, things must go smoothly, if one intends to keep a post. It is a choice very often between self-interest and public duty. But after a time one wonders who cares that one should do one's public duty? Are not matrons who insist upon right doing often considered contentious and tactless? Any way, my experience is that the expedientists succeed the best; and are usually to be found comfortably encoised in high places, where they remain until pensions come their way. When one hears of the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)