

who were put in wards with patients suffering from various other diseases. Miss McGaw expressed her disapproval of compulsory segregation, and thought this would only result in people hiding the fact that they were suffering from tuberculosis.

Dr. Gaffikin differed from Miss McGaw, inasmuch as she thought compulsory segregation desirable, as otherwise patients would go home, and then the last state would be worse than the first. She stated that in Ireland many who have been in a sanatorium cannot obtain work.

THE BLACK PLAGUE.

We hope it will not now be long before the Public Health Committee of the N.U.W.W., seriously considers the question of how to stamp out Venereal Disease? Mrs. Bedford Fenwick suggested some time ago that it should grapple with this appalling question—which ruins more lives, and breaks more hearts than any other known disease. Now that the National Council of Trained Nurses, and the British Medical Association have come out in the open, and the Government has granted a Parliamentary Commission to enquire into it—the National Council of Women should no longer hesitate to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, the truth about venereal disease, with the determination of taking strong and active measures to help to minimise its terrible ravages.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

HALFPENNY ALLEY.*

This book should be interesting to our readers, as it is written by a district nurse in the East and South-East of London and is the outcome of a diary kept during a period of six years. She has wisely, as she tells us, made small attempt to reproduce the English language as it is spoken in Halfpenny Alley, but has successfully conveyed the Cockney idioms, and phraseology which makes the London poor so delightfully refreshing. We are sorry that Miss Hardcastle does not give us more actual nursing detail; the sketches are as a rule general in character. The Mothers' Annual Outing to the sea contains some very real touches. Mrs. Saunders had privately arranged to borrow her aunt's new hat, and knew therefore the success of her costume for the occasion was assured. Mrs. Thompson hired for the maximum sum a blue velvet hat, "Mrs. Levy reckons it is one of her best." Mrs. Jones who had designs on the same head-gear, behaved 'andsome, as she says, "Mrs. Thompson," she says, "if you means to come out of your weeds and has decided on the blue velvet, it shall be yours; that's just the way she says it. "Its yours," she says, "and I'll make do with

* By Marjory Hardcastle. Smith, Elder & Co., London.

the purple silk." But Mrs. Thompson thought she would feel rather lonely without her weeds after all these years, so Mrs. Jones' sacrifice was not required of her.

Tom and Tilda's matrimonial affairs are also interesting. Tom, whom Tilda eyed with satisfied pride, would not be everyone's choice. "He was tall, pale and spotty, with his red hair plastered down till it reached his eyebrow, where it turned up abruptly in a watered curl. His new suit was made to order for 19s. 11d., by a tailor who did a roaring trade among bridegrooms, for he gave away a wedding cake gratis with each order." Tilda's first baby was born in hospital, for Tilda had a severe illness prior to its birth. Their youth and mutual love won a soft spot in the Sister's heart; for night after night he crept into the ward with his boots in one hand, and a penny bunch of flowers in the other. Then, one night Elizabeth was born; she had been christened hurriedly as she was thought to be dying, but then the strength of Elizabeth's character was not known. She had no intention of departing thus hastily; instead she was dressed in cotton wool, and established in a comfortable cot in the fender, with three hot bottles and an important-looking chart, announcing that her name was Elizabeth Thompson, and her weight two pounds, eight ounces. But when Elizabeth was taken to her squalid home she changed her mind, and her spirit fled back whence it came. Then the boy and girl father and mother pawned all they had, and hired an absurdly large old family coach, with two black horses, and four black plumes, their inordinately long manes tied up with black. The neighbours bade each other take notice that it was the smallest coffin ever seen or likely to be seen, for was it not the coffin of Elizabeth?

Old grannie Relf, who at last has to "come to" the Infirmary is a pathetic figure. She bequeaths to Nurse, on the eve of her departure from her poor room, the "pair of loveyers off the chimbley piece": "I took the loveyers home under my cloak, and now they live in the middle of my own chimney piece." The Infirmary, was not 'ome, it was all the dear old body complained of. "There may be chips and cracks, and things ain't so comfortable, but they're *your own*, and the place is yer own, and somethin' what ain't, can't never be 'ome, and that's the truth." The eternal, plaintive cry that comes from the very soul of those who are "clean and comfortable."

This volume of incident with its mixture of tragedy and comedy has caught indeed the atmosphere of the submerged. The introduction tells us that "nurses see folk as they are."

H. H.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

You'll find that luck is only pluck,
To try things over and over;
Patience and skill, courage and will
Are the four leaves of life's clover.

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