

"I believe she was thinking of how she heard the cuckoo first.

"At seven this morning Georgina died. A minute before she died she stirred; I saw her lips moving.

"Open the window, my dear,' she breathed. I obeyed at once, and when I turned back to the bedside she had gone. The look of gratitude was still on her face. For one instant she had heard the birds at their singing. I am glad she heard them once more before she died." Diana is left to the vicar, and she and Nature do their utmost to heal.

There is a quaint picture drawn of the old man and woman who agreed to live together, thinking the marriage ceremony unnecessary.

"You must remember, Fastnedge,' said I, 'to ignore the marriage sacrament is to live in sin.'

"Would 'ee mind tellin' me, sur,' he replied, 'what sin there be left in the world for an old man of seventy-five and an old woman of seventy to do? . . . I reads my Bible just the same as I ever did, and I reads how St. Paul says it's better not to be married same as he was, but that if a man can't abide it, so to speak, then he might as well be married rather'n be burnt. . . . No, sur, I don't object, but it seems to me what's the good? T'agin with, look you, I can't afford it, and then it ain't goin' to make no better of us 'cos there ain't no bad in us. We're a pair of old children, sur, that's what it comes to, and wouldn't you pop your bairns in a bed, and not think one way or t'other about it?'"

At the close of the book Diana is married, and the vicar is left very lonely.

"I stood at the gate waving my handkerchief, as though it were the most ordinary wedding in the world. They have promised to return, but I have looked at the atlas, and California is a long way away. I opened the door of the room where Georgina died. 'Death cannot be the end,' said I, and closed the door. There was not even the voice of a robin to break the stillness of the countryside. But they will sing again. They will sing again next year."

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

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. Tea, 2, Portland Place, W., by kind invitation of Mrs. Walter Spencer.

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.—Quarterly Meeting Matrons' Council. Bourne Hall Hotel, Bournemouth. 3 p.m. Open meeting, State Registration. 3.45 p.m. Tea by kind invitation of Miss C. Forrest.

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,—It seems strange if hospital matrons are so overworked, and unappreciated, that for every vacancy there are dozens of applicants. During the past year a new matron was appointed at this hospital (which shall be nameless) and we had 62 applicants for it, although I am bound to confess the salary is modest.

Yours truly,

A HOSPITAL SECRETARY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I was interested in the letter signed "Formerly One of Them" describing a hospital matron's working day. I know that grind so well. As a hospital matron I calculated my day at thirteen hours' active work. I am not complaining, I liked to be busy all the time, and yet with the best intentions in the world the strain was too great. The choice was between breaking down entirely and letting things slide; I could not afford to give up my post. I did less, and everyone seemed quite as well pleased—indeed, more so. I gave up battling with untidy heads and fly away caps—in many ways discipline was relaxed. I found myself much more popular. My nickname in the hospital (all matrons have a nickname but seldom hear of it) was changed from "The Dragon" to "Pussy." The medical staff said I was "a woman of tact," and the committee of men never found out that the quality of the nursing was on the downgrade.

The only person who appeared to appreciate the change and to bitterly deplore it, was a first-rate night sister who left "because she did not care to work under a slacker." This opinion with which I was in entire sympathy, was repeated to me by her inferior successor.

I kept that post many years—despising myself all the time. I suppose I overestimated my own force of character in attempting to do fine work. I don't want to blame others; from lack of moral courage I chose an inglorious part, but I have now a pension. "Pussy" can lap her cream, and the more she knows of human nature the more she realises that in the aggregate it abhors a high standard of conduct to which it has no desire to attain.

Yours sincerely,

"Pussy."

[This letter came in the first instance by way of confession, not for publication, but we thought it of value and have consent for it to appear. We hope that night-superintendent is now at

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