

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"A JOURNAL OF IMPRESSIONS IN BELGIUM."*

The introduction tells us this is a journal of impressions, nothing more. "When I set out to keep a journal I pledged myself to set down only what I had seen or felt. It was my misfortune that I saw very little of the field work of the Corps." The introduction should be read before starting on the journal; this will save a good deal of disappointment in expecting that which we do not receive.

Miss Sinclair is, of course, an able writer, and no items of interest in this great world tragedy can be dubbed trivial, but for all that we feel that the personal note is too much in evidence, and the treatment of the whole is in too light a strain. But having said so much we hasten to add that from our point of view there are many criticisms, spoken and implied, that lead us to conclude that Miss Sinclair has an intelligent appreciation and admiration of the trained nurse, and that she deploras the wasted opportunities of skill and money which could take, at the commencement of the War, young girls, barely out of the schoolroom, and entrust them, in their youth and ignorance, with the awful responsibility of accompanying the field ambulances. Miss Sinclair herself, who accompanied a motor ambulance corps, went in the capacity of secretary and newspaper correspondent, and to her credit did not try to assume the pose of nurse though she appears to have assisted on occasions. She wished passionately all the time that she had had the training to fit her for that work.

She says "The Commandant has brought four women with him besides me. I confess I was appalled when I first knew they would be brought. Mrs. Torrence, perhaps" (a trained nurse, apparently the only one), "but why little Janet McNeil? She is the youngest of us all, an eighteen year old child, who will follow Mrs. Torrence if she walks straight into the German trenches. Her delicate Highland beauty. . . . Her small face under the woolly cap," &c., &c. Then there was "Ursula Dearmer, who can't be much older. If she were not so slender she would look like a pretty dormouse recovering from its torpor." In the committee-room this girl had the air of a "senior schoolgirl." This is all very charming and picturesque, but in spite of Janet's being an expert motorist *ce n'est pas la guerre*, and Miss Sinclair leaves us with the impression that she feels this. Here is another picture:

"I have got used to Mrs. Torrence, and to Ursula, but I cannot get used to Janet. It always seems appalling to me that she should be strolling about here at the seat of war, as if a battle were a cricket match at which you looked

on between your innings, and yet there isn't a man in the Corps who does his work better and with more courage than this eighteen year old child." If it is the intention of the authoress to emphasise the unseemliness and monstrous injustice, both to nurses and wounded, of this state of affairs we should be grateful to her.

It was in Ghent, where there were not enough wounded to go round, and where "while two young surgeons cool their heels in the corridor, and a fully trained nurse tears her hair, the young girl Ursula Dearmer takes the field in the ambulance car with the Commandant. In that part of the Corps which has been left behind there has crept a sneaking envy of her luck. I feel it myself. And if I feel it, what must Mrs. Torrence and Janet feel?"

Apart from the nursing question, there are many sympathetic passages. The whole attitude of the Belgians seeming to express "*C'est triste n'est ce pas?*"

The descriptive portions of the book are well worth reading, especially the account of the flight before the invaders from Ghent to Bruges. H. H.

"THE QUIET,"

I could not understand the sudden quiet—
The sudden darkness—in the crash of fight,
The din and glare of day quenched in a twinkling
In utter starless night.

I lay an age and idly gazed at nothing,
Half-puzzled that I could not lift my head;
And then I knew somehow that I was lying
Among the other dead.

—From "Battle," by Wilfrid William Gibson.

COMING EVENTS.

October 25th.—Central Midwives Board. Examination in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. The oral examination follows in a few days' time.

October 26th.—National Association for the prevention of Infant Mortality. Public meeting to consider a national campaign to promote the welfare of motherhood and infancy. Guildhall, 3 p.m.

October 28th.—Central Midwives Board. Penal Cases. Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W. 11 a.m.

November 6th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Sale of Work, Sloane Gardens House, 52, Lower Sloane Street, London, S.W. 10 a.m.—6 p.m.

November 6th.—Church League for Women's Suffrage. Intercession Service. St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Preacher, the Lord Bishop of London. 3 p.m.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"A dying old terrier said to her pup,
In all life's afflictions keep your tail up."

* By May Sinclair. Hutchinson & Co., London.

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