

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE DIARY OF A FRENCH ARMY  
CHAPLAIN,"\*

This record is a translation by Harriet M. Capes of "La Guerre vue d'une Ambulance," and the events recorded are of the American Hospital, Neuilly, Paris.

The frontispiece is a portrait of the priest-author. The keen kindly face with a hint of humour is crowned with a biretta, while the left arm proudly displays the Red Cross. We say proudly, advisedly, for the subsequent pages reveal the sense of high privilege with which the Abbé undertook the spiritual charge of this Hospital. He is delighted when the offer comes for he was fretting, as many others, at the inactivity.

It was some days after its equipment before the Hospital received its first patients, and the Abbé appears to have taken his share in the strenuous preparations.

"Eleven o'clock. We are still waiting, our bodies heavy with fatigue; we have been working so hard at preparations these last days; but our minds are awake, and if our eyes can't keep from half closing, hearts are wide open."

Later when he goes out with the ambulance, "At last we make out a piteous group; we stoop over the bloodstained grass, minister to soul and body, distribute drink nourishment, dressings; revive strength and hope. Very gently the poor wounded are wrapped up, lifted, laid on the mattresses of the ambulance, and here they are off for the home of science and kindness. There is a science that kills and a science that cures, as there are good and evil, and God and devils...."

Of one poor fellow he says, "I saw his face, nearly black, his eyes shining with fever, and his smile, yes, his smile so beautiful, so full of resignation and sweetness that it brought to one's mind the Christian martyrs looking up to Heaven amidst their tortures. He had been wounded in the head, the leg and the arm."

"Are you in great pain?" I asked, as I took the hand I should like to have kissed.

"No," he answered. "A little tired by the car."

In recording the honourable behaviour of German medical officers, he remarks, "In this letting loose of horror and hatred, we must dwell on the few features capable of softening hearts."

"September 25th.—It's really beautiful, a ward for the wounded with its snow-white beds, its glass tables, its great bays full of light, its spotless floors and walls, with its nurses both eager and calm, always smiling yet so serious, watching over everything, flying noiselessly from place to place. Yesterday I begged for the privilege—not, need I say, for vain curiosity—to have the sad privilege of being present at wound dressing, with the idea of entering more thoroughly

into the minds of my poor friends, and by better knowing their troubles, the better to sympathise with them." After describing it in detail, "Awful War! Awful War!"

"I was talking with a doctor this evening and saying I had never seen anything worse. 'That's because you have never been on the battle field,' he answered. 'You have never seen the dead, the dying, the wounded begging for something to drink.' Reflecting on this he exclaims, 'Those no one sees, no one hears, who know not if anyone will come, who feel themselves dying quite alone, or among the dead!'"

"November 1st.—Many received Communion in Chapel. Many received it after Mass in their Wards, and it was good of Christ to go to find our wounded on their beds of suffering. Almost everywhere He had picked out the most tried, and in one ward where each one was in danger He tarried with all, and, after His Divine passing, the door of that sad limbo was left ajar upon Paradise."

Many are the pathetic and moving pictures the Abbé gives of his ministrations to the dying.

He has a great appreciation of the English courage and spirit. "Who is this young officer laughing as he walks about, a borrowed képi unblushingly stuck over one ear? An English lieutenant! Who are those soldiers who are jumping along on their crutches, or running on their wooden leg in the corridor? English again! And those who are singing with much gesticulation, laughing aloud and trying to make others laugh? Always English, unless they chance to be Tunisians or negroes. Assuredly not Frenchmen. La Bruyère said mournfully that one must laugh before being happy, on pain of dying without having laughed."

This is a beautiful and sympathetic record, and makes one long to have a personal acquaintance with this good priest. A word of praise must be given to the translation, which, though in excellent English, retains the expressive characteristics of the French language.

H. H.

## COMING EVENTS.

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

October 28th.—British Red Cross and Order of St. John. Countess Grosvenor "At-home," 35, Park Lane, W. Small sale of pictures, flowers, comforts for wounded soldiers, &c. Admission 1s. 11 to 6.

November 4th.—"The American Child at School," by Miss Clara E. Grant. Royal Sanitary Institute, 90, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W. 6 p.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.

\* By Abbé Félix Klein. Andrew Melrose, Ltd., London.

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