

splendid work in the military hospitals at home, and in the various theatres of operations, and no praise is too high for their noble and self-sacrificing labours. Whilst thousands of pounds are disbursed annually in substantial pensions for politicians and others who have been well paid whilst in office, Parliament wrangles over the paltry amounts to be allowed our soldiers and sailors who are incapacitated in the nation's wars. The recognition by the State of its obligations to the nursing sisterhood is tardy, but it is welcome all the same.

From the reports submitted at the annual meeting of the Exeter District Nursing Association it is evidently doing most valuable work for the poor of the city. Mrs. Andrew stated that the midwifery branch had steadily increased, 289 cases being attended by the association's midwives, whose services were becoming more eagerly sought as the poorer mothers of the city were realizing the advantages of skilled nursing, followed in many cases by curative and preventive services. This dual attention had undoubtedly contributed in no small measure to the gratifying reduction of infantile mortality in the city. Towards the end of the year arrangements were made with St. Thomas' Nursing Association, whereby the scope of the work was extended into that district.

Mrs. Vlieland thanked the members of the staff who had resisted the attractions of higher wages and variety of work offered by war service. It was of primary importance that the soldiers should be cared for, but it was also essential that the health of the women and children should be looked after. She called attention to a Local Government Board circular, according to which the maternity mortality for the whole country was 4 per 1,000; for Devon 4.60, for Plymouth 4.62, and for Exeter 2.66. The low rate was not attributable so much to sanitary conditions, or the industrial occupations of the women, but to skilled attention given by the midwives. Exeter District Association's nurses had attended 933 cases in the last four years, and there had been no deaths. Therefore, it might be claimed that they had contributed in no small degree to that low mortality, notwithstanding that they were working among the very poor, where it might be expected to be higher than among the mothers who were in better circumstances. One very sad lack in Exeter was that they had no maternity wards outside the Workhouse Infirmary.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE STRANGERS' WEDDING; OR, THE COMEDY OF A ROMANCE."*

Rather a tragedy than a comedy.

Huncote, a graduate of Oxford, decides that settlement work among the poor is the end to which he was born. He undertook it more from the social than the religious aspect.

"It was fortunate from his son's point of view that Colonel Huncote had not lived, for they were so much alike that they would probably have disliked each other intensely. Colonel Huncote had all the hard generous absurdity of his son—principles, sense of duty, and so forth. He had made up his mind to serve the Empire just as Roger had made up his mind to serve the people. He had thought woman inferior and lovable, and so he left his son about seven hundred a year, with the reversion after his mother's death of a further nine hundred, while Elspeth and Flora were given two hundred and fifty a year each when their mother died, until then nothing. Their pretty mother was young somehow, though fifty-one, in her semi-artly semi-messy clothes, with her fair and grey untidy but pretty hair, and her general likeness to a hollyhock after a shower."

Roger tries to recruit his sisters' help in the Settlement dance. Elspeth refused. "No, thanks; I know the kind of thing. A collection of all the undesirables in the district and no enquiries made."

Flora was different. She was weary of the dull round of a life in a Cathedral town.

"Oh, I'd love to come. It's sweet of you, Roger."

Her brother patted the little hand. "You know I don't promise you a life guard."

She laughed. "Roger, dear, even a railway guard would be a blessing in a place like this."

This was not exactly social zeal, Roger thought, but still—

It was at this dance that Roger first met Sue Groby.

He stood before a dark young girl.

This old young man's heart leapt quite suddenly as if he had been snatched up with many other young things and had become aware of you.

He realised that he had been staring at the girl while he thought of something else.

"I beg your pardon," he said.

"Granted," she replied.

Beautiful Sue was the daughter of a washer-woman, and Huncote almost at once fell under the influence of her personal magnetism.

Later at a Settlement picnic he drew her out to tell him of her home life, her pleasures.

The girl at his side who talked so freely of her concerns did not jar upon him, for she was not pretending, not trying. Where the sun touched

* By W. L. George. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London.

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