

SPHAGNUM MOSS.

Sphagnum Moss, which in the various Sphagnol Preparations supplied by Peat Products, Ltd., 18 and 19, Upper Thames Street, E.C., is being so successfully used for dressing wounds, sore feet, insect bites, &c., is greatly appreciated by the men at the Front, as the following letter from a private in the Worcester Regiment demonstrates:—

"I do not know how to thank you for the ointment; it was truly a godsend, for it has acted like a charm upon my feet, which have been so sore and blistered. I never knew ointment to give such relief to one's feet. After each day I rub my feet with it, and it stops that burning feeling. Thank you ever so much; I cannot express my thanks."

The campaign for the collection of sphagnum in the North of Scotland has now assumed enormous proportions, and is under the direction of Miss Ogston, daughter of Sir Alexander Ogston, of Aberdeen, the eminent surgeon.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE DIARY OF A NURSING SISTER AT THE WESTERN FRONT,"*

If you are not desirous of having tears in your eyes and a big, big pain in your heart, if you are afraid of being alternately thrilled with pride and cast down in self contempt, we strongly advise you to have nothing to do with this book. It is a first-hand, simple record of the daily experience of what we judge to be one of the pick of the nursing profession in charge of an ever-changing convoy of wounded men on a hospital train. Such experiences! Such men! The chronicle gains much from the fact that it was not originally written for publication, but is in the form of a diary kept for the friends of the Sister at home. And it was published without alteration.

Its literary style is good, and the lady has evidently considerable talent in this direction. In the short daily entries an appealing bit of scenery, a humorous incident, the mingled pathos and laughter of Tommy, silent heroism, glorious fortitude are expressed vividly and convincingly. The book is full of priceless, deathless records of otherwise unrecorded valour.

And the Sister jots them down along with her own personal experiences, without any appeal to the gallery, without any strained sentiment, and just because of this it goes straight home.

We will simply quote briefly just a few of the entries.

"They were bleeding faster than we could cope with it; and the agony of getting them off the stretchers on to the top bunk is a thing to forget."

Speaking of wounded Indians she writes: "One compartment of four lying-down cases got restless with the pain in their arms, and I found them all

sitting up rocking their arms and wailing. 'Aie Aie, Aie.' Poor pets."

"Seems funny, 400 people, of whom four are women and about sixty are sound, all whirling through France by a special train. Why? Because of the swelled head of the All Highest."

"By the time these men reach the Base these men are beyond complaining, each stage is a little less infernal than the one they have left; and instead of complaining they tell you how lovely it is."

Of the Sikhs, "Their great disadvantage is that they are alive with 'Jack Johnstons' (not the guns). They take off *all* their underclothes and throw them out of the windows, and we have to keep on supplying them with pyjamas and shirts. All the cushioned seats are now infected, and so are we. I love them dearly, but it's a big price to pay."

"A wounded officer told me he was giving out the mail in his trenches the night before last, and nearly every man had a letter or a parcel. Just as he had finished a shell came and killed both his sergeant and his corporal; if they hadn't had their heads out at that moment for the mail neither of them would have been killed. The officer could hardly get through the story for the tears in his eyes."

"Five mufflers went on a little isolated station on the way here. When I said to the first boy, 'Have you got a muffler?' he thought I wanted one for some one on the train. 'Well, it's not a real muffler, it's my sleeping cap,' he said, beginning to pull it off his neck, 'but you're welcome to it if it's any use.' What do you think of that?"

"A man whose arm was smashed got as far as a man 'to tie his torn muscles up' and then started to crawl out dragging his arm after him. After some hours he came on one of his own officers wounded, who said, 'Good God, sonny, you'll be bleeding to death if we don't get you out of this; catch hold of me and the chaplain.' So 'e cuddled me and I cuddled the chaplain, and we got as far as the doctor."

"I have a boy of 22 with both legs off. He is dazed and white and wants shifting very often. Each time you fix him up he says 'That's champion.'"

"My boy with the dressings on his head has not the slightest idea he has no eyes, and who's going to tell him?"

Later, doing duty in a field ambulance. "Can't face the graves to-day. I found a boy who brought his officer in from between the German line and ours on Sunday night, crying this morning over the still figure under a brown blanket on a stretcher."

"Nine officers have 'died of wounds' here since Sunday, and a tenth will not live to see daylight."

"One boy said suddenly when I was attending to his leg, 'Aren't you very foolish to be staying up here? Oh, sorry, I was dreaming you were in the front line of trenches bandaging people up.'"

* Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons, London.

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