

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

HOSPITAL DAYS.*

These sketches give experiences from a wounded subaltern's point of view. They are interesting because nurses are, or should be, interested in hearing patients' ideas about their nurses and their modes of nursing. For this reason we will confine ourselves to extracts bearing directly on these subjects.

The writer found himself after various vicissitudes in one of the Home Hospitals.

Sunbeam was my nurse—not that this was really her name, or the name by which any of us at first called her. She inherited her soubriquet in course of time. I tried calling her Flossie the second morning I was her patient, but the Matron who was passing at the time, overheard me and explained that was not the way for a patient to speak to his nurse, and that there were rules of decorum to be observed in the Ward. Thereafter for the next week I addressed her formally as Nurse X. The next day a new patient was brought in, a skip of a boy with a shattered knee, which gave him little rest from pain. He had just come from another hospital and was querulous at being moved and suspicious of the new hands into which he had fallen. He began by assuming that Nurse X knew nothing about dressing wounds, and gave her detailed instructions about how to take off the old bandages. As she had had five years' training at a London Hospital, these instructions were hardly necessary. However, she listened attentively to all he said and followed his directions. Next he found fault with the fresh dressing she had put on and said it was not what he had been having or what his doctor had ordered. On this point Nurse was gently firm and said she must be allowed to know. Finally, when the dressing was done, he complained that the bandage was too tight on, when she took off the whole thing and rewound the bandage. Dressed and tucked up, patient and nurse surveyed each other. Was there anything more she could do for him? He shook his head wearily. "Perhaps if I got the pillow under your knee higher up it would be easier."

He agreed that it might help, so all the bed-clothes and the cradle over his legs came off, once more the pillow under the injured limb was adjusted and he was tucked up again.

Quite an ordinary picture of what a nurse should be, and it is pleasant to think that the unmatched patience of a true nurse has been recorded.

The narrator says, "What endless skill, patience and a real love of her work go to the making of a hospital nurse. And Sunbeam is, I suppose, still there in the 'old ward' (which is really a beautiful, big, airy room with lovely flowers and blue silk quilts, but still a ward nevertheless), moving among the chemicals and the bandages—a

* By a Platoon Commander. T. Fisher Unwin. Price 2s. 6d. net.

ray of light in herself and the realst of real war workers."

The chapter on the convalescent home contains the following amusing incident. "Flanigan always made as thorough a toilet as he was able from his bed. On the morning in question he had taken off the top part of his pyjamas and was leaning well out of bed over the basin soaping the back of his neck. At this moment in came one of the lady probationers. Seeing Flanigan in his state of undress she gave an exclamation and made to go back through the door. Flanigan, looking up, caught sight of her, and being used to the matter-of-fact ways of trained nurses, beckoned her to his bedside. Hesitating and much embarrassed, the young lady probationer sidled toward Flanigan. He, unable to speak for fear of filling his mouth with soap, made a gesture to her that he wished her to sponge his back. Misunderstanding his movement and feeling that she must be brave and behave like a hospital nurse at all costs, she went and fetched a screen and put it round his bed. She then slipped from the ward."

One of many war books, this has a place of its own. H. H.

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.

BY DIVINE RIGHT.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with interest the letter signed "J. B. N. Paterson," in this week's JOURNAL, and quite agree with the writer as to the need for union amongst nurses. I think it is a great mistake that so many Matrons should have put themselves in such an invidious position in regard to nurses as to claim, as such, to control them through the Register for which the College of Nursing is seeking recognition from the Privy Council. Nurses as a rule are very loyal to the Matrons of the Schools where they were trained, and would willingly follow their lead, but when they claim that they are to direct and control the destinies of all members of the nursing profession who do not happen to hold superior posts in institutions, for the rest of their professional lives, one is really tempted to ask: "Who made thee a judge and a ruler" over me?

As heads of training schools the jurisdiction of Matrons—exclusive of that over Sisters and Staff Nurses, who are in a small proportion to the whole staff—is mainly over pupils in training. In my view those Matrons are in the strongest position who grasp this fact. To claim to control the certificated nurses throughout the country, professionally and economically, is a most preposterous demand, and an assumption of autocracy in which, if they persist, they are riding for a

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