

GLIMPSES OF MY LIFE IN ARAN.

Those who from time to time have read in this JOURNAL of the work of Miss B. N. Hedderman, a district nurse in Aran, off the coast of Connemara, in Galway Bay, will welcome a book by her—"Glimpses of my Life in Aran"—just published by Messrs. John Wright & Sons, Ltd., Bristol, giving an account of some of her experiences in these remote Islands.

It is evident to those who read her simply told tale that courage and endurance of a very high order are necessary for anyone who contemplates work amongst the Aran Islanders. Indeed, many a Royal Red Cross has been won for less heroic work than that which forms part of the daily routine of the lonely nurse on

reasons to build the cottage, so Miss Hedderman hopes that nurses will help her by ordering a copy of her little book.

Of her arrival at Inishere, the South Island, Miss Hedderman writes:—"From the strand that day the Island appeared as though it were one small mountain of rock, with no visible pathway or road. What human retreat could be more desolate? It seemed to be cut off from civilization, so apparently remote was it from the outside world, society, and companionship." Also:—"I was obliged to live on an island nine sea miles from the doctor, a situation not without risk, as there was no special concession for me; laws that applied to nurses on the mainland were equally applicable here."

In the course of her work the District Nurse of the Aran Isles has "to cross from one island

to another to visit the sick and to attend to maternity cases. The Sound which has to be crossed is three miles wide, and the sea is sometimes mountainous, a condition said to be caused by a current of the Gulf Stream running across it.

"The Middle Island, Inishmain, is the wildest and most inaccessible of the three, and the habits and manners of the natives are almost unknown outside its rocky coast, for it has no attraction to offer to the tourist, while to the discomforts in reaching it is added risk, dreadful and dangerous.

"Treacherous rocks, sharp and rugged, stretch out far into the ocean, and on the shore inside, the



THRASHING CORN, INISHMAIN.

Aran. Whether she is scaling the inaccessible rocks which compose the islands, or crossing the channel between them, to reach a sick patient, in a coracle (a frail canvas craft propelled by paddles), with the waves running mountain high, and the landing one of extreme peril, she constantly takes her life in her hands.

Miss Hedderman's motive in writing her experiences was first to let her colleagues know something of her difficulties in this terribly remote spot, and secondly, to endeavour to raise the sum of £200 to build a little cottage, for the strain of having to pay rent out of a salary of less than £1 a week is almost unendurable. Both the Congested Board and the Galway Guardians have refused for financial

surf dashes against the cliffs with raging violence."

Here is what Miss Hedderman describes as an "incident in connection with my work." She returned to her rooms after a visit to the far end of the South Island, when the short winter day had already closed, to find a man waiting outside who wanted her to accompany him to Inishmain. He spoke in Gaelic, and mentioned that the sea was high, but there was nothing to fear, as his boatmen were unique in the mastery of the curragh. On their arrival at the beach to embark there was pouring rain and the thundering noise of the rollers across the Sound could be heard distinctly—"However, being then physically strong, and possess-

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