

to have far-reaching results. Already numerous furnaces for the annealing and heat-treatment of steel are working in Sheffield and other places with air from an ordinary fan; and since they are under perfect control, the recuperation makes them economical of gas, and they are silent in work, it seems inevitable that they will quickly displace all others for these purposes. Figures are also given which effectually dispose of the objection that with low pressures of gas and air it is difficult to reach temperatures higher than 1,000 deg. C.

OUR GIRLS IN WAR TIME.*

Those delightfully humorous authors, Hampden Gordon and Joyce Dennis, who compiled and illustrated "Our Hospital A.B.C." which we noticed in these columns last autumn, have contributed another volume of the same priceless calibre, entitled "Our Girls in War Time." No fair worker is spared a sly dig in rhyme or picture. Rhymes and pictures are the complement of each other, and it is impossible thoroughly to appreciate either without seeing them both.

We have only space to quote two skits, so we hope other workers will not be jealous. We can assure each one that she is attended to.

Pansy ran a knitting party—

Oh! the things she knat.

Pansy's meetings never ended;

And results were simply splendid,

I can swear to that,

Since for weeks we used the socks she sent,

To take the place of wire entanglement.

Dora drove a motor van,

And she drove it faster than

Any ordinary man,

Did Dora.

Into something Dora ran—

Thus she found that people can

See not only stars, but an

Aurora

Borealis.

Let us rejoice, fellow-workers, that our little foibles should form the basis for this delightful book of mirth, so welcome in these dull days. That it is not of malice aforethought we are assured in the introductory verse:—

"The authors of this book of rhyme

Will yield to none in admiration

Of ladies who give all their time

To work that's useful to the nation.

And if we show them in a comic light

It's only our attempt at being bright."

The attempt is entirely successful, and we cordially recommend this book as a Christmas present for friends with a sense of humour.

* Price 3s. 6d. Published by John Lane Bodley Head.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE RED PLANET."**

A novel from Mr. Locke's pen is bound to be good. He writes only when he has something to say, and that something is, as always, far above the average.

"The Red Planet" is a story that will stick. There are personages in it that will be remembered, and upon whose characters one will ponder long after the book itself is laid aside. Humour, tragedy and romance are welded together into such a balanced whole that the reader is kept stimulated throughout, never once wearied or bored.

Leonard Boyce is the pre-eminent character, and a marvellously complex character he is. Is he to be admired for his brilliant achievements? Is he to be hated for his despicable weakness? Such a gallant figure of a man, with the touch of the animal peeping out of him.

Marigold, the sergeant butler, is described by his paralysed master as "the ugliest devil God ever created and further marred after creating him." He and his master were both honourably maimed in the South African war, Major Meredyth in the manner indicated above, and Marigold in that he had a bald head with a silver plate in it, which he covered with a curly wig, and only half-a-dozen teeth, spaced like a skeleton company. Between the wearing of false teeth and the wearing of false hair, he makes a distinction of unfathomable subtlety. In the same way neither entreaties nor abuse have induced him to wear a glass eye. On high days and holidays, whenever he desires to look smart and dashing, he covers the unpleasing orifice with a black shade.

"But the other eye is large, of ultramarine blue, steady, fearless, humorous, tender—everything heroic, beautiful and romantic you can imagine about an eye."

Major Meredyth, the cripple and writer of the story, must have been a charming man, although he is too modest to say so, for "almost every one came and told me his or her side of the story. All through I found thrust upon me the parts of father confessor, intermediary, judge, advocate and conspirator. For, look you, what kind of life can a man lead situated as I am? The crowning glory of my life, my wife, is dead. I have neither chick nor child." Marigold, his butler, was "his second self."

A year before the story began Althea Fenimore's body was found drowned in the lock. What had caused the tragedy? A mystery. Her father, Sir Anthony Fenimore, lived at Wellings Park. Althea was twenty-one; "pretty, buxom, like her mother, modern, with (to me) a pathetic touch of mid-Victorian softness and sentimentality." She is described as a passionate, reckless rider to hounds in the morning, and in the evening a pretty mass of pink flesh and chiffon,

** By W. L. Locke. John Lane, The Bodley, Head, London.

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