

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## A SCOTTISH NURSE AT WORK.\*

"So many people have written of their doings in the Great War that it seems as if there were nothing more to be said; but one whose opinion I value tells me that my experiences are in some ways unique as being so varied."

This introduction is Miss Henrietta Tayler's excuse for launching yet another war book.

She goes on to say:—

"Circumstances had prevented me from qualifying for admission to that finest of all services, the Q.A.I.M.N.S., or wearing the Territorial Nurses Badge . . . and therefore during all my nursing service I have had to bear the stigma of the semi-trained."

From a V.A.D. Hospital in the South of England, Miss Tayler was transferred to a similar post in the North of Scotland, from whence she got the coveted "move on" and had her first foreign experience in Dr. De. page's famous ambulance at La Panne, of which she gives an interesting account.

"Night duty was a wonderful experience, and I never got over a kind of mysterious thrill when two of us took up our twelve hours' vigil, not knowing whether we might sit peaceful and idle for an hour or two at intervals, or work without stopping until relieved. When the ambulance clattered up in the dark and the door was thrown open with the cry of "Blessés," the sleepy *brancardiers* would slowly bestir themselves—the very slowest was appropriately called *Désiré*—a hasty messenger would fetch our *médecin de garde*. We always had to remember their special idiosyncrasies (the doctors') and how *one* liked to have his attendant nurse to have everything prepared and to hand it without being asked, while another

would consider this a liberty, and if anything was offered to him for which he had not asked would stop and remark witheringly, "*Tiens, c'est l'infirmière qui fait le pansement.*" One of our own young surgeons, when he went back to take his turn in the trenches was brought in badly wounded and died with us.

"How I loved the work, and thanked Heaven daily for allowing my unworthy and half-trained self to do it, and then the interruption came.

I, who in more than thirty-five happy years had never been a day in bed, except to have measles, fell ill and did not realise it." Finally "I was ignominiously carried on a stretcher to the sick house, and lay in bed six long weeks with pneumonia. A civilian relation, who was sent for to see me, received from Belgian Headquarters a pass, authorising his presence "on the Front" for five days. If found there after that date he was to be shot at sight.

Instead of myself wielding the syringe—I became a victim of three-hourly *piqûres* of *huile camphrée* with strychnine, caffeine, and other horrors during three weeks, till I felt like a pin-cushion, and though I have never been 'wounded,' yet I shall carry to the end of my life the scars gained on the Belgian Front."

On the evacuation of the hospital at La Panne, Miss Tayler obtained permission

from H.Q. to take service in connection with the Refugee Children at Adinkerke.

"My new home was a small wooden barrack, or two of them, somewhat reminiscent of glorified cowsheds planted on brick piles with a mud yard between. Here were gathered Belgian children of all ages from three months to twelve years.

"One twelve-year-old boy, a refugee from Armentières, always fled crying to me when the shelling began, and when told that he ought not to show more fear than the little ones, replied sadly, "*Mais ma sœur moi je sais, qu'après les obus, arrivent les chariots plein de blessés.*" He quaintly enough could only speak French, and therefore



SISTER AND SEFKE.

\* By Henrietta Tayler. John Lane, Bodley Head.

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