

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "THE PEAK OF THE LOAD."\*

The two former books by Miss Mildred Aldrich, "The Hilltop on the Marne," and "The Edge of the War Zone," will make her many admirers eager to read her last volume relating her most interesting experiences in the war zone in France. It will be remembered by many that Miss Aldrich, an American lady, no longer young, a resident on the Hilltop on the Marne, elected to stay in the house which had been hers in time of peace, during the whole of the eventful years of the war.

This last volume covers the period from the entrance of the Stars and Stripes to the second victory on the Marne, and like its predecessors it takes the form of letters written to an intimate friend, vividly describing the stirring happenings of that time.

It is frankly enthusiastic as to the coming into the war of her compatriots.

"Personally, after the uplift the decision gave me, came a total collapse, and I had some pretty black days. I had to fight against the fear that we were too late, and the conviction that if we were really to do our part at the front, the war was still not to last one year, but years. But, no matter from what point of view one looks at the case, it does make a difference to think that our boys are coming over here to go into this holocaust."

The delightful characteristic of this lady is, that while she is heart and soul with the Allies, and unwearied in her efforts to do her share to alleviate in any way their sufferings, she is still able to take interest and to actively share in the intimately personal life of her little household, and she most delightfully details them to her friend, in conjunction with the tragedies that are happening close at her door.

"Lovely day—so good after the terrible winter. The flower garden will not be very good this year, I lost so many rose bushes in the awful long spell of cold. But what of that. Potatoes are the only *chic* thing this year. They are planted everywhere. The weather is good for planting, if it lasts I am going to try golden bantam corn. What do you think of that for a farmer? Hush! Louise does the hard work and I boss it. I sit in the field on a camp chair with the seeds in a basket and a green umbrella over my head and big gloves on my hands, while Louise grovels in the dirt and carries out my ideas. I get terribly tired and very red in the face, but Louise, brown as a berry, comes out as fresh as possible."

She is equally happy in her description of her animals. Amélie thinks it would solve the milk problem if they kept a goat. "I was amazed when she came back carrying the cunningest little beastie you ever saw."

"Why, Mélie," I cried "that won't give any milk!"

\* By Mildred Aldrich. Constable & Co., London.

"Give it time," she replied, "It's such a pretty one."

So I named it Jeanette, and it came to live at the farm.

I was eternally catching it in my garden standing on its hind legs nibbling my rose bushes. But it was so fascinating on its stiff wooden peg-like legs, and it side-stepped so gracefully when I was catching it, and danced on its hind feet and butted at me sideways, that I could not get cross."

Miss Aldrich finishes this charming chapter with, "You can't call this a war letter, can you?"

She was able to gratify Mademoiselle Henriette's desire (who had served in the ambulance) to see a big modern war hospital. "She thought the American girls so handsome and smart," and they were, but most of all at tea in the huge white refectory she was impressed by the *cameraderie* between the men and women as they sat there over their tea." She goes on to tell her friend, "You will not see the pretty picture which we saw from the window of the Abbé's study, a white-robed, white-coifed nurse sitting on the pedestal of Sainte Genevieve, with her white-shod feet sticking straight out in front of her, and her young head bent over a writing pad, while the setting sun flecked the white figures with shadows from the moving leaves of the big trees about her. *Monsieur l'Abbe* remarked, 'She ought to be writing verses, but I presume she is only writing home.'"

There are many exciting and deeply interesting chapters on Gotha raids, and on the allied retreats, and the flight of refugees and of her own charming hospitality to "the boys."

The combined pathos and humour with which Miss Aldrich relates her dramatic experience should make its appeal to all readers. H. H.

## THE NURSES' BOOKSHELVES.

MESSRS. J. WRIGHT & SONS, LTD., Colston Avenue, Bristol, are the publishers of Lectures on Surgical Nursing, by E. Stanmore Bishop, F.R.C.S. Eng., and other professional literature.

## A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Deep in the heart of the bird, the flower, the poet, the child, and the Virgin Mother, lies that mystic, fragile, fleeting thing called happiness. Perhaps after all it is only the power to sense the ideal, share the invisible, grasp the intangible, and build a new world from the same dream-dust God used when He fashioned this.—Edward Earle Purinton, "The Triumph of the Man Who Acts."

## WORK.

The comforter of sorrow and of care;  
The shortener of way prolonged and rude;  
The lightener of burden hard to bear;  
The best companion 'mid the solitude;  
The draught that soothes the mind and calms the brain;  
The miracle that lifts despair's thick murk,  
When other friends would solace bring in vain:  
Thank God for Work.

—E. Sabin.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)