

a flash of powder in the pan of John's brain. It lit up the thought of the King ready to walk out of Barbara Rackstraw's house—the betrayal of his secret and of hers. He struck out with his bare fist and then closed with a suddenness that prevented its becoming an affair of swords.

His King's secret and Barbara's was preserved, but Fairfax was challenged by a deadly marksman, and undoubtedly his career would have come to an end had it not been for the intervention of the King and Barbara, John all unwitting. His life was saved, but his honour was gone, and after a vividly described scene of disgrace, John left London a ruined man. The tale of his being tied to an ass facing the tail became known as far as his country home.

For a time he hid his shamed life in Shere Hall, but the horror of the plague and the plight of its unfortunate victims drew him back to London, from which the inhabitants were fleeing in terror. Here he amply redeemed his unfortunate past.

"There was a pot of musk in the window that overlooked the river. The pot stood on the table where John Fairfax sat and wrote in his journal, coatless, his shirt open at the throat because of the August heat. The window had a second opening on to the end of Lantern Lane. The water went by like oil flowing without a ripple, in colour a greyish-yellow, under a heavy and suffused sky. There was no air moving and not a boat was to be seen upon the river.

Fairfax read the last entry in his journal:

"Mrs. Barbara Rackstraw died this morning. Of this most notable and noble woman I write with a sad heart. She had no fear. She drove out daily in her coach, bearing food to those who were foodless, carrying her courage like a lamp into the darkness. What had the world to say of her? What will the King say of her death? I know not at this moment whether to call her end happy or sad. She was greatly loved and she loved with greatness. There was a time when I loved her and somehow in my heart I know I still love her. Were I the King I should be full of a great anguish, remembering that she had remained while I had fled."

The little parson Marbury is bravely drawn, and he and Fairfax work heroically for the plague-stricken population.

John survives the terrors of the times and lives to justify himself and to win Luce.

But we do not like the final scene of Luce's surrender, nor of John's reception of it. It is ungenerous.

Luce had been perfectly sincere in her attitude to him throughout, and it was not her fault if he had failed to touch her heart and imagination. John rescues her from a compromising situation with Teg Hargreaves, his old enemy, and kills him in a duel.

"Luce did not flinch from the bright glare of the light in his eyes.

"I have saved you," he said; "you shall belong to me body and soul."

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.*

### PEDIATRICS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I note with interest the progress made by the General Nursing Councils, and trust that the Nurses on these Councils, will insist that the science of tending and feeding the healthy child shall be included, in the future, as an essential part of the Nurses' training, so that the knowledge may be disseminated far and wide. Professor Ramsey (University of Minnesota, U.S.A.), speaking at the London Pediatric Conference (1919) finished an illuminating and forcible address with these words: "These are fundamental matters and those conclusions were come to after a close, careful and intensive study of Pediatrics . . . fallacies still exist in the minds of doctors, nurses and the public. Heresies handed down from time immemorial still exist, and if we are going to do anything fundamental in regard to infant and child welfare we must get the doctors properly educated, the nurses properly educated, and then the public will get properly educated; or else we must educate the public first and they will compel the doctors and nurses to get educated—this is sometimes necessary, you know."

I am, Yours, etc.,

J. B. N. PATERSON.

### THE INCIDENCE OF CONGENITAL SYPHILIS AMONG THE NEWLY BORN.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I was very interested in the quotations from the report presented to the Medical Research Council on the Wassermann reaction of placental blood in a series of 340 unselected cases, in which the material for investigation was collected by midwives. I entirely agree with your conclusions: (1) That the midwives should be suitably remunerated for their services in this connection; (2) That the specimens forwarded by the midwives should be numbered, and the names and addresses of patients should not be given.

Personally I should be very pleased to help to collect specimens which would aid in the collection of valuable statistics, but I should absolutely refuse to divulge the names and addresses of my patients. I note the particulars "demanded," and presumably supplied, were as follows. I will fill them in, in two hypothetical cases:—

Name, Mary Jones; Age, 30; Address, Milton's Mews; Date of Marriage, January 17th, 1911; Number of Pregnancies, 6; Abortions or Miscarriages, 4 in 7 years; Patient's Health, attending hospital for vaginal discharge; Husband's Occu-

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