

the Leader of the House of Lords—would do much to decide the fate of the Bill.

From our coign of vantage we noticed an earnest little discussion taking place between our champion and the Leader of the House. What would be the result of it? Our hearts went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat. In a few minutes we knew.

Lord Lansdowne summed up the position in a most able and convincing speech, when he informed their lordships that if the Bill was pressed to a division, he should vote against it.

The House divided at 6.30, and there voted—

For the Bill	..	..	20
Against	..	..	53
			—
Majority Against	..	..	33

Sir Henry Burdett, who was standing behind my seat, frankly remarked:—

“I always said it was a damned bad Bill”!

And yet he supported it in his papers for all he was worth!

The result of the division was eagerly awaited by the nurses in the Lobby, and was received with an intense sense of relief and gratitude; and those Lords who had supported the nurses came out and seemed much gratified with the reception accorded them. Lord Ampthill received an ovation.

Thus once again the nurses organisations saved the profession from dangerously suppressive legislation, and went on their way rejoicing.

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

(To be continued.)

### ANNUAL MEDICAL REPORT.

The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health for 1922 is now in the press, and it is hoped that publication will be made by the middle of next week. The Report is in form similar to that of previous years, and contains the chief vital statistics for the year with the inferences to be made from them. Special chapters are devoted to Maternity and Child Welfare, Tuberculosis, Venereal Disease, and the statistics relative to the increase of Cancer are discussed at some length. Observations are also made on the Loch Maree and other food poisoning outbreaks, and the precautions which are necessary on the part of manufacturers and others to prevent similar outbreaks in future.

The Report, including four short Appendices, is 186 pages in length; it is priced at 2s. 6d.

### LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES.

The League of Red Cross Societies has telegraphed to Japan proposing that the Japanese Red Cross shall form a committee, under the Presidency of a Japanese, comprising a representative of every foreign Relief Mission, in order to co-ordinate all relief efforts.

### PLAGUE, PESTILENCE, AND FAMINE.

The Bishop of London is wont to tell the story of a nurse whom he met in a Casualty Clearing Station in France who said to him: “Isn’t it splendid, Bishop, to be up at the Front?” So it was, and we are proud of the way in which British Nurses demonstrated their right to give the skilled help, which meant so much to our wounded, at the earliest possible moment, regardless of personal risk, and so effectively as to win the thanks of Parliament publicly proclaimed by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. But at least they had the support and comradeship of others of their countrymen and countrywomen—members of the medical and nursing professions—while working under difficult and dangerous conditions, and if any trained nurse had been asked during the Great War where she wished to be she would unhesitatingly have replied: “At the Front”—any Front, anywhere.

Courage of a different quality is required to adventure into a foreign country—and that country Bolshevik Russia—fifty miles from one’s nearest countryman, in order to rescue from starvation and death, men, women, and little children.

Yet that was the task which Miss Muriel A. Payne, a certificated nurse of St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, London, set her hand. The modest story of her achievements is told in “Plague, Pestilence, and Famine,”\* told simply and naturally, without any thought of limelight, in letters written to her mother (to whom the book is dedicated), in 1922, while journeying to, and working in, the famine area of Russia. Of these letters Miss Payne writes in her preface: “Rough and sketchy as they are, I think at least they give a glimpse of a tragedy which only those who, like myself, were on the spot during those terrible months, can really give. Graphic details of suffering are missing. If you want more, just sit for five minutes and imagine the most awful things possible to your imagination: plague, pestilence, and famine, in a country apparently forsaken by God. But even then I doubt if you will begin to visualize the sufferings of the Russian people in 1922. Anyhow, I cannot describe them—to me they are indescribable.

“The famine is virtually over, but the medical conditions as regards disease and public health are still deplorable. Millions of people with vitality lowered from starvation, and from the shock of six years’ war and revolution, are continually faced with the dangers of epidemic diseases which in England, owing to our wonderful health organization, are practically unknown. They spread, unchecked, among the 120 millions of Russian people who lack health, education, medical and nursing care, and hospitals. . . .

“Our panel system—‘scandalous,’ we say, ‘that doctor has got 3,000 patients on his books! How can he treat them properly?’ True, how

\* By Muriel A. Payne. (Nesbit & Co., Ltd., 22, Berners Street, London, W. 1. 3s. 6d. net.)

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