

BOOK OF THE MONTH.

UNKNOWN WARRIORS.*

"And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been. . . .

With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant. . . .

Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.

Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore."

Ecclesiasticus xlix.

Many books have been written on the Great War, some with grim realism, some with a needlessly undue emphasis on terrible facts. Now we have from the pen of a nurse the story of the Western Front as a woman saw it. The nurse is Miss K. E. Luard, R.R.C., a Nursing Sister in France from 1914-1918, and we are proud that a member of our profession should have given this book to the world, which is at once so modest and so clean. It takes the form of letters written home, because she had something to say which needed saying, in times snatched with difficulty during strenuous work at the Front, letters written hastily and not polished, with no straining after effect, no exaggeration—who indeed could exaggerate the pathos of a Casualty Clearing Station?—but as we put it down our deepest impressions are of its essential cleanness, of the nobility, gaiety and courage of officers and men, under circumstances of unexampled horror, and there is borne in upon us the conviction that the writer saw them under conditions when their very souls were laid bare and that what she saw was good and not evil. We are reminded of the lines:—

"Two men looked out from prison bars;
The one saw mud, the other stars."

True there was mud in the trenches—mud physical and moral, but overhead, plain to see for those who looked for them, and many did, the stars shone brightly, telling them of the time when this tyranny should be overpast.

The book has a preface by Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, and he gives it high praise when he says:—

"It is a tale of heroism; modestly told, but unsurpassed in interest by any War novel yet written.

The last extract quoted by Lord Allenby in the year of Victory—1918—on the 9th of August at 4 a.m. is this entry:—

"All is ready for Berlin. I'm hoping breathlessly that they hold back my leave to see this through."

Here are some of the stories told by Miss Luard of her patients.

"A boy is lying smiling all day with his head, right hand, and both legs wounded, and his left arm off. When asked 'Are you happy?' he said with a beam, 'Trying to be!' To-day he is humming 'Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers.'"

"A boy came in at 6 p.m. with his right arm blown clean off in its sleeve at 2 p.m. He was very collapsed when he came in but revived a bit later. 'Mustn't make a fuss about trifles,' he explained, 'we got to stick it.' What a trifle!" says Miss Luard.

Miss Luard describes a procession to the cemetery on All Saints Day. The rain came down in streams and the streets ran rivers. The orderlies were much distressed at the weather. "This is a great day for France," they said. "The French take those things so serious."

Here is another entry. "We are wondering who has been sent to the Chateau to nurse a certain august patient. The 'damned good boy' (Prince of Wales) has made himself a great name with everybody. They called him 'a stout fellow!' He visits dug-outs when they're being heavily shelled, and when he at last says: "I think we'll go back

* Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d. net.

now,' the rapidly ageing officer in charge of him heaves a sigh of relief and gets him away. He has a passion for exercise and scorches about on a swagger new cycle, with his officer panting after him on an old Government one."

"The weather is beyond description vile, and the little cobbled streets I wear out my shoe leather on are a Slough of Despond and a quagmire. The King has been about here yesterday and to-day, and was to have held a very sodden and damp Review a mile away, only he had an accident riding, and had to be carried away instead; no one knows if it was much or not. They didn't bring him to my Officers' Hospital anyway."

We could go on quoting endless stories of heroism on the part of officers and men, nurses and orderlies; we can only advise our readers to procure the book themselves and read it from cover to cover. This last rather gruesome story must, however, suffice.

"I looked into the mortuary to see my poor Jock lying under his Union Jack at the foot of the Cross and flowers. It is a whitewashed sort of coachhouse; I do the flowers. The Corporal and the boy in charge of it (and the P.M.s and funerals) were preparing placidly to sleep there, too! on their stretchers. They prefer it to sleeping in the billet with the rest and don't mind how many corpses they share it with."

Well, "gallant men were all."

M. B.

COMING EVENTS.

June 10th, 17th and 24th.—The British College of Nurses. Lectures on Advanced Psychology, by Dr. T. Ronald Forsythe, Ch.B., D.P.M.Eng., 39, Portland Place, W. 8 p.m.

June 14th.—Quarterly meeting Mental Matrons' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W.

June 24th.—Alexandra Rose Day.

June 24th.—Princess Arthur of Connaught, R.R.C., S.R.N., opens the Patients' Sale of Work at the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney. 2.30 p.m.

June 25th.—The King and Queen attend Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

June 26th.—Annual General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

June 27th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales, Monthly Council Meeting, 20, Portland Place. 2.30 p.m.

June 28th.—British College of Nurses. Miss K. A. Smith, R.R.C., and Miss S. A. Villiers. "At Home" to Fellows and Members at the West End Hospital, Regent's Park, N.W. Tennis. 4-6.30 p.m.

July 5th.—Summer General Meeting, League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, Lecture Room, Nurses' Home, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. 3 p.m.

July 9th.—The Queen opens the new Bethlem Hospital at Monks Orchard, Eden Park, Beckenham. 3.15 p.m.

July 9th.—The British College of Nurses. Annual Dinner, Café Monico. 7.45 for 8 p.m.

July 9th.—"At Home" given by the Matron-in-Chief and Members of Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, at which Her Royal Highness Princess Mary, Countess of Harewood, G.B.E., has graciously consented to be present. Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W. 3.30 to 6.30 p.m.

July 10th.—The British College of Nurses. Annual General Meeting, 39, Portland Place, W. 3 p.m.

July 11th.—Bedford College, Regent's Park. Presentation of Certificates by Miss Margaret Bondfield, M.P., Minister of Labour, to successful students in International Course in Public Health for Nurses, and International Course for Nurse Administrators and Teachers in Schools of Nursing. 3.30 p.m.

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