

A Persistent Thief.

Mary Donaldson, stated to have been at one time a hospital Matron, was, at Marylebone recently, sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the second division for a series of thefts.

Detective-Sergeant Bowton said that the accused became a nurse in 1917, and she had been matron of hospitals at Ealing, W., and Bristol. She went into partnership in a nursing home with a doctor's wife at Wimbledon, but had to give it up owing to her drinking habits. Then she became a health visitor under the Surrey Council County and afterwards a maternity nurse. The thefts, which had occurred since 1929, had undoubtedly been committed to obtain money for drink. Through the help of friends she had been appointed a staff nurse at another hospital before she was arrested.

We are officially informed that Annie Robson and Mary Donaldson are not registered on the Register of Nurses for England and Wales.

HALLOWE'EN BALL.

A meeting was held recently at Devonshire House, at the kind invitation of Lady Levy, followed by an "At Home," to discuss the promotion of a Hallowe'en Ball, to be held at the Royal Opera House, in support of University College Hospital. Among the attractions of the Ball was a Cabaret arranged by Miss Phyllis Bedell, and at 12 o'clock, the midnight hour, "The Witches' Cauldron" took place, when witches and fairies appeared in the subdued lights of Fairyland.

REVIEW.**A TEXTBOOK OF MATERIA MEDICA FOR NURSES.***

When given "A Textbook of Materia Medica for Nurses," by Miss Edith P. Brodie, A.B., R.N., formerly Instructress in Materia Medica and Therapeutics, Washington University, to review, I set down as a preliminary the points that appeared essential to an ideal Materia Medica for Nurses: it should be simple, concise, complete up to a point, up to date, specially applicable, and last, but not least, interesting reading.

On going through Miss Brodie's book, I found it passed the test at all points, and can thoroughly recommend it. In this, the third edition, she has reclassified the drugs according to their action on the various systems of the body, with reviews of the physiology of the systems.

The Apothecaries' System of Weights and Measures is given, but the Metric System is used throughout. The spelling is naturally American. There are some printer's errors, one rather amusing—"old tea" as a remedy for atropine poisoning, and one unfortunate, "leakage due to complete closing of the valves" of the heart.

After good grounding chapters, with problems and exercises on dosage, etc., the author deals with local remedies, and then with those that act on the systems. The chapters on the nervous system and anaesthetics are specially interesting, also those on the heart. A great many of the drugs have not been long in use—at least, their names were new to me.

There are excellent descriptions of the organic remedies—insulin, thyroid, pituitary extract, etc., and of the diseases for which they are used. The book is really more than a Materia Medica. Another good section deals with serums, vaccines and allergens, always a difficult subject.

The book is well written, and deserves study. I give as an example of pithy description the effect of habitual beer-drinking—"increase in adipose tissue and decrease in efficiency."

K. M. L.

* Henry Kimpton, 263, High Holborn, W.C. Price 8s. 6d. net.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.†

We have received from Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., "Florence Nightingale, A Biography," by Irene Cooper Willis, first published in America. While it contains nothing very new except perhaps that it enters into detail in regard to Miss Nightingale's attitude to the Nurses' Registration Movement, it condenses into one easily read volume the salient facts of Miss Nightingale's life and work, and may therefore be useful to those who have not the time or the inclination to read Sir Edward Cook's Life published in 1913, or Mrs. O'Malley's recent "Study of her Life down to the End of the Crimean War," lately reviewed in these columns.

Miss Willis emphasises the fact that there was in Miss Nightingale "an insatiable public spirit. She developed into the personification, almost, of public-spiritedness. She stripped her life bare of domesticity and all interests which might hamper her public activities. She went without love, æsthetic joys and the pleasures of ordinary social life, maintaining only, with the strictest economy, family ties and a few others made before she became a public figure."

The soul-destroying boredom of a purely domestic and social life for unmarried women in the middle of the nineteenth century has, says the author, never been more tellingly put than in Florence Nightingale's own words in her thirty-first year.

"O weary days! O evenings that seem never to end! For how many long years I have watched that drawing-room clock and thought it would never reach the ten."

"But it was not only the evenings that were weary and seemingly endless to Florence. The days with their continued round of what she felt to be sham activities were just as intolerable to her. From early childhood, as she wrote in later life, her one desire had been to have a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my time. And that desire had sharpened, as she grew up, into the determination to become a nurse."

Her father's habit of reading almost the whole of *The Times* aloud to his daughters every morning was to her boring to desperation. "To be read aloud to," she wrote in her privately printed book, *Suggestions for Thought*, "is the most miserable exercise of the human intellect. Or rather, is it any exercise at all? It is like lying on one's back, with one's hands tied, and having liquid poured down one's throat. Worse than that, because suffocation would immediately ensue and put a stop to this operation. But no suffocation would stop the other."

Contrast this with her ecstasy in the life at Kaiserswerth, from whence she wrote to Mrs. Nightingale: "I should be as happy as the day is long if only I could hope that I had your smile, your blessing, your sympathy, without which I cannot be quite happy."

"The routine was of a Spartan simplicity and strenuousness. There was no luxury of any kind; the food was poor; the hours of work long. But Florence revelled in it. 'The work here fills my life with interest,' she wrote, 'and strengthens me in body and mind—we have ten minutes to each of our meals of which we have four—we get up at 5; we have 2 ryes and 2 broths: ryes at 6 and 3, broths at 12 and 7; bread at the two former, vegetables at 12. Several evenings in the week we collect in the Great Hall for a Bible lesson . . . This is Life. Now I know what it is to live and to love life—God has indeed made life rich in interests and blessings, and I wish for no other earth, no other world but this.'"

Of such material are made those called upon to endure in the battle of life. How many modern probationers would respond to and delight in this test? M. B.

† George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 40, Museum Street, London, W.C.1. 7s. 6d. net.

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