

## REVIEW.

### A MEMORY OF SOLFERINO.\*

By J. Henry Dunant.

This small book of 63 pages, translated from the French of the first edition which was published in 1862, is an account of what surely must be one of the bloodiest battles in history.

The author, although disclaiming having seen the actual battle, was near enough to hear the "heart-rending din"; "the oaths and shrieks of rage"; "groans of anguish and despair"—Yes, even the whinnying of the fear-maddened horses.

The first 22 pages are a moving and vivid description of the most unimaginable horrors of war. The mutilation, the butchery, the agony and suffering which ensued is almost unbearable.

This Battle took place between the Austrians and the allied forces of France and Sardinia, on June 24th, 1859, near the town called Castiglione-della-Pieve.

The description of the carnage that took place is comparable (if only on a smaller scale) to the mass extermination that resulted from the use of the atom bomb at Hiroshima.

The narrative continues with a tribute to the great response of human kindness given impartially to every call for help, which, although poured out without stint (not having been organised previously), resulted in much panic and disorder, thus aggravating the miserable conditions of the wounded who were dying because there were not enough hands to attend to their thirst and hunger, or dress their wounds, even although supplies of lint in abundance were to hand.

The vision of the author and his realisation that kindness to be effective must be organised resulted in the Geneva Conference being called in 1864.

This was the beginning of the Geneva Convention, better known as the Red Cross, which has organised kindness to deal with all human suffering wherever it may be found.

This organisation constitutes a very fitting monument to the fulfilment of a great ideal, carried through against much discouragement.

I hope this book will have a large circulation, the timely translation has made that more than possible, and all those who feel the horrors of war keenly will acknowledge their gratitude.

B.G.S.

## 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.*

### THE CHURCH WINDOW.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM.—The window in our church, referred to in your last issue, is in three panels, in memory of our two sons. The soldier on the battlefield represents (but not a photograph) our eldest boy (22), who was killed when leading his men "over the top" in 1918, November 10th, just the day before the Armistice! The invalid in hospital represents our second son (18), who died in Bath War Hospital in 1917. The centre panel represents our Saviour with arms outstretched! The window was dedicated by the Bishop of Lewes in 1919.

Yours sincerely,

E. H. POOLE.

(Mrs. SANDFORD POOLE.)

### WEDDING CAKES AND PRIVATE NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Not long ago I went into the bakery and found four large wedding cakes on view, awaiting delivery. The largest was nearly three feet across with four tiers, and all the cakes were beautifully iced and decorated. We have not seen such a sight in England for years.

What also interested me was the crowd of small children with their mothers shopping. They were gazing fascinated, and in their high shrill voices asking very grown-up questions about the number of bridesmaids and ushers, suitable for such large cakes, and speculating on dresses, flowers and colours. No English child could have shown such knowledge of wedding etiquette.

Where is this place where wedding cakes are to be had in unrationed splendour? In the United States, where I have been for fourteen months with a sister recovering from a major operation. I was granted a visitor's visa and told that on no account was I to nurse anyone but her.

Which brings me to private nurses. I have met very few, but have gathered a few facts which may interest nurses at home. A registered nurse, (equivalent to our S.R.N.) works eight hours a day for which she receives ten dollars (£2 10s. at the present rate of exchange). She has to find rent for her apartment or room, find the meals which she does not have at her patient's house, pay for telephone, light and other usual expenses.

All nurses walk or ride to their cases in their white shoes and stockings, white overall covered by a large coat, with nothing on their heads except perhaps a scarf in winter. Their white shoes are lace-ups, very strong and always with a steel shank support built in.

Mothers and babies leave the hospital very 'quickly, sometimes after a week, though not the primiparas. In fact farmers' wives, multiparas, come into hospital for one day, going home the next day or the day after. It is understood, however, that the mother goes straight to bed on reaching home, where a relation looks after her. A registered nurse or an experienced woman takes the baby. The latter is paid seven dollars a day, the former eight to ten dollars. I met a registered nurse whose work consists entirely of taking charge of new babies on their return home with their mothers. She will not nurse children or grown-ups. In fact she told me that only when she had to find money for her rent, telephone, etc., each month did she take work at all. I sighed, knowing what a lot of work there is for nurses here, who are as short as at home, and sighed more when she told me that she had just left a case where she was paid eight dollars a day because the baby was ordered a 2 a.m. bottle.

By "minding" her baby for two days I helped a busy young mother get her sister and mother off to Bermuda by plane. I was fetched at 10 a.m. and taken home at 6 p.m. For this she asked me whether fourteen dollars was enough, but I would not take it, explaining why. And so the mother brought me back from Bermuda a lovely Shetland wool jacket made in Scotland.

Another friend of my sister has a nurse from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. It seems a very unfinished day for the patient from our standard. There is no attention during the long evenings, nor any help in being made comfortable for the night. It is accepted here as the usual thing. When the whole twenty-four hours is covered by three nurses, at ten dollars the case becomes a costly one.

E. J. HERRING.

### KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Miss H. M. Thorold writes: "I enclose cheque 7s., being my subscription for 1948. If I may say so, the Journal grows better each year."

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