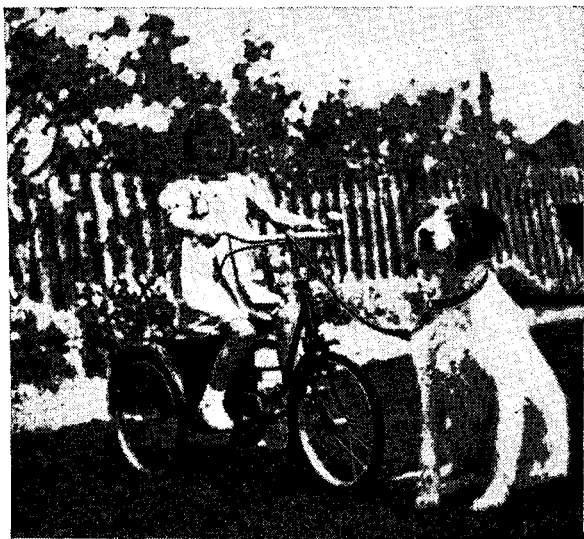


"A Little Child with Laughing Look."



Barbara and a faithful companion.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1946, Barbara — was born with a cleft soft palate, and owing to the professional observation of the nurse, consultations took place, when it was decided that before reaching the age of one year, plastic surgery should be performed.

When a month or two old, this child was attacked by bronchitis, but by careful nursing, was able to be taken to the famous Plastic Surgery Centre at East Grinstead on the appointed date.

An operation on this minute mouth was performed, and after a few weeks in hospital the child was returned to her parents with some simple directions for the care of her mouth.

Before she was two years of age, she was gaily chattering away in "Harry Hemsley's Horace" dialect, but within another year she was able to compete in conversation with any normal child of her own age.

Now, at four years old, thanks to the devoted services of the eminent Surgeons practising at the Plastic Surgery Centre at East Grinstead, she is the possessor of a full set of baby teeth, if slightly uneven, and is a most intelligent child, with a delightful sunny disposition.

Mankind in general, and our heroic servicemen in particular, owe much to the miraculous performance of Plastic Surgery.

Barbara and her dog are inseparable companions.

Book Reviews.

Hospital Improvements.*

By Olive Matthews.

A useful little handbook full of ideas on how to ensure a greater degree of comfort for hospital patients. Many of the ideas are neither new nor original, but credit must be given to the author for her painstaking work in collecting the hints into one small manual. The little pen sketches are amusing and quite explicit.

G.M.H.

*Miss O. Matthews, 22, Harrington Gardens, London, S.W.7. Price 1s. 6d.

Florence Nightingale.*

By Cecil Woodham Smith.

A SURVEY OF THE LONG LIST OF BIOGRAPHIES of the life of Florence Nightingale, contributed by admirers and critics alike, including Sir Edward Cook's monumental publication of her official career, would seem to have exhausted all there could be to say and know of this great woman—until the recent appearance last month of Cecil Woodham-Smith's "Florence Nightingale!"

In this magnificent work, Cecil Woodham-Smith brings much that is new and of fascinating interest to our knowledge of Florence Nightingale's work and character. In the author's description of the Nightingale's home and family life of the very distinguished society of the time in which they moved, both in this country and on the continent, many personalities come out and live! Vividly is the story told of her years of battle—with her ambitious mother, scholarly father and her elder very affectionate but jealous sister—her battle for freedom that she might obey the terrible urge to do the work of which she was convinced she had received the "Call." In those years of struggle for her freedom, which Florence then considered an endless period of frustration, the author reveals it to be a time of self-discipline and unique preparation for her great destiny.

The Nightingale family were on intimate terms with the great philanthropists and politicians of their age; of these Florence had her own circle of associates who realised her amazing ability and brilliant intellect.

It was the time of the "hungry forties" when the appalling poverty, misery and dirt of the people, so horrified her and strengthened her determination to work for the sick. To this end every possible opportunity was seized in which to visit and study hospitals and their administration in this country and on the continent. In secret she studied Blue Books dealing with Public Health, the Health of Towns, the sanitary conditions of the labouring classes, and the report of the Health of Towns Commissions. This was to make her, when she entered on her mission at Scutari as the Superintendent of Nursing, the first expert, in Europe, on Hospital Administration.

A friend once said of her: "Beneath the fascination, the sense of fun, the gentle hesitating manner, the demure wit, there was the hard coldness of steel!"

Out of the chaos of the Crimean War, through her energy and brains, nursing became a profession.

The drainage system and sanitary conditions of barracks and hospitals were revolutionised. Cecil Woodham-Smith gives new matter of her endless difficulties and endurance. Who, lacking implacable determination, could have withstood Sir John Hall's determined opposition to her authority, consistently waged against her under his official medical administration? In this ruthless campaign she witnessed the intimidation of her medical allies, and further, through Sir John Hall's influence, the defiance and insubordination of her nursing staff. Her herculean task in the Crimea ended, she returned to her home—haunted by the terrible mortality of the British soldier—"73 per cent. from disease alone, was the result not of War but of a system!"—a system that would continue in peace time. Enraged by these facts she passionately resolved to devote the rest of her life, which she then felt would be short, to reforming the Health Administration of the British Army. In her determination to pursue her purpose she went into strict retirement as a public figure—refusing all ovations in her honour, all public meetings and social functions. In poor health and against medical advice she began her gigantic task: of reform also of the War Office and sanitation in India. Those years of struggle make amazing history. "Without her knowledge, without her extraordinary powers of perception, her unrivalled talents for handling vast masses of material, success would have been impossible," was the opinion of Dr. John Sutherland.

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