

labour, and ensures the meals being served hot, which is very difficult to accomplish in providing for any number of people. This room should be for those sleeping in the house, but there should be a refreshment room as well, open to all Nurses and their friends, where a plain, well-dressed meal can be secured at a moderate charge, but of the latter I shall have more to say presently.

There should be also a Laundress who can get up caps really well, engaged by the Lady-in-Charge, who would call every day, as that is one of the real troubles of a Private Nurse's life. She leaves one case just before the Laundress arrives, to arrive at her destination to find she has departed for the week, and unless your stock of caps, &c., is inexhaustible, you start away again with a supply of few, or none; perhaps that is why some Nurses seem tempted to go without altogether; that may not be a good reason, but it is perhaps better than some people would think.

Have I put in all the rooms necessary for the comfort and happiness of all reasonable women? I think I have, with one exception—that is, the wants of the Lady Superintendent. She, of course, should have a commodious bedroom and sitting-room, both furnished in such a way that to retire to them would mean being at home in its best sense; for who can strive, and work, and think, and plan for others constantly, without receiving some real rest and refreshment in their own short leisure hours?

The next thing to be considered is the working of such a club, if we had it. Those who are to be admitted as Members, first, should only be fully Trained Nurses—those preferably who are already Members of the B. N. A. They should pay a small annual subscription, over and above the expenses they incur during residence. They should subscribe to certain rules, such as being punctual at meals, in by a certain time at night, observing silence in the passages and on the stairs, maintaining always a propriety of conduct becoming in all, at all times. They should be proposed for admission by a Member, and admitted, or blackballed, at the discretion of the rest of the Members, provided the reason for blackballing be given (in confidence) to the Lady Superintendent. They should pay by the day, and be able to come in for a meal only if desired; those who kept a room all the year round having only to pay for board and lights daily when at home. There should be breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper at a fixed time and rate, those requiring any alterations to pay extra. The food should be really good, well-dressed, and nourishing, but studiously plain, as no Nurse could afford luxury; and if there were such a Nurse, she would be at liberty to

either order extra fare for herself, or bring in the dainties she could not live happily without.

Then we come to the question of a refreshment room for the public—ladies only, of course. This is one of the sources from which it would be possible to make "Our Club" pay its own expenses. Everyone knows that the rents asked for houses in a central position are simply exorbitant, and I very much fear that, with the best intentions, even denying themselves to give generously, all the sources of income available from the members would be insufficient to meet the large yearly expense.

Another small addition might be gained by throwing open the reading-room for a small charge per hour to all Nurses, not necessarily Members, on their writing their names and addresses in a book for the purpose. This would doubtless be a boon to many whose work brings them near in their daily outings, which would be too short to allow of their going to their own homes. These might even subscribe weekly, monthly, or quarterly for the privilege of spending their leisure time in such comfortable quarters.

The most difficult part is to decide what number of workers would be necessary to keep this "Ideal Residential Club" in good order. First, we may consider how much assistance may fairly be asked from the inmates? I think each one should make her own bed, and dust her own particular room or cubicle, and tidy away her own belongings from the general sitting-rooms. Beyond that I do not believe the majority would go, and I do not think it would be fair to ask more than that of them; it is more than likely that not a few would feel that a burden; but there are always a few who like a grievance, and to provide them with one ready to hand is only true kindness; they sleep better for it and even look positively happy at times under a light affliction. Then we should require a cook, with a soul not above the plain good things of this life; and if the public refreshment room were an established fact, a kitchen-maid; a housemaid, and house and parlour-maid for above stairs, the latter attending chiefly to the Lady Superintendent. Then two waiting-maids, one entirely for the refreshment room, the other to wait in the Nurses' dining-room, more or less, as there were many in or few—the rest of her time being given to assisting the other one in the public room. And above all will be required a lady—when I say a lady, forgive me if I suggest that all people born in that position have a very fragmentary idea as to their duties and behaviour as such; perhaps if I were to use the word gentlewoman it would more truly express what I mean, for no one can hold any position of trust, and power, without a constant exercise of those

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)