

through it. Enter nurse number four, and she consumed a plateful of "Neapolitan Cream," white, pink, and green. Is it the reaction from plain and unappetising hospital fare, which makes nurses select food of this kind when they cater for themselves? We are inclined to think that a course of lectures on food-stuffs and dietetics, might with advantage be included in the curriculum of all nursing schools. We hope that nurses are more judicious in the selection of food for their patients than they are for themselves.

#### THE SWEATING OF COUNTRY MATRONS.

ATTENTION has, on various occasions, been drawn to the conditions of nurse sweating which prevail in some institutions, and the demand has been made that an eight hours working day shall be enforced. We desire, therefore, to draw attention to the hours which some country matrons are compelled to work. In the case to which we draw attention the title of Matron would appear to be an empty one, as the official in question is matron, day nurse, night nurse, probationer, and, on occasions at least, servant also, so that "Jack of all trades" would be a much more appropriate title than the more high-sounding one of matron, only, if the post were vacant and a person of this description advertised for, we doubt if there would be many applications for the position. At a recent meeting of the Halstead Urban District Council, Mr. Wallis drew attention to the following facts. A child was admitted to the hospital on a recent date suffering from malignant scarlet fever. The child was extremely ill, and required constant attention both by day and night. The matron was short-handed (we should imagine so), being without a servant and having nine patients in the hospital at the time. She did the whole of her ordinary work, the night nursing, and all the menial work of the hospital for two days and nights by herself. Under these conditions we should imagine that even Mark Tapley would have found an opportunity after his own heart for coming out strong. It was stated that no additional help was asked for for two days, because it was thought that the child would not live. At the end of this time, however, application was made to both the Urban and Rural Medical Officers of Health for an extra nurse. Neither of these officials feeling empowered to grant the order, the matron was obliged to go to the expense of sending

messengers round the town, to find some of the Hospital Committee. It was stated that on that day four out of the six were out of the town, but one was found at last, who, after a good deal of hesitation and persuasion, gave the necessary permission. Mr. Wallis said that had the child died of neglect, for want of an extra nurse, the responsibility would have fallen on the Urban Council. He considered that a rule should be made for the guidance of the medical men and matron, to prevent a like occurrence, and moved "That the question of extra nursing be left absolutely to the discretion of the Medical Officer of Health." Mr. Wallis further stated that to make sure of his facts he had seen Dr. Roberts, who told him that he had no authority to engage a nurse, and that when he had attempted something of the sort on a former occasion he was rather severely reprimanded by the Council. We commend this case to the kindly attention of Mr. Sydney Holland.

#### A Public Protest.

THE Royal British Nurses' Association was founded, in 1887, by leading nurses, for the benefit of nurses and the improvement of their calling. For the first six years, it was chiefly managed by nurses, and with great success. It was more than self-supporting, and, after much opposition, obtained a Royal Charter. During the last three years, its management has been usurped by half-a-dozen medical men, who have packed its managing bodies with their own friends and dependents, have ousted the nurses out of the management of their own affairs, have spent hundreds of pounds each year beyond the reliable income of the Association, and are doing nothing at all for the benefit of nurses. Influential nurses and medical men have publicly protested against this mismanagement, and are demanding a Government inquiry into the matter. It deeply concerns every woman whether this—the first body of working women incorporated by Royal Charter—is, or is not, to be managed by the women themselves. A public meeting is to be held at St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross Road, W.C., on Wednesday, October 13th, at 4 p.m., in order to draw public attention to this matter. The presence and support of all who are interested in women's work is earnestly invited at this meeting.

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