

where a boy of seven was suffering from a complaint which made strict dieting of the first importance. A friend, a few months younger, came to see him, and the nurse, finding the children too shy to speak to one another in her presence, left them alone for a short time. Feeling uneasy without exactly knowing why, she returned suddenly, and interrupted a feast, neatly spread out on the white counterpane, which would probably have been her little patient's last indiscretion. From one pocket of his knickerbockers, the kind-hearted guest had produced a halfpennyworth of sour plums, and from the other half a pint of periwinkles. The invalid, obviously from mere politeness, was urging him to begin, but he was saying, with heroic self-sacrifice, "No, I brought them *all* for you!"

GAMES AND PETS.

Games are a great resource with many convalescent patients, especially children and old people, and the nurse who hates them absolutely may well learn to love them relatively. They are a weariness in themselves, perhaps, but they save her from what is far worse. No nurse will ever give satisfaction as an opponent unless she tries to win, and yet to lose frequently is too great a trial for the patients. To escape this dilemma she must avoid the games she plays best, or else—a more satisfactory system—give, or if necessary accept, a fair handicap.

The trained nurse is apt to be a little too strict in her exclusion of pets from the sick room. I do not mean to say that they should be admitted for one moment in infectious cases, or that a cat fresh from a happy half-hour in the dust-bin is a desirable bed fellow for a surgical patient; but, within certain bounds, it is safe to regard the harm done by the proximity of well-cared-for animals as small and uncertain, and enormously outbalanced by the inexplicable pleasure that the invalid derives from their presence. What is the billionth chance of a maleficent germ compared with the fact that your nervous, almost sleepless patient will lie quietly for hours if a drowsily purring cat is allowed to curl up luxuriously on the eider-down; or if the bored and cantankerous old gentleman who snubs the nurse's best efforts at entertaining him, can find in a lively terrier or an adoring collie exactly the degree of companionship that he requires?

I cannot say much for birds as inmates of the sick room, for even if inured to captivity they are too much "under the weather" to have an even flow of good spirits. When the sun is shining, and the patient thinks he is feeling better and will soon be well, then the bird will sing. But on a rainy or stormy day, which would rouse the demurest cat's sense of humour, and make the most restless puppy happily content to sit by the fire, the wretched little prisoner ruffles up its feathers, takes stock of its woes, and looks out on the world with despairing eyes.

In district work, the nurse learns to look upon the cat almost as a colleague. Have the people who periodically propose the taxation of cats any conception of the part that these animals play in the daily lives of the poor? I know many homes which, as far as the tenants are concerned, are decent and well kept, but in which without the constant presence of a cat the loaf would not be safe on the shelf, the candle in the candlestick, nor even the baby in the cradle.

"I don't know what I should do without my Tommy," said an almost bedridden patient, who lived alone in a single room in a large old house. "He scarcely leaves me half an hour. Any time, night or day, when I says 'Tommy,' he'll say 'Miau,' just like a Christian." There was no forced note of sympathy in my voice, and I averted my eyes from the paw marks on sheet and pillow, when she added "Only the other day I was lying here, I hadn't been up not to say properly for a week, when I seed a great big rat a-sitting on that theer box. I throwed my bed sock at him, it was all I could reach, but in no time he was back again. I lay there all of a tremble till my Tommy come creeping through the window, and then there wasn't any more rat!"

And how ill many of these poor creatures could be spared as playthings! "Everyone like a ca-at," said the battered little victim of a mother's drunken habits and a father's cowardly selfishness, hugging in her arms a furry monster which to a nurse's outward eye was full of evil possibilities, but with a spiritually discerning vision, watching the wizened face radiate love and protection for the one creature in her narrow world who caressed her and rejoiced in her presence; how could she look on the animal as anything else than "an angel and minister of grace," granted the child to keep alive in her heart the conception of tenderness and pity?

AMUSEMENT.

Music is of rather limited use as an amusement for the sick, unless the nurse is a really good performer, or her patient uncritical; but children may often be soothed by the low crooning of ballads with much repetition and little discoverable meaning.

Chip-carving is a fascinating pastime to many boys and girls. Even if they are not strong enough to execute the work, they can amuse themselves (as the future Lady Teazle did for other reasons) in preparing designs. If the nurse knows the barest elements of geometry and a little freehand drawing, she will be able to make fruitful suggestions. One of the best ways is to divide the surface of the wood (or the paper representing it) into squares or hexagons, or octagons filled in with small squares or four-pointed stars, and then make a separate design for each division. Rough modelling is also an excellent amusement, and the nurse will be none the worse playfellow for not knowing too

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