

from a suddenly developed bronchitis, owing to the change of climate and the unhealthy "fall" weather, and our little Scot found his last resting-place in a strange land.

## CHAPTER III.

I COULD multiply cases, and could give chapter and verse for many a similar melancholy death-bed. The Nurses, Doctors and friends standing round the little white-curtained cots, the cat at the foot looking as gloomy and much wiser than any of the staff. But space is limited, so I must draw up the curtain on the last act in which the subject of this story made his final appearance in the Wards.

It was on Christmas Eve that this auspicious event took place, and, as may be supposed, we were immensely relieved to see the last of him.

I have been often asked by persons with whom I have discussed this strange history, why we did not kill the cat, and thus rid ourselves for ever of so unwelcome a visitor.

To begin with, we all, let me confess it, had not a little superstition and dread about the wretched creature. And we could convict him of no crime. He was not responsible for his evil pre-science. And he had an innocent way of acting as if he were only the agent of some stronger power—something apart from his own will.

Altogether, we had no case on which to execute him. And so, on a basis of superstition and an upper crust of rough justice, we tolerated him in our midst. We watched him closely, and spoke of him with bated breath.

It was reserved for some subtler power to rid us of him. On Christmas Eve we were gathered by the cot of a little child whose battle for life grew fainter each moment. It was a case of acute pneumonia, and the patient had passed the crisis, had weathered the fever, but in the struggle had spent all her strength, and she lay, as we believed, dying from exhaustion. Her condition seemed hopeless, and the "Death Cat" was there.

He lay at the foot of the bed, watchful as heretofore, his yellow gaze fastened upon the child's face with never a blink. The little girl had been raised upon a pillow, as the breath came more easily so; her wide eyes rolled restlessly, with the weary aimless seeking of exhaustion, when suddenly they lighted upon the cat.

In a moment they were fixed. Their rolling ceased, and with a quiet, steady gaze the dark, dilated pupils focussed the creature's yellow, staring orbs. The cat held his ground, and the two looked thus into one another's eyes. It was a horrible moment. A sort of morbid fascination held the child's attention. Her foe (if so he might be called) gazed back at her with his calm expressionless

stare, in whose depths we who knew him read death.

Another moment in which I resolved to throw a shawl over the uncanny creature's head, and hide it from the child; but in that moment there occurred a strange thing, for the cat's lids suddenly fell, its yellow gaze was extinguished, and it passed into a deep sleep. Such an event had never before been known. Never before had the creature been seen asleep. Always it had maintained a ghastly continuous stare.

With the closing of the cat's eyes, the little patient drew a long breath, turned to one side, and fell into a lengthy quiet slumber. From that sleep she awoke refreshed, took food eagerly, and slowly but surely recovered. In a fortnight she was practically convalescent.

But the cat was found the next morning dead, beneath the child's bed.

---

◆

### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGISTRATION.

By MISS M. C. LOCK.

"It is very good for strength  
To know that someone needs you to be strong."—  
E. B. BROWNING.

ALTHOUGH the British Nurses' Association is but so recently established—although, as Miss Wood so graphically describes it, "this baby is not yet a year old, so that it cannot have cut all its wisdom teeth, and is by no means too old to learn"—yet it has already enrolled 1,600 members, and is daily adding to its numbers, which fact shows clearly enough that it now needs no outside help to plead its cause, or fight its battle, for it is already a power in the land, and must ere long gain its end, and be followed by the much-coveted Royal Charter and Legal Registration.

What nine months ago seemed but chimerical is now, without taking too hopeful a view, almost an accomplished fact, for all past experience in Legislation goes to prove that when the need has been urgent for any particular Act to be passed and the want really felt, when its supporters have been numerous and influential as well as patient and persistent, opposition has not been able to stand long in the way of its fulfilment, and has been obliged to give way before it, and the Act has become law even sooner than its most ardent supporters dared to hope. That such will be the experience of the Royal Charter in question, there is very little reason to doubt. This being so, the British Nurses' Association a strong, working and increasing power amongst us, and Legal Registration looming in the distance—nay, we hope well-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)