

in health and strength. Every Nurse knows of such cases, and one hears of them in every part of the country. At many Hospitals there is the same result—a few months' activity, then gradually increasing lassitude, anæmia, lameness, and then collapse; a short or long holiday, a fresh attempt, and then another, and perhaps final, failure. We have before us the figures of a very large Nurse Training School, which show that over a term of years one-fifth of the whole number of Probationers admitted, left from loss of health within a few months, and, to perhaps a lessened degree, the same story would apply to many other Institutions. When it is remembered that it is almost the invariable rule for Probationers to be medically examined and certified as strong enough for the work before they are admitted, the fact of so large a proportion failing from this cause acquires additional significance.

It may be presumed, therefore, that it is the fault of the work rather than that of the worker which causes so much sickness amongst Nurses; and it then becomes a matter of the first importance to discover the precise cause of the mischief. Amongst these must be placed foremost, the unhealthy and depressing surroundings amidst which the Nurse works—the difficulty of gaining regular exercise and fresh air—the vitiated or lost appetite consequent upon both these causes, and the great strain upon her nervous and muscular system. Let us consider these in turn, and see what remedy can be found for each.

The depressing influence which daily work amongst the sick has upon Nurses, is, perhaps, not fully realised by anyone else. To attend upon a suffering fellow-creature to the best of one's ability, and the utmost of one's strength, faithfully carrying out the directions for his treatment, and yet, day by day, to see him growing weaker and his disease progressing, apparently unchecked, to its inevitable end; or to see a brilliant operation done, and observe the hopes which are held of success and cure—and then, perhaps, for some inscrutable reason to find the patient becoming worse instead of better, and despair slowly taking the place of hope in his mind; few things are more depressing than these. And the higher the Nurse's ideal of duty and responsibility, the more conscientious she is in the fulfilment of her duties, the more, as a rule, does she sympathise with her patient, and the more deeply does she feel unsuccessful results. This is as it should be, and she has her counterbalancing pleasure and satisfaction in seeing many, whose recovery seemed doubtful or almost impossible, return to health and strength. There must always be a largely depressing influence in Nurses' work, and this is exemplified here in order not only to explain what we believe to be a very frequent cause of breakdown,

but also to show the necessity for the adoption of means to prevent the evil results of the other causes to which we propose to call attention.

#### A NURSE'S "LOOKS."

THERE are numerous qualifications which a Nurse is expected now-a-days to fulfil. She must be thoroughly trained in the duties of her vocation. She must, if possible, gain a certificate of competency from an important Hospital. She must, of course, be Registered, if she desires to be distinguished from Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris. Then she must possess every angelic quality under the sun in superlative measure, and finally, to suit some people, she must be able to do without food or sleep, except on rare and convenient occasions. But Peterborough has discovered another characteristic, which, the sequel shows, is to be regarded as almost essential to success. In that venerable cathedral city, she must be good-looking. At a recent election of a Nurse for the workhouse, there were four candidates for the vacancy, and they were gravely interviewed, one by one, by the guardians in full conclave assembled. After the final interview, the chairman felt compelled to request the Board, individually, not to be "captivated," and, collectively, to "attend to business," a delicate hint that interviewing the candidates might be regarded as pleasure. After this it appears that a pause ensued, broken by a reverend guardian who proposed the election of the Nurse from Hatcham, and the following little colloquy ensued:—

"Thought so," whispered another guardian, and with a friendly nod to the reverend gentleman he added, "Not a very bad judge of looks either." The proposer accepted the compliment with the remark, "Don't you mean to say if you were on a bed of sickness you would not like to have a bright face attending you?" and the board unanimously cried, "Why, certainly!" Then a dissentient, impervious to the charms of youth and beauty, hinted that the favourite was not one they would be likely to keep long, thereby suggesting matrimonial prospects, and he thought they should rather appoint the elderly candidate from Birmingham, whereat there were suppressed groans from the rest of the members, and one guardian went so far as to suggest that the appointment of a pretty-looking lady might induce the Visiting Committee to attend more regularly. The soft impeachment that "we must have a pretty girl to induce the guardians to go up to the workhouse" was plaintively, but not too strenuously, repelled, and youth from Hatcham gained the day over age from Birmingham by thirteen votes to five.

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