

within our personal knowledge, and one whose importance to Hospitals it would, therefore, be difficult to exaggerate.

But how is this effect upon the health of Probationers to be prevented? It should be remembered that it is the new recruits who suffer so severely in health from the strain of Hospital work. The greater number of failures occur within the first six months; and then, after the next half-year, the ratio of those who break down diminishes almost every month as the worker becomes more and more acclimatised to her surroundings. The general rule, at present, is for the Staff Nurse to receive longer holidays and more time off duty than the Probationer, whereas it may reasonably be contended that the latter requires the relaxation more than the former. The remedy, therefore, which we would suggest, is, in the first place, that the hours of work should not exceed ten, and that all Probationers should be allowed off duty for three hours daily, which would enable them to obtain not only a real rest, but also to get away to a considerable distance from the locality of their Hospital in the allotted time. We recognize that it would be most difficult, and, indeed, would be undesirable, to carry out the suggestion which has been made, to restrict Nurses' hours to eight per diem; but it will be admitted by all Matrons of experience that, with a sufficient Staff, there would be no practical difficulty in arranging the maximum of ward work on the suggested scale. Then it appears to us that it would be wise to give every Probationer a short holiday at the end of the first three, and, again, after her first six, months' work; then a fortnight's holiday at the end of her first year, and, thereafter, not less than a month's rest, once a year, preferably during the summer months. Such arrangements would, we believe, prevent a large number of failures amongst women who, if able to pass through the first strain of Hospital life, would become valuable workers—helpful to the sick and creditable to their profession. The gentleness, tenderness, and tactful sympathy which are such essential characteristics of the true Nurse, are often found, in pre-eminent measure, in women who neither by physique nor previous occupation are qualified to bear a prolonged strain on their nervous and muscular systems; and yet, surely, it is not for the benefit of the public or of the profession that they should be so heavily handicapped in their initial training.

It is well known how fickle the appetites of Nurses become, and how impossible it is for anyone whose nervous system is depressed, to retain an active and healthy digestion. The remedy for this additional cause of failure amongst Probationers would, we think, be partly found in the increased rest and lessened strain of work to which we have already alluded, and, partly, in an improved method

of catering. We are well aware that these improvements may be objected to, on the score of their increased expense to the Institution; but we venture to believe, not only that they would redound to the credit and efficiency of the Hospital which carried them out, but that, by a very simple re-organization of Nurse Training Schools, they could be provided at a profit, instead of a loss, to the Institution.

THE EXPLODED BELT.

Our ever-energetic and up-to-date contemporary, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, has been girding—if we may use the word without being suspected of a joke upon so serious a subject—at the Harness Belt. In language which cannot truthfully be described as vague, it has denounced the proceedings of the Harness Company as a gigantic public swindle, and quotes instances in which poor people have been deliberately plighted of their small savings by being induced to purchase so-called Electric Belts or instruments which contained no electrical property, and which were useless, if not actually harmful to the wearer. But it is hinted, in no obscure fashion, that leading journals have been restrained from publishing damaging revelations, which have been made in the Law Courts concerning the Harness Company for fear of losing the large sums paid by that Company for advertisements. It is to be hoped that this will be proved or disproved, because it would be a serious disgrace to English journalism in the former event, and it would then be well for the public to know the names of the newspapers whose columns could thus be purchased. It is a great satisfaction to us to learn that the proprietors of this journal have several times refused most tempting offers to accept the advertisements of the Harness Company for these pages, because we regard the journalistic side of the scandal as the most important. The Harness Belt, like other forms of arrant quackery, has had its day, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* exposé will probably explode it, but the fair name of the English Press must be cleared from the reproach, which appears to rest upon it, that it can be bought and sold. So far as the public is concerned, we confess that we have no hope of any good result from the exposure, excellent and complete though it is. The British love of quackery is something too deep and too wonderful "for any fellow to understand"—if we may use the Dundrearian expression. The public is never so happy as when some Cheap Jack is gulling it, and the demand, as in all other departments of commerce, speedily creates the supply. If the Harness Company disappears next week, somebody else's Company will take the field before another month expires. If the Electric Belts go out of fashion, Magnetic Braces or Galvanic Boots will probably take their place, and their pictorial representations will make the hoardings of the Metropolis more hideous than heretofore. However, perhaps, some will feel grateful that, thanks to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, there will be many in future who will *not* quote Shakespeare:—

"Blow wind! come wrack!
At least we'll die with Harness on our back."

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