

never trust to memory," and she must, moreover, keep a detailed record of many other points connected with the patient's progress. Now, all this infers that the patient is to be attended for the first five days, if not throughout the case, by one Nurse, and one Nurse alone; and it is well-known that this is a practice which is not only advocated, but which is even insisted upon, by some of the leading abdominal surgeons of the present day. We have no hesitation in stating our belief that such a practice as this is not only unfair to the Nurse, but may be, and often is, actually prejudicial to the patient. It is a physical impossibility for any woman to maintain her full powers of observation, or fulfil her entire obligations and duties to her patient if her nervous system is suffering from such a prolonged strain, and such an utterly unnatural loss of sleep. We would insist upon the fact that an abdominal operation requires constant care, and it is manifestly impossible for any Nurse to give such attention if she is sound asleep; while it is certain that it will be impossible for her to keep awake consecutively for five days and five nights. The result, within our own experience, is that the Nurse, sooner or later, falls asleep, after perhaps struggling to keep awake and maintain her vigilant care for 36 or 48 hours; the patient pitying her prolonged vigil, in many instances, will not disturb her hardly earned repose, and certainly suffers more or less from the consequent lack of attention.

We earnestly hope that abdominal surgeons who still maintain this practice of insisting that only one Nurse shall take charge of their operations, will follow the example of some of their most successful brethren, and will, in future, demand that these cases shall have a day *and* a night Nurse to attend upon them. They will find that the patient will be much better looked after, and that the Nurses will be much less liable to break down, as they now so constantly do, after a severe and anxious case. For it must also be remembered that although now-a-days the great majority of these cases are out of danger in five days, in a considerable proportion of them convalescence is protracted by more or less detrimental, if not dangerous, consequences of the operation. We have known and have tried both the single and the double Nurse system, and have no hesitation in asserting, from practical experience that the latter is in every respect the more satisfactory, as, indeed, it is the only efficient system of Nursing in these cases. At any rate, there can be no dispute that such a system is both more just to the Nurse and more scientific; more just to the Nurse because it does not try her health and strength to the point of utter exhaustion; more scientific because it is in conformity and not in absolute disregard of the ordinary laws of nature, upon which Surgery itself is founded.

MALE NURSES.

The male Nurses have taken a leaf out of their sisters' book, and have now established a Co-operation of their own, to which we heartily wish all success. The new body, which has adopted the title of the Male Nurses' (Temperance) Co-operative Association, has taken offices at 10, Great Quebec Street, Montagu Square, W. It has issued an appeal to medical men in London, earnestly requesting them to enable the Male Nurses to resist the extortions of proprietary Institutions which, in most cases, amount to 40 per cent. of their earnings. Only total abstainers are eligible for membership of, and employment through, the Association, and all must also "have had not less than three years' training." This is an excellent standard, but one concerning which we should be glad to know some further particulars. Considering how very few Hospitals now employ male Nurses, we should be glad, as a matter of information, to learn where and how the members of the Corporation have gained, or how future candidates for membership can gain, three years' experience in Hospitals, to say nothing of the definite "training," which is very rightly demanded according to these regulations. We are in such cordial sympathy with the scheme, because there are, of course, many cases for which male Nurses are infinitely better suited than women, that we have always regretted both the inferior class of men who, as a rule, undertake this calling, and also the very restricted opportunities which are afforded to them of obtaining the necessary instruction and Hospital experience in the performance of the duties which they are expected to fulfil.

ONLY A PAUPER.

The British public, with all its ultra refinement and loudly-voiced sympathy with the poor, has never really shaken itself free from the feeling of contemptuous neglect of the pauper "whom nobody owns," which was so bitterly satirized by Hood half a century ago. This is evidenced very clearly in the perpetration of the manifold evils connected with the Nursing of our Workhouse Infirmaries and sick wards; in the utter want, for example, of proper provision for the care of those who are afflicted with illness as well as poverty. The most recent example of this glaring defect was produced at an inquest held last Saturday on a young man who had died, apparently from neglect, in the Bethnal Green Infirmary. It was proved that the Night Nurse, who was supposed to be in charge of this patient, had no less than six separate wards to take care of; and the doctor, with concealed sarcasm, expressed his opinion that "*as the Nurse was growing old* this amount of work was too much for her"! The jury were equally refined in the satirical rider which they appended to their verdict, "that the attendance at the Infirmary was insufficient!" But when one finds that such a state of affairs is even tolerated, much less permitted, to continue year after year, it becomes difficult to understand what motive force would prove sufficiently great to bring about reforms in these Institutions, to incite their authorities to perform the duties entrusted to them, and to provide for the helpless paupers under their charge the care that their condition, as suffering human beings, demands that they should receive.

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