

practically consist in the discovery of the aptitude of the Probationer for District work, but so far as nursing education goes, it could not be appreciable in its result to the Probationer herself.

If found suitable, the candidate would then be sent on to St. Mary's Nurses Home, Plaistow, for what is termed "a six months' training." We doubt not that the Institution in question does excellent work for the sick poor in its neighbourhood in the way of district Nursing, but it is impossible for a Probationer to acquire an efficient knowledge of Nursing if she is trained entirely in district work; and her education under such circumstances could not be considered to be either complete, nor even efficient, so far as it goes. Towards this six, or, let us say, at the most seven, months' education, the County Council is desired to pay no less than thirty pounds for each candidate. We have no hesitation in saying that the County Council would not obtain any adequate return for this expenditure under the proposed scheme, and that certainly the sick poor could not obtain benefits from Nurses, so inefficiently trained as to warrant so comparatively large an expenditure of public money.

The other scheme of technical education appears to us to be rather vague, for it seeks to spread the knowledge of technical Nursing, by means of courses of public lectures. Such lectures are to be given, it would appear, "by a fully-qualified Hospital Nurse, who is also a Certificated Midwife." But the proposers, with much discretion, add: "who is capable and willing to give such instruction?" Putting aside altogether the undoubted facts that technical Nursing cannot be acquired by means of lectures alone, but is, of all sciences, perhaps, the most practical in its daily work, and one, therefore, which can only be learned by actual experience and practical teaching in the care of the sick, it is, we believe, very doubtful if the Affiliated Benefit Nursing Association of the County in question will succeed in finding a lady possessing the qualifications they very rightly require, who will, or can afford to, accept a salary of £66 per annum, in return for her entire services. Because she not only will be required to lecture and to teach the rural population "Technical Nursing," but, "in the intervals of her lecturing, she is to pursue her avocation as a Nurse in the district." Out of this salary she has to provide herself with board and lodging and everything else. We can only feel that the chances are very considerably against the County Council obtaining the services of a first-class lecturer and a first-class District Nurse in one person, for this munificent salary, and if they do not obtain a first-class Lecturer and Nurse, it is more than doubtful what benefit will be obtained either by the lectured to, or by those nursed, by this lady. The idea of securing a first-class Nurse is excellent, and we should

be glad to see it carried out in every part of the country. We do not see why the poor in rural districts should not obtain the assistance of the best class of Nurse to lecture to, and to attend upon, them. It seems to us far better than the village-cottage system. But a first-class worker deserves first-class remuneration, and her services cannot be, therefore, obtained for an inclusive salary of £66 per annum.

#### PSYCHOLOGY AND THE WEATHER.

IT is a trite observation that the weather and its innumerable variations furnishes an endless subject for conversation to the people of this country. There seems, however, to be a scientific side of the question, which has hitherto been neglected, and a careful investigation is now proposed to be made into the precise effect which the weather produces upon the mental state of different individuals. This is something more than the disposition to "le spleen," which our French neighbours invariably ascribe to the British nation in consequence of its fogs. It has been observed that, in damp weather, and especially when the atmosphere is heavily charged with electricity—as during the progress of a thunderstorm—some individuals display marked mental changes; some, for example, being unable to collect their thoughts; others, to perform the simplest calculation in arithmetic; while others, again, suffer from distressing headaches. And it is almost proverbial how frequently, during the prevalence of foggy weather, melancholic or even suicidal attacks occur. A curious fact which has been observed, is that during dull and wet weather a very much larger number of fires, due to carelessness, occur than under finer climatic conditions; and this is ascribed, by some observers, to the effects of barometrical depression upon the human brain. It has been also noted that accidents upon railways and amongst men employed in machinery, are much more common during bad than during fine weather. There seems, therefore, to be considerable reason to believe that the theory contains a very considerable amount of truth.

#### ICE CREAMS.

There has been, recently, considerable suspicion cast upon the purity of the ice creams which are so dear to the hearts of London arabs, and scientific investigation as to their microscopical impurities has shown that a very large number of bacteria are found in most of the specimens sold in our streets. Similar statements from Paris are even more serious, because they show that ices sold in that city have been found to swarm with microbes of all kinds, besides containing various disgusting impurities. The advance of science at present seems to be chiefly engaged in revealing hidden dangers, and showing that poisonous pitfalls abound on every side. Meanwhile the *gamin* of both London and Paris will probably argue like the late Lord Granville, who, when condemned to a strict dietary, said that he preferred the gout, and will continue to indulge in ice creams, microbes, bacteria and all, included, perhaps, on the principle that "the more there is in it the more there is of it," or the still older proverb that "what doesn't poison fattens, and what doesn't fatten fills up."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)