

out into a dreary London street, and thinks to herself that she ought to go out, her heart fails her. She spends her time off duty with a book by the fireside; but if she would only exercise that fortitude which is impressed upon her in this matter, as well as she does in the case of illness, and go out, if only for half-an-hour, she would find her appetite better, her bedtime more welcome.

Some short time ago, I read a very pleasant article in a Nursing paper, and the following expression attracted my notice particularly:—"There never was a good Nurse who was not fond of tea." Probationers, who have no private room, are more or less prevented from indulging to excess in this particularly anti-digestive beverage. I have known many Sisters who have taken tea six or eight times a day. When I quote some remarks of Sir William Roberts, who has experimented extensively on the effect of tea on the digestion, the folly of such excess will be sufficiently obvious to anyone. In his Lectures on Dietetics, page 47, he says: "It is seen that both tea and coffee exercise a powerful retarding influence upon peptic digestion." Again, he shows that a "five per cent. solution of tea delays salivary digestion one hundred and seventy-six minutes." "If you wish to minimise the retarding effects of tea in a person of weak digestion, instruct them that the beverage be made weak, and it is used in sparing quantities." How much better would it be if a cup of beef-tea, milk, or cocoa were to take the place of this obviously deleterious drink.

As the result of these combined influences—namely, want of air and exercise, neglect of the physiological requirements of the body, and the ingestion of anti-peptic food accessories—we see various manifestations of malnutrition, anæmia, with its distressing accompaniments, want of energy, neuralgic pains, breathlessness on exertion, and many other symptoms only too well known to those who have the care of sick Nurses. But the evil does not end here; the tissues of a person in the condition I have described lose their physiological resistance, and form a tempting resting place for the germs of infecting disorders. In Hospital Wards nowadays antiseptics, with the aid of ventilation and cleanliness, have mitigated those dangers with which attendance upon the sick was formerly fraught; but a good state of health and great care are still necessary for the protection of a Nurse.

And here let me give a word of advice, particularly to Surgical Nurses, about their hands. Small abrasions, which are scarcely visible to the naked eye, may be detected by the smarting caused by rinsing the hands in some acidulated water. The small cut should then be washed with

a solution of one to twenty carbolic acid, and painted over with collodion, before attempting to touch any wound with foul discharge; and after the dressing is finished, the hands should again be carefully carbolised, and a strong nail-brush used to dislodge offending particles which are so apt to accumulate beneath the nails. I cannot too strongly insist upon the use of a nail-brush. If Nurses, when they have, to use a Nursing expression, taken leave of the world, would not at the same time take leave of their common sense, and when they enter upon a Hospital career, if they would endeavour to make their mode of life as much like, instead of as much unlike, their life at home, they would be better able to bear the grave responsibilities of their noble calling.

SALOPIAN.

AMATEUR NURSING.

IT is interesting to note how various are the motives which have induced women to take up the Art of Nursing—religion, romance, remorse, enthusiasm ("a fierce but fading fire"), dilettantism (which "effaces" the patient in the case), and last but not least bread-winning.

Bread-winners! a noble band of workers these, the guiding principle of whose lives is duty, a fire that never "flares" nor fails! True as the steadfast radiance of a heaven-light, that shines in darkest night, in wildest storm, to guide, to comfort and to save!

It is in hands like these that Hospital Nursing has been raised to a point of excellence yet to be surpassed, its prestige ever rising higher, and the public have learnt to repose unfaltering confidence in the tried skill and experience of a Trained Hospital Nurse.

And now at the very summit of its fame, Hospital Nursing is threatened with an evil that the most far-reaching prescience could not have foreseen. I allude to Amateurism, or preferably "Anyhowism," the mischiefs of which were so ably exposed in your Editorial of January 10, and not one moment too soon. What good can possibly come of this new system of "short service" Nurses?—Probationers who are graciously allowed to *pay* for doing a maximum of harm in a minimum of time. You point out with irresistible force the probable effects of incapacity in the wards; but, Sir, that is not the whole of the evil, nor the worst of it. It may be held in check there. Let imagination picture to itself incapacity let loose upon an unsuspecting public, free to follow its mysterious ways and works upon our helpless sick, without even a shadow of control being exercised over it! We may fairly assume that a paying Probationer, at the end of her exhaustive course of Hospital

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