

that a little soothing, or some slight alteration of a pillow, may change into rest, and the call from a weak voice that will never be strong or cheery any more. The Night Sister will come in presently, and creep softly round the Ward, giving any needed help, and taking her observations, and writing her report. She will make a pleasant break into the solitude, and with a kindly, helpful word, pass on to other Wards, returning with the same stealthy footstep, and the same questioning face and voice. She may find necessity for summoning the House Surgeon or Physician, whose directions will give Nurse a busy time, and seem to hasten the dawning daylight.

About five o'clock she will commence preparations for the patients' breakfast, having refreshed herself with something nice if possible, but at least something hot, her midnight meal being taken about one o'clock; and she will have mugs and plates cleared, and some of the patients washed, when the Day Nurses come on duty at seven. She will make all beds on one side of the Ward, having washed the patients therein, and be ready to give her report and go off duty at eight, when breakfast and a walk in the fresh air will be welcome, but the rest in bed afterwards often more so, for the night is sometimes very busy, and always an anxious time.

Having now taken charge both on day and night duty in the Medical and Surgical Wards, Nurse may commence her final year of training, by being placed as Staff Nurse in a Surgical Ward, where she will remain for six months, when six months' Medical work will complete her three years' training. It is a great advantage, both to the Sister and patients, to have a Nurse stationed; the Medical Staff also appreciate their particularities being understood and remembered; but a training school necessitates constant change, and only in her third year can a Nurse fairly be stationed for a lengthened period in one Ward; when, having learned the rudiments and essentials of Nursing, she can aim at perfecting her skill in particular cases, settled in a Ward with which she is familiar, and with a Sister whose ways she knows, and who has learned to trust her. The Probationers will be constantly changing, but that will only improve the Nurse's work, as all teaching must prevent her growing careless about details, by the fact of her supervision being needful.

At the close of three years, the training of a Nurse may be considered complete; and if successful in her examination, and having given satisfaction to the Matron, she will be awarded a certificate, declaring her a Trained and qualified Nurse. She will understand the treatment of most cases, and having attended the lectures through-

out her training, will be prepared for all ordinary emergencies, but will find there is still much to learn, and an extended residence in the Hospital an advantage; indeed, Nurses make a mistake in severing themselves, without previously securing an appointment, from the Hospital where they have been trained, and where they are likely to possess interest, for with increasing competition many capable women must be disappointed at election times; and it is preferable to be serving in the ranks, in the midst of friends, where work never means wasted time, to drifting to and fro amongst strangers, with eyes so fixed on the highest branch of the tree, that the feet are only likely to miss an important rung in the ladder, and the aspirant for honours find she must begin the ascent again somewhat lower down.

WARD MEMORIES.—I.

WHAT a pretty Ward it was, the one I first worked in—the largest room in a quaint old suburban house, its lofty windows flooding the place with light, and showing off the mouldings of the fine ceiling, and beyond, a vista of the carved oaken staircase, centuries old. And how little Polly did chatter when the sun rays crept over her bed, and like a little bird awaked, kept up the pretty piping all afternoon. She lay flat, her lovely little head fixed in a cushioned box, but her tongue was all the busier, and her little fingers threaded beads incessantly while she talked. Indeed, all the little voices began when the sun peeped in, till the air was full of a pleasant hum, upstairs and downstairs. Ward work—the heaviest part of it at least—was over then, and Sister sat at the big table through the long bright hours, stitching or reading, while the flood of chatter went on all round. And such funny things children say, when they think themselves unobserved, and such queer songs they sing—songs sometimes of their own invention to tunes of their own composition: anything rhythmical will do, and it does not matter to any of the little musicians whether his neighbour is singing a perfectly different tune or no.

An occasional appeal is made to Sister to settle some wordy dispute, or a fascinating voice pleads in the intervals of merriment: "Sister, tum and sit aside along of me;" or Miss Polly endeavours to attract attention by singing, "I's a very naughty dirl, Sister's a naughty dirl, we's all naughty dirls." This, chanted to a measure of her own composing, affords her great satisfaction. Another song had a very truthful refrain, and lent itself easily to music as a chorus: "All my friends is pore." The songs were many and vari-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)