

basin and quaintly folded towels, and on the tall polished lockers beside the cots, those that were safe from tiny mischievous fingers.

But the girls' ward upstairs pleased me most, and I remember remarking to the Sister as I stood and admired, that it looked like a "Kate Greenaway" picture, and she smiled and looked round with pardonable pride.

To my sorrow, my friend, Nurse Claire, left the "Jenny" long before her time was up. One day a whisper went the round of the wards that *someone* was coming from a distance to see her. So Nurse Claire took a day off; still, there was nothing whatever in her manner to show that this was anything out of the way. But that afternoon she brought a gigantic young parson round. He looked absolutely shy and nervous before the searching eyes of patients and nurses; he made but one remark, and that after much cogitation; it was that children were like the birds and flowers; they loved the sunshine! Considering all things, it was a remarkably happy thought. And Nurse Claire stood by and smiled at the young man's embarrassment as if she rather enjoyed it than otherwise.

The next morning Nurse Claire came on duty with a bright new ring on the third finger of her left hand; a thick, wide band of gold studded with pink coral.

How we sighed with envy as we caught sight of the tender symbol. The fascinations of the "Jenny" paled into insignificance before this.

But Nurse Claire was not a bit exalted or puffed up; she took all our congratulations in her calm, matter-of-fact way, and allowed us to examine the *gage-d'amour* to our heart's content, and also to try it on. But the abominable way she treated that ring was a sin and a shame, and we told her so. For she scrubbed out the bread-and-milk saucepan, she washed up the crocks, and she polished the big tin candlestick with it glistening resplendently upon her finger.

A few weeks after she left us, and then came a provincial paper in which was the announcement of her marriage with the young parson, who turned out to be a popular preacher, not a fashionable one, and a friend of the working man.

Ah! that was years ago, and Nurse Claire, no doubt, is a comely matron now with boys and girls of her own, and I question if she ever gives a thought to the old "Jenny Lind" days when we were pros together.

But I have drifted on to a cross track. Still, no reminiscence of the "Jenny," no matter how trivial and slight, would be complete without a thought to bonnie Nurse Claire.

The "Jenny Lind," as it stands to-day, is a fine and handsome building, and the old house in Pottergate Street is forgotten by all but a few. But to us, who lived and worked there, it will always be a tender and prized memory. AN OLD PRO.

## The Ideal Hospital Secretary.

If I were a little bird I would not build my nest in the neighbourhood of a boys' school, and were I a woman with a leaning towards a life of domestic happiness I would not encourage the matrimonial attentions of a man who for his daily bread acted the part of a hospital secretary. Not that hospital secretaries are more selfish than other men, but by reason of the indisputable fact that all day, and day after day all the year round their working hours are passed under a strain of assiduous amicability which renders them touchy as husbands. They have the worries of a stage manager and the responsibilities of a modern liner's captain, and amid it all, they must smile and smile, else the letters they write to donors who are eager for appreciation will fall flat, and the casual visitors will depart with their purse strings still drawn tightly. What wonder, then, that on reaching home the inevitable reaction asserts itself and the hospital secretary lets himself go.

*Punch* recently told the world that while looking in a draper's shop, a Clapham lady was injured by an electric light globe falling on her head, and that husbands hope this will be a lesson to ladies not to look in drapers' shop windows! In much the same sober spirit every honest citizen believes in his heart that he has but to say how in his judgment it is possible to cut down the working expenses of a large hospital, and the pathway is made clear for the authorities of such an institution to immediately publish the satisfactory news that, owing to Mr. John Montgomery Smith's practical advice, the sum of £3,621 sterling was saved during the quarter ending March 31st last. And it is in circumstances of this character that the ideal hospital secretary needs all his optimism. He can only maintain his cheerfulness by flouting his full note of rebuke when he has done his day's work and retired to the bosom of his family.

He must be a neat and a tidy man. It is true that some men in delicate positions may affect singular neck-ties, but I doubt exceedingly whether any hospital secretary would retain the entire confidence of his committee were he to do so. Think of the settled gloom that would be dispelled when the comfortable widow taps at his office door and inquires sedately after the poor milkman who was so sadly hurt through slipping down the area steps of her town house. Did the secretary give himself up to individualism in dress he would also hurt his wife's relatives, who would not hesitate to say that a man whose duty brought him into the society of so many nurses ought to know better.

With a young heart he must step briskly onwards in the direction that good faith points. Even if aware that certain applicants for relief will lie as fluently as a polite testimonial, he must never allow any evidence of perplexity to shadow his

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)