

is usually treated by cleansing the intestinal tract with a dose of castor oil, and the change of the diet to veal broth and barley water, and (4) *Convulsions*, which are relieved by a warm bath. The inhalation of nitrate of amyl is sometimes ordered.

### The Trials of a Private Nurse.

BY TRUDA GORDON.

So much has been written about nurses regarding their duties, faults, and failings that it seems high time that we should try and realise some of the trials and difficulties they have to undergo, and particularly so in the capacity of private nurse. Like the rest of mankind, nurses are far from being perfect, yet it is often by no means their fault that they fail to please the fidgetty relations and friends of "their cases."

Writing from some experience of the private nurse's life, I can mention a few of the trials she has to encounter when living under the same roof as the patient.

Firstly, people are, I am afraid, sadly indifferent to the personal comfort of the private nurse. The room allotted to her is generally the worst in the house, being filled with a collection of maimed furniture, a bleared looking glass, knobless chest of drawers, broken chairs. Cracked crockery and dirty, ragged carpets are considered quite good enough for nurse.

A nurse told me that once at one of her night cases she was expected to utilise by day her patient's bed, no other being provided for her.

Very often, too, servants, but more especially the general-housekeeper type, jealously set themselves against the nurses called in to minister to their master or mistress. I heard of a faithful old housekeeper who so bullied her bachelor master that before he was really convalescent he dismissed—for the sake of peace and quietness—the capable nurse the doctor had procured for him and resigned himself to the bad cooking and clumsy ministrations of his old servant.

The poor nurse had indeed undergone a terrible time in the discharge of her duties from the old housekeeper, who amongst various charges accused Nurse of drinking her master's beef-tea, because after she (the housekeeper insisted on making it) had made it, Nurse always took it first into her own room in order to make it more palatable for the patient by removing the inch of grease which covered the fluid like a coating of slippery ice.

Another irritating type of relations are the suspicious ones, who, utterly ignorant of the very rudiments of nursing, spend their time in spying on the nurse.

Some parents, whose child was suffering from appendicitis, and was carefully tended by a fully certificated nurse, relate with pride how they used to creep down in the middle of the night to spy and listen, in order to find out if Nurse was doing her duty in their absence. Needless to say, Nurse was always to be found at her post, awake and watchful. Some relations seem to make a point of disregarding the doctor's orders as to what and what not the patient may eat. Nurse W—— told me how after a long battle with the disease she twice nearly lost her typhoid case through the folly of a married sister, who, when Nurse was taking necessary rest, deliberately gave the patient pears to eat. Another instance of a relative's behaviour is yet more surprising. A Maternity Nurse relates how puzzled she was after leaving the few weeks' old baby with its mother, to find on her return that it was always placed on the top of the pillow. She inquired the reason. "To keep away the draught from my head," calmly replied the mother. "I took good care she never had an opportunity to use baby as a 'draught protector' again, I can tell you," concluded nurse W——.

Then there are the proud relatives, who consider themselves a cut above the nurse. They do not like to consign her to the kitchen, and though they allow her to tend their invalid they will not sit down to meals with her themselves, but markedly, and as a great favour, let her have her meals in the dining-room after they have finished; consequently her food is cold, greasy, and by no means tempting.

A nurse, with her long, anxious hours, and great responsibilities, naturally requires good, nourishing food. I heard the other day of a nurse being given for her breakfast one tiny slice of fried bacon, and even this her hostess thought was too much for one person's appetite, for she actually proposed that Nurse should halve it with the chronic invalid upstairs. Nurse's reply was to demolish the tiny morsel. Perhaps when patients' relatives remember the golden rule, "do as you would be done by," private nurses will be better treated and more considered by their employers.

On Tuesday evening last while a lady was descending from her cab outside the Lyceum she slipped and fell, spraining her ankle. She was immediately attended by the trained nurses on duty at the Lyceum. The nursing service was instituted at the Lyceum when Mrs. Barrasford opened the house as a music-hall. There are two trained nurses on the premises. A ward has been fitted up in the case of accidents, and contains every requisite necessary for dealing with any mishap that may arise.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)