

Our Two Guinea Prize.

Thirty papers were received in competition for the Two Guinea Prize offered by this Journal for "The Best Article on a Practical Nursing Subject" of from 1,300 to 1,400 words, and upon the recommendation of the examiners we have pleasure in awarding the prize to

MISS E. MARGARET FOX,
Matron of the Tottenham Hospital, N., for her paper on Preventable Insomnia, which appears this week.

Several of the remaining twenty-nine papers deserve honourable mention, and we propose to publish the following as space permits.

1. "Cataract Nursing," by Annie R. Daly.
2. "The Preparation of Patients for Operation," by R. C.
3. "On the Giving of Enemata," by A. L. B.
4. "A Nurse's Notes on Typhoid Fever," Miltonian.
5. "The Diet and Care of Hand-fed Children under Two Years of Age," by Sister Nora.
6. "The Nursing of Gastric Cases," by Edith M. Bunyard.
7. "Little Things," by Mabel L. Darling.
8. "Preparation for the Operation of Abdominal Section in Private Houses," by Mary Alexander.
9. "Notes on the Methods of Lifting and Moving Helpless Patients," by E. E. West.

Several other useful papers were sent in, but in the judgment of the examiners do not come under the heading of Practical Nursing—as for instance one on "The Theory and Practice of Ventilation"—this would be classed under Hygiene, and "Meals of the Sick Room" under Dietetics. "The Importance of making Notes of Cases" and "Notes on an Interesting Case of Neurasthenia"—we hope to publish in another department of the Journal.

Our New Year's Five Guinea Prize.

During the past year our Prizes have evidently stimulated the literary genius of many trained nurses, and as we consider that writing on professional matters has a very educative effect—as to write well a person must study and know—we propose to offer a Five Guinea Prize for the best article on Practical Nursing Work, illustrated with photographs suitable for reproduction. Articles competing for this prize must reach the Editor by December 29th, 1906, and the article gaining the prize will be published early in the New Year. The rules for this prize will be found in the last column of the Journal.

Preventable Insomnia.

BY MISS E. MARGARET FOX,
Matron, Tottenham Hospital, N.

A clever modern writer* has defined sleep as a "vital function, an appetite, like thirst and like hunger; a desire, a necessity," and adds that the "living organism that cannot sleep, cannot live."

Keeping this in mind, we can at once see the close practical bearing the question of procuring proper sleep for her patient has on the nurse's work, and the vital importance of doing all in her power to secure for the sick the "voluminous pleasure of falling asleep."

In illness of most kinds, with its many disturbed functions of mind and body, insomnia continually presents its problem to both physician and nurse, often stultifying by its persistence their best efforts for the patient's recovery. Its causes are far too numerous to mention in detail, but again quoting from the same writer, they may be divided into two groups—viz., *symptomatic* insomnia, and *intrinsic* insomnia. To these I will add a third, which from a nursing point of view, we may call *preventable* insomnia.

Where sleeplessness is symptomatic, of course, it can be alleviated only by treating each symptom as it arises, and the cure will be spontaneous as soon as the cause abates. Of symptomatic insomnia, pain is the greatest hindrance to sleep. Blissful slumber will ensue when the raging tooth ceases to ache, but not before. It is quite impossible to sleep while that or any other severe pain continues. Persistent enemies too are cough, dyspnoea, and a high temperature. The physician's efforts, therefore, will be directed towards reducing these symptoms, and those of the nurse towards an intelligent co-operation with his orders.

Intrinsic insomnia is, as a rule, much more persistent than symptomatic insomnia. It often occurs in persons of neurotic temperament in whom there seems to exist a "simple inability to sleep": also in cases where sudden shock, severe emotion, prolonged mental strain, or undue indulgence in stimulants has resulted in a condition when it seems impossible to produce that anæmia of the brain necessary to natural sleep: likewise in gout, kidney disease, or circulatory troubles; and in old age.

Whatever the cause may be, the condition will always be confronting the nurse and calling for the exercise of tact and judgment, as it is one in which good nursing is likely to have a singularly beneficial effect.

* James Sawyer. "Insomnia: Its Causes and Cure."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)