

nurses so bitter that they have no strength left to build a new life, but prefer to leave the world. One is often so weary when one finds how different hard reality is from one's dream life."

She is herself conscious of her deterioration, and cites one glaring instance of how she has always despised those nurses who have accepted a percentage from undertakers, and how finally she falls into the same habit, going for the first time with the Matron of the Home and "bargaining in the dusk, amongst the coffins, for her fee."

She is often poor, and when she has saved a little money she is ill, and has to spend her savings on her health. Now and again she is with pleasant people, or with those who treat her well, but in the majority of cases she certainly has much to complain of; she is usually, for her employers, a thing that can work and sympathise endlessly, requiring no rest, little nourishment, and no mental relief even with the hardest cases.

Finally, she becomes engaged, and her diary beams with happiness. But, alas! her health once more gives way; she is ill and wretched again. Her lover throws her over. "He cannot bear the idea of marrying a woman with ill-health," and all her hopes of happiness are dashed to the ground. At the end of six years' nursing she writes:—

"When I think what my six years' nursing have brought me—hardly ever real content, much irritation, a broken down, overworked body, an entirely hardened mind, and probably incurable nerves, no savings, only debts—that is the result of six years hard work."

Once more she attempts suicide, this time with laudanum, and is saved, and her friend—for she has a good, bright nursing friend—comes to the rescue. She procures her a post as sister wardress to a female prison, and with joy the unfortunate Gerda accepts the post.

"She has known trouble and want and misery herself; she will try to calm and soothe the unhappiness of her fellow-sisters. That must give greater peace than standing by the bedside of the sick and easing their last hours. That means to awake the unhappy to life, new life."

When one has finished the book one is relieved, much of the misery described could have been avoided by a more enlightened, a more thorough training, a better and higher professional standard, a larger comprehension on the part of the public of the duties they owe to nurses; but much was inevitable with a girl of Gerda's temperament. She expected too much from the calling she had chosen; she desired her own soul's comfort, the realisation of her own ideals; she demanded from life a

full cup. Her rather cynical and her egotistical, though kindly, nature would never allow her the happiness she desired. She herself thinks her six years' nursing have deteriorated her; I doubt it, for I think she has lost herself at last, and we have it on good authority that you cannot find yourself until you have lost yourself. I do not know what happened to Nurse Gerda behind the prison walls. The book doesn't say; but I trust and hope she found congenial and satisfying work, and forgot the woes of a private nurse. I should like to recommend to her notice a verse of Von Platen's, which I have translated roughly—very roughly—but which, I think, partly meets her case:—

Could I but pour within thy spirit,
When torn with useless grief and rage,
A few drops of that lighter fancy
Whose folly would make thee more sage.
When night lulls thee to peaceful slumber,
Forget the past day's love and hate,
For canst thou punish God in Heaven,
Who damned thee to a mortal's fate?

M. MOLLETT.

Progress of State Registration.

There has been a cordial response to the invitation, issued by those in charge of the three Bills for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, to a Conference which will be held in Committee Room 15 of the House of Commons on Monday, June 28th, at 3 p.m., and we hope much good may result from it. Those who have been working at this question for the last twenty years know that there are certain principles which must be incorporated in any Registration Bill if it is to effect the best for both the public and the nurses, these agreed upon there is legitimate ground for discussion in the details of the Bill.

Kai Tiaki, the Journal of the Nurses of New Zealand, remarks that in nominating Mrs. Grace Neill the first President of their National Association, they do not forget that they largely owe to her that their profession is recognised by the Government, and their high status in the nursing world.

Those nurses who have followed the history of the registration movement in New Zealand will remember that it was mainly owing to Mrs. Neill's work that the Nurses' Registration Act was placed upon the Statute Book in 1901. We are glad to observe that the registered nurses realise their indebtedness to her. Mrs. Neill's unique acquaintance with nursing matters in New Zealand will be invaluable to its National Council of Nurses in its early days.

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