

nurses. Their work is that of the experienced detective, or they are no use to the doctors.

Should a patient and the nurse appear not to get on together, a change should at once be made.

A tone of serenity, gentleness and refinement, should pervade a Home for nerve cases. The patients should be greeted with a look of brightness, and the thought should be conveyed to them that they have come to get well, that *everybody* gets well; there should be a suggestion of *joie de vivre*, that it is good to live.

Sometimes a harassed-looking husband brings his wife. She is in deep mourning, and looks up with a sad, pathetic smile.

"We have lost our only child," he will tell you, apart. "She was so good and brave at first, but the effort was superhuman, and she has broken down with the strain."

What gentle nursing she requires! A cheerful, bright room with a view; good, dainty food; general massage; long stroking movements, which soothe and send her to sleep; a daily letter from her husband; and, if possible, a weekly visit. In a few weeks she is a different creature. At first you allow her to tell you all about it. It was meningitis; you understand, for you are a nurse, and you listen sympathetically and intelligently. But, after that, the subject must be put aside gently and tactfully.

These are our most hopeful cases, and invariably end well.

But it is the cases of unhappy married women, of single women, and of men who are suffering from disappointed love, which are the hardest to cope with.

The nurse should at once inspire interest and sympathy in her patient, but she must always maintain an attitude of professional reserve. Nerve cases are very fitful, changeable and capricious, and you never know when they may turn against doctor, matron, or nurse; and when the professional prestige has gone, all influence, all discipline, has gone with it too. There should, therefore, never be any intimacy between a nurse and a patient, who is a nerve case. This was impressed upon me by a specialist.

Well-trained, refined maids, should be chosen to go into the bedrooms; and there should be a sufficiency of them. Probationers should be unheard of, and the nurses should not waste their time on housework, though, I find, that in slack times, it is a relief to their nerves to do a little housework, and overhaul the linen, or perhaps make lamp-shades.

Convalescent patients frequently like having their meals together. In the summer they con-

gregate in the shelters, or under the trees; in the winter, especially on dark wintry days, a piano is a boon.

Frequently a spirit of fun and merriment runs through the house. One evening a patient was awakened by thumps on her floor from the room beneath her. She rang her bell in a great fright, and enquired the cause. It was found that the patient beneath her had obtained a broom from the maids, and was killing mosquitoes on her ceiling and walls. Quiet was restored, and everybody slept till the morning, when thumping was heard over the head of the mosquito lady. On entering the aggressor's room, she was seen sitting on the floor, beating it with a poker. She looked up with a mischievous smile, saying, "I am killing the wasps!" The joke was considered so good, that it ran through the house, causing much laughter. A young middy carried it on, by making a terrible noise with the coal-scuttle. "I am only frightening the flies away," he explained, rolling on the floor with laughter, thinking his joke the best of all.

EDLA R. WORTABET.

THE MASK PRIZE.

The name of the winner of the 10s. Prize for the Mask will be announced in our next issue. There are eleven competitors, and as several of the patterns though different in shape are most excellent, the Editor invited three members of the Matrons' Council at its meeting on Wednesday to judge the Masks and award the Prize.

We have received several letters from Matrons and nurses who, for well-understood reasons do not wish for publicity, reporting that throat, nose and ear operations done in the out-patient departments at the hospitals where they are working are now supplied with dressings before being sent home. One Matron says, "How they have been omitted so long is the wonder, but our out-patient department is very over-crowded and our nursing staff very limited, so the work has been hurried and defective." An out-patient sister says, "We were greatly interested in poor little Tom, Dick and Harry, but the lesson has not been lost in this hospital. All our little patients are now dressed before being sent home, only we don't want it mentioned, as of course this precaution should always have been taken. This special work is very disheartening; so many after results—perhaps the masks will prevent some breakdowns."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)