

their time by accompanying "inspectors" who know nothing about the special conditions of the institutions they are called upon to inspect.

A SOCIETY OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF NURSING HOMES.

We hope therefore that the effort now being made to associate Superintendents of Nursing Homes together for the protection of their work may be widely supported, as it is only by forceful co-operation that they will be able to protect themselves from the prejudicial interference of bodies of men who do not hesitate to legislate for them without consulting them concerning their own affairs.

Never was the absolute need of the Parliamentary Suffrage for Women more effectively demonstrated than by the ineffective treatment of the question of the Registration of Nursing Homes by the London County Council.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU NURSE A REST CURE PATIENT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Margaret McLagan, Galashiels, Scotland.

PRIZE PAPER.

In nursing any case intelligently it is necessary to understand the nature of the disease and the objects aimed at by treatment. Cases which require a rest cure are generally those in which there is a condition of nerve exhaustion, and is usually brought on by more or less prolonged malnutrition of the nervous system, combined with constant and excessive calls on the supply of nervous energy—as by over-study, by worry, by some great sorrow or shock to the system—and in some cases by over-feeding, abuse of alcohol, and want of exercise.

Treatment consists in placing the patient under such conditions that by rest—*i.e.*, by freedom from exertion, or activity, or care—and proper feeding, the nervous tissue can be properly nourished and cut off from undue stimulation.

Much depends on the tact and moral character of the nurse for the success of the treatment. She must be kind yet firm, be able to disperse groundless fears, and to assure her patient of his improvement and eventual recovery.

The treatment attended by the best results is that known as the Weir-Mitchell treatment.

The essential principle of this treatment is isolation, in which the patient is attended to only by his doctor and nurse. The patient should be removed to the country if possible, into new surroundings, away from the circumstances which have conduced to the development of the disease, and where quietness can be obtained.

In choosing the sick room try to procure a large, airy, sunny room, one in which the bed could be so placed that the light from the window would not fall on the patient's eyes. Have the walls painted; no paper with patterns, nor pictures, which would tire the patient's eyes and irritate his over-active brain by making him wish to construe all sorts of pictures and designs from the pattern.

The patient should be kept in bed, and for the first few days should not be allowed any bodily or mental effort at all. In a favourable case he may as a rule get up for a short time at the end of the fourth week, then for a longer period each day, and at the end of the fifth week he might be allowed to go for short drives, resting on returning; and then later for short walks in the open air.

No visitors should be allowed to see him until there is a marked improvement in his condition; and he must not be allowed to receive or write any letters, nor to consider any business matters. But he should be made to understand that if any family or business matter occurs which demands his immediate attention, he will be informed of it.

Reading should not be allowed at first, but the nurse may read short extracts from daily papers or light novels. Later he may see illustrated papers, but care must be taken to avoid what would be exciting matter to that particular patient; more latitude in reading will depend upon his improvement. For the first few days the patient should have milk diet only; as a rule, 3 to 5 oz., with sodium citrate 1 gr. to 1 oz., is given every two hours. After four days, if his digestion is quite satisfactory, three light meals a day in addition to the milk may be given; then the diet may be cautiously increased till the patient is taking three good meals a day in addition to four or five pints of milk. If there is great irritability and insomnia a bromide mixture is generally ordered. After a time, valerian may be substituted, given twice or three times a day. The bowels should be regulated by aperients if necessary, care being taken to observe that the stools do not contain any undigested food.

The patient must have massage treatment—at first for 15 to 20 minutes each day, but after three days it may be increased to an hour a

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