

George's face was twisted up with pain; he could hardly suppress a groan, but he managed to smile when she looked at him. Then he saw a way out of the difficulty. He tapped her on the arm. She was listening with rapt attention to a love song sung by one of the nurses.

With a long sigh of bliss she turned to George. "Wot is it, lovey?"

"If I 'ad my lower teeth, I could fancy some food," said George, earnestly.

"Where are they, ducky?" She pushed her hand under his pillow as she spoke.

George sighed. "I left 'em in the kitchen drawer close to the nutmeg grater."

Eliza rose full of resolution.

"I'll nip over an' get 'em; it won't take me above ten minutes."

She was gone. George groaned and beckoned to one of the nurses. "The pain's terrible bad, but I didn't want to spoil Eliza's Christmas. I told 'er I wanted my teeth, an' she's gone to fetch 'em."

"But she will be back soon; it's so near here," said Nurse.

"No," said George, with a faint smile. "She won't be able to find 'em 'cos I've got 'em 'ere."

CUPID'S BIRTH.

"God took a little bit of light,
A little bit of love,
A soldier's heart that joys to fight,
A serpent and a dove.
He put them in a lily-cup,
Then mixed them all with dew,
And when the morning sun rose up
Naughty Cupid grew."

Helen Douglas Adam (aged 12).

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Life may change,
but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish,
but it can die not;
Truth be veiled,
but still it burneth,
Love repulsed,
but it returneth.—*Shelley.*

COMING EVENTS.

December 31st.—Nurses' Registration Act, Ireland, 33, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Election of Nine Members to represent the Nurses upon the General Nursing Council for Ireland.

January 1st.—New Year's Day, 1924.

January 18th.—Publication first monthly issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

January 18th.—Meeting General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Ministry of Health, Whitehall, S.W. 2.30 p.m.

January 23rd.—Meeting Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, 431, Oxford Street, W. 4.30 p.m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

YOUTH v. EFFICIENCY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have been interested in the letters which have appeared on the above subject. I think we have to seek more deeply than your last correspondent does for the cause of the trouble, but, even if it is entirely due to the patients' prejudice, are the nurses not after all to a good extent responsible for this?

To begin with, women are slowly liberating themselves (and nurses more slowly than any) from the habits and conditions of a time when, in every sense, they were entirely subservient to men, and the heredity resulting from such conditions predominates still when there arises opportunity to exercise mental energy, self-determination, independence, and the like. New professions for women have come into being, and our own has held back while these others have shot ahead until now we find that girls with brains scorn to enter it. Its conditions, whether as regards the individual or the profession, are largely due to the fact that the nurses refuse to allow their minds to "live"; they compress them into the small compass of "self" instead of sending them out to expand and grow into the wideness of their professional affairs and the thousand and one delightful and stimulating interests that they can find in the world. The result is that they grow old at fifty, largely because they ceased to struggle or to exercise their mental powers at thirty.

But, it seems to me, there is another aspect of the question still. More and more is there a tendency for life to be lifted from the physical on to the mental plane; intellect and mental qualities will count for more and more in the future, and those who cannot exercise their minds and keep them active and acute must thereby, in the natural course of things, be "left lamenting." I have met many nurses and have lived in their clubs both in London and in Scotland, and what astonishes me more than anything else is the poor use they make of their time between their cases. They do nothing for anybody, nor do they take any interest in what is happening in the world, but just settle down to breakfast in bed (if they can get it), hot baths, a stroll round the shop windows, gossips, dinner, smokes, with interludes for the manufacture of jumpers and crêpe de Chine underwear. No better opportunities than these do they give their minds to function, and of course they can neither digest experience nor keep the balanced, broad-minded, and large-hearted condition of mind that experience can give. Nobody wants a nurse with a mind like a plaster-cast, and those who have found themselves too old at fifty have usually courted this fate in their youth by focussing their minds upon their own interests alone, by their continual atti-

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