

this, that and the other," "Mrs. Brown," the scrubber, "Lottie," the wardmaid, no one forgotten.

It was, of course, pleasant to give and receive all these little gifts, but with a stab of pain she owned to herself that the only gift she was really interested in, could not be offered. Certainly not! Still, less likely would she receive the only one that at the moment would provide her with a thrill.

And yet, and yet, a pair of merry teasing eyes had surely ceased their mockery when they rested on her, had seem to soften and grow tender. Surely it was the old love message that had shot its arrow home!

At least—well she had been mistaken, that was all! She didn't care one little bit! By way of proving this a big tear fell on the report, leaving it uncertain as to the point *rr*'s temperature had reached at 6 p.m.

But here comes the night nurse. "Good evening, nurse."

"Good evening, nurse."

"Been very busy?"

"Nothing out of the way. I'm afraid the ward looks untidy. Good thing when the decorations are put up. Sorry I've blotted the Report Book. Hope you'll have a quiet night."

She moved, a light figure up the ward in the dancing shadows made by the fire, and out into the corridor.

"I wish, in the manner of speakin,'" said old Daddy, whose bed was next the door, to his neighbour, "that she wor on dooty dooin' the night as well as the day."

On Christmas Day "all went merry as a marriage bell."

The presents were just what everyone wished for. The decorations and "motters" far surpassed the united efforts of other wards. The pudden was pronounced "A.I." The short service with the old sweet hymns, produced a satisfactory moisture to several eyes. Visitors and tobacco were unlimited, and in the evening the lamp shades made the light mysterious and alluring.

The staff nurse stood in the shadow of the big, electrically lit, Christmas tree, which threw soft-coloured radiance about her.

The ward echoed with laughter and song, and she stood bravely to keep in tune with it and to still the ache in her heart.

And then, she knew not how, but he stood beside her.

The ward vanished and they two were alone.

"Mary," he said, "have you no gift for me?"

A little sob in her throat—she could not speak.

"Will you," he asked gently, "give me yourself?"

The patients were singing "For she's a jolly good fellow." Subconsciously she knew it was meant for her, though Sister was looking pleased and flattered.

That night she dreamt that she had hung up a stocking for her gifts, and the Holy Child came down Himself to fill it. Somehow the stocking changed into a heart, and the Child looked at it with sorrow and cried "It is not nearly big enough for my gift, which is Love that has no measure and no limit."

Nurse went about her duties thoughtfully on Boxing Day, and the patients were of opinion that she was "wore out, and no wonder."

Love came down at Christmas.

Love all human, all Divine.

"You can't separate them" she reflected. H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

December 10th.—General Meeting. League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. Medical and Surgical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. 3 p.m.

December 16th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Monthly Meeting, 20, Portland Place, W.2. 2.30 p.m.

December 25th.—Christmas Day.

December 31st.—The British College of Nurses. Council Meeting. 39, Portland Place, W.1. 3 p.m.

LETTER 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.

IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PATIENTS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I add a note to my first letter? I was quite alive to the fact that I should be bringing a hornets' nest about my ears, but I am so keen on the abolition of what I call "menial work" that I had to write. There seems great misunderstanding with regard to menial work. I don't consider tidying a linen cupboard menial, or digging a garden; the one is necessary and done by every housewife with pride, the other healthy exercise. Menial work to my mind, and to which I take exception, is the sweeping of floors and dusting, the scrubbing of baths and basins, the polishing of taps, door-knobs, etc. It is unnecessary. I ran a house myself in charge of three maids for four years before I became a probationer; in that time I learnt to see that a room was properly turned out, but I never did it myself.

A patient I was asked to speak to who refused to stay and have an operation, told me he would rather see his daughter work in a ploughed field than do the work the junior nurses did. I told him we were all happy and all had done it, and his reply was, "Well, all honour to you, but I am going home," and home he went. This was at the outbreak of the war. In the seventeen years I have been nursing I have always heard the remarks about the sweeping, etc., and so many private patients have asked me why it should be so. My suggestion to remedy the defect is to halve the number of nurses to each ward, and either double or add one more maid to each ward.

I have been working it out myself, taking my own experience from several hospitals, that is why I ventured such a very bold remark.

Yours faithfully,

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KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

State Registered Nurse writes:—"Recently I was arranging an "all-in" Insurance Policy, and one of the benefits held out to me by the agent in connection with this form of insurance was that I should be insured against thefts by nurses. Can this be a usual provision? It seems terrible that insurance societies should consider such thefts so prevalent that it is necessary to insure against them. It has really shocked me to find that the Nursing Profession is held in such low esteem."

NOTICE.

The officials of National Councils of Nurses, affiliated to the International Council of Nurses, as well as members of these Councils, and other persons, are asked to note the new address of the Headquarters of the International Council, which has now removed from 1, Place du Lac, to 14, Quai des Eaux Vives, Geneva, Switzerland.

Application for the Report of the recent Conference of the I.C.N. should be made to the Secretary, Miss C. Reimann, at the above address. It is desirable to write for it as soon as possible as the supply will be strictly limited. Price 4s.

PRIZE COMPETITION FOR JANUARY, 1928.

Give the signs and symptoms and nursing care of a patient suffering from (a) Scarlet Fever, (b) Diphtheria, and (c) Measles.

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