

fresh bottle was emptied in an incredibly short time, I asked her if it had been upset by accident. She coloured. "Well ma'm," she said at length, "I'll tell you: I was feeling that poorly, I thought you would not mind my taking a bit of your stuff. It did me a world of good."

"I don't believe in Dr. Z." said an old woman, the other day. "His physic's too nice."

The horrible compounds of our forefathers are still administered by country mothers to their shuddering offspring, in preference to any of the more palatable concoctions of modern chemistry.

"Take it Tommy," the maternal Nurse may say on these occasions, "if it wer'nt nasty, it would'nt do you good."

In spite of Nursing Lectures, pamphlets, free education, and dispensaries in every European centre, it is wonderful to find how careless people are with drugs. A woman living on the outskirts of Hanover, a town famous for its schools and scientific institutions, borrowed from her neighbour a bottle of medicine, that some months before had proved beneficial to her neighbour's son. She administered the unknown compound freely to her husband, who had returned from the field feeling unwell. The husband died in agony a few hours afterwards. At the inquest the poor woman, in great distress, declared she thought "what was good for one was good for another."

In many parts of the Continent, and even here and there in our British Isles, women who have no knowledge of the three Rs are popular Doctors, Druggists, and Nurses. Their cures are effected by herbal concoctions and the uttering of spells, the sign of the cross, and orders to the patient to go through certain rites in perfect silence. Moonlight, midnight, the first and last day of the month sometimes take part in these cures. Like the witches of old, these women have great faith in their powers. Many of them are good natured Nurses, and clever enough in an untutored way. In many cases the web of magic they weave round some very harmless herb-concoction does not harm at all, and the superstition of silence enforced on the patient may be a real benefit to his friends.

The educated Nurse of the present day, with her clear-headed way of grasping practical details is an immense and ever-spreading power for good. Unconsciously, simply by being what she is: a well-bred, pure-hearted Englishwoman, with a strong and gentle soul, she may rend the veil of black doubt and sickly fancy from the mind of many a bewildered brother or sister, whose fate rests largely in her hands while sickness wears them. I have met Nurses, who ministered self-forgetfully to their "cases," who saw these "cases" mend and leave, and who forgot them soon enough in their care for others. I have met some of these old "cases" and have spoken to them. In the toil

and toil of earth's warfare they remembered their Nurse of yore; remembered her and spoke of her with reverence in homely unlettered terms. But the spirit of their praise was as true and grand as that which inspired RUSKIN, when he spoke of Athena as "Queen of the breath of man, first of the bodily breathing, which is life to his blood and strength to his arm in battle; and then of the mental breathing, or inspiration, which is his moral or habitual wisdom."

## "Letters from Life."—No. 22.

(Continued from page 704.)

GREAT EASTERN HOSPITAL.

DEAREST JEAN.—Upon leaving the General Director's room, I received a message to go to the Matron's office, and passed an instructive hour standing in the outer office, where two Probationers (promoted to the uniform worn by the Sisters, altho' they have not completed the curriculum of training ordained by the authorities, nor gained a certificate) sit in state, and act as buffers between the "supreme authority" and the common herd. Two Sisters came down on business, docile, quiet, trained women, and one innocently inquired of the other if she was busy, the other replying that they have had a "poor take in." These apparently simple remarks were the signal for an indignant reprimand upon the part of Jack in Office, No. 1.

"Are you aware," she demands, wheeling round from her desk, and addressing these inoffensive women, "that you are breaking matron's rules? No conversation is permitted upon the part of any person in the outer office. It leads to unnecessary gossip on the part of the Sisters."

Total collapse of the inoffensive females—one of whom has been a servant of the Institution for more than ten years.

I bite my lip, and am sorely tempted to ask a question on my fingers. This vulgarity (for is it not the essence of vulgarity to trample on the weak?) and injustice make my blood boil. You will not be surprised to hear that the latest addition to the Litany in the Great Eastern runs: "From all official 'side,' Good Lord deliver us."

When, at last, I am ushered into the Matron's presence I approach the desk and wait. She is apparently oblivious of my presence and for some minutes continues writing, and I have time to notice that the bedizened little hand flutters like a bird. How much character there is in a hand. There is none of the beauty of symmetry about these hands, but, at the same time, they are pretty and most carefully tended; small, sleek, dimpled, with rosy palms, hands which have never moved a muscle for an honest purpose, nor gripped another hand in loyal friendship, and which, with all their infantine innocence, have a peculiar claw-like curve. My attention becomes strangely concentrated on these hands. I seem to see them creeping stealthily round the hair of Samson, depriving him of power, or clutching iron and hammer, and driving home the nail through Sisera's brain—dainty, treacherous hands, which, I conclude, "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten."

Presently a metallic tone breaks in upon my reverie. "I have sent for you, Nurse Graham," it says, "first, because I wish to hear your version of the unfortunate accident which occurred last night in Matthew ward, and secondly, to inform you that Sister Matthew has reported you for gross insubordination, neglect of duty, untruthfulness, and general inefficiency."

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