

the most solemn of engagements to this good, true man? Had not the thought of her spurred him on to greater efforts, and made him toil when others had gone to rest, and work on in spite of weariness? Had he not the first claim upon her? Ought she, for the sake of her girl-mistress, to entail further waiting and self-sacrifice on Robert Hamilton?

There were yet others to be considered—the parents from whom she had been parted, except at rare intervals, during nearly twenty years. Had not they openly expressed their joy at the thought that Jean would for the future be very near them, and that as years increased she would always be within call and ready to minister to their wants?

At last Jean said, "I must go back to Steynes-Cote and give reasonable warning."

To this Robert answered gravely, "If you give more than due notice, Jean, I shall begin to fancy that I am losing grip of you *altogether*."

The speaker's look and tone expressed dissatisfaction—almost doubt—and troubled Jean, though she answered cheerily—

"No fear of that, Rab. I'm owre old to change; but you would think badly of me if I were not to consider those I have served so long."

"I shall think you are putting them before me if you give them more than the lawful month's notice," persisted Robert.

After this speech he was strangely silent, and then he went away sooner than usual, after a less kindly and affectionate leave-taking. Poor Jean! She was not a very demonstrative woman, but she was true to the core, and there was in her a wealth of tenderness, despite her business-like, self-contained manner.

Through so many years of absence she had kept her love story to herself, even while longing for sympathy; but never for one moment had she varied in her whole-hearted affection for Robert Hamilton. She never believed it possible that he could have any doubt of this, or that he *could be less true* than herself. Yet Robert's abrupt departure wounded her sorely, and his dogged words seemed still to sound like a threat in her sensi-

tive ears. His manner to-night had been to Jean a new and sorrowful experience.

Anxiety for the safety of the little ones at Steynes-Cote had of late interrupted her rest and kept her on the alert at times. But it was not often Jean's personal concerns robbed her of the nightly sleep she so well earned by her conscientious daily work. On this night, however, Jean's heart was too full, and her mind too busy to allow of much rest. First she grieved over Robert's hardness of manner, then began to make excuses for it.

"Poor Rab! He can only see what a long wait he has had already. When he has made all smooth by his patient work it must try him sorely for me to put hindrances in the way. How can he enter into what I feel for the master and mistress, that are strangers to him? How can he understand that I shall be happier all my after life if I can only think that the mother is awake to her children's needs, and is watching over them herself, instead of trusting them to such unsafe hands?"

No doubt Robert had planned to give her a glad surprise, by hiding the fact that his preparatory work was now done, and his home ready for Jean. But he had plainly forgotten all other claims upon her, in thinking of his own.

How could he expect her to blurt out all at once the story that had been so long kept secret, and say, "I must leave on the shortest possible notice"? Would not Dr. and Mrs. Crawford feel that she had treated them very ill?

Jean could not blame Robert for demanding the wife so long promised, so patiently waited for. He had right on his side, and yet, in thinking matters over, Jean could not help saying, "And so have I."

Agitated by contending thoughts and interests, she passed a sleepless night, and came down early, a weary-eyed, sad-faced woman, very unlike the Jean Graham whom Robert Hamilton met at the station a few days before. Probably his night had also been one of unrest, for he presented himself at the door before Jean's parents were downstairs.

"Jean," said he, "I want a word with ye. I doubt I troubled ye last

night, and I troubled myself no less. I have come to tell you so. I did not mean to grieve ye, Jean," he pleaded, and he looked wistfully at her, as he read on her honest face unmistakable traces of suffering.

"I was troubled, Rab," she replied, "for you hardly seemed like yourself. Best forget what passed altogether, as one forgets an ill dream," and, with a smile, Jean extended her hand to meet that which Robert was holding towards her.

"If your dreams were as few as mine were, you'll have none to forget for the last night," said Robert as their hands met with a hearty clasp. "I could not sleep for thinking of my Jean's face that spoke, though her tongue was still when I left her."

Jean's looks were eloquent enough now. Robert's words made amends for all, and he saw that he was forgiven.

"And now, Jean, my woman," said he, "I want ye to take away from me, once and for all, the temptation to part as we did last night. Why need ye go back to Steynes-Cote to serve, when you can be mistress here? Write and tell Mrs. Crawford that you want no more wages, and ask for your clothes and all belonging to ye to be sent. Let her know that you have been promised to me since we were boy and girl together. She cannot say you ought to go back just to serve the month after all these years."

"If I had told them, Rab, it would have been easy, but I never said a word; and if I were to leave them in this sudden way, they would have a right to think I had behaved ill to them. I must come to you with a clear conscience, Rab, and to do this I must first serve out my time at Steynes-Cote. Bid me go, and you will make me very happy, and I will make up to you through all my life for this little extra patience."

But Robert did not say, "Go, Jean!" he turned away and left her without a word. And the glad look died away again, and the unwonted tears streamed like rain down Jean Graham's cheeks as she gazed on the retreating figure of her lover, who deigned no backward glance, and who, having come to heal the wounded heart, now left it sorer still.

(To be continued.)

## NURSES AND PATIENTS.



It must be very evident to any reader of our correspondence columns that the candidates for the profession of nursing are rapidly augmenting in number. But, the more ready we find our young country-

women to enter on this arduous vocation, the more is it incumbent on us to take no unfair advantage of their noble devotion. They should not be permitted to accept, almost blindfold, a present life of unlimited risk and self-denial, nor a future of broken health and, more or

less, of penury. Of course, if they survive to retire from work, they will have the reward of seeing the fruits of their labours in the persons of others, and the still greater consolation of the "answer of a good conscience," as regards the faithful manner in which their work was accomplished. And truly, to the God-fearing, and even to the mere philanthropist, such a reward would be more precious than any decoration or pension, however justly awarded.

But we have no right to take advantage of the self-denying devotion of those who expend the best efforts of mind and body in assuaging the sufferings, and contributing to the cure of ourselves or our fellows. "He that watereth, shall be watered also himself," and a sacred

obligation is laid upon us to give back to our faithful nurses "good measure, pressed down, and running over."

What have we done?

So far as I have yet been informed, scarcely anywhere has a provision been made, up to the present time, of the nature of a pension to be granted on the retirement of nurses from the various hospitals where they were employed. One or two exceptions may be named, however; for an asylum for the worn-out, or a fund for their benefit, has, I believe, been provided by the Devonshire-square Institution and the Sisterhood of St. John. There is also a Trained Annuity Fund, to which they may have a claim under certain

conditions (Hon. Sec., J. C. Stirling, Esq., 9, South Eaton Place, S.W.). But with the exception of these provisions, I believe that until now, none other has existed, the undowered hospitals being too poor to do more than make their own individual work self-supporting.

Having directed attention to the fact that some further effort was necessary, both to preserve the health and strength of our nurses, and to provide for their support, when worn out with sickness or age, I pass on to the second point for consideration; viz., the risks run, and the unavoidable penalties entailed on the members of such a profession, and to the question, why we are bound to regard their claims on our own resources as so strong and urgent. Dr. William Farr, of the Registrar-General's office, states that "the mortality in the fifteen largest Metropolitan hospitals, amongst the nurses, exceeds the ordinary mortality of the female population of London, in the ratio of 40 per cent.;" and, when quoting this statement, Professor Erichsen observed, in the course of a very able speech of his, "What does a mortality of 40 per cent. represent? It means that, out of every hundred hospital nurses who die, forty would still be living, at any given time, if they followed a less hazardous walk in life. A mortality of 40 per cent. is tenfold greater than that which is inflicted by the bullet upon any field of battle. This mortality is the result of the conditions to which these women voluntarily expose themselves; and that is proved by this additional fact, that 50 per cent. (exactly one-half) of all the nurses who die, die of infectious diseases, of fevers, etc., caught in the discharge of their duties. Whereas, in the female population of London generally, the mortality from infectious diseases is only 16 per cent. of the deaths; in other words, one-half of the nurses die, and only one-sixth of women who are not nurses die of these diseases." Add to this item of deaths from infectious fevers, small-pox, etc., the destruction of limb, if not of life, or of health and bodily power, from blood-poisoning, insufficient sleep, over-taxing of the nerves or muscles, depressing influences, lack of fresh air, and change of scene; and casualties of all kinds. Aye, and if death should not bring the career to a premature close, while the nurse be still in harness, what remains to the worn-out or superannuated amongst them but "labour and sorrows," in those days of which they must be compelled to say, "I have no pleasure in them?"

The third point to which I would draw your attention has reference to the various trials and temptations to which, even while yet in health and vigour and actual enjoyment of the work, nurses are necessarily exposed. Apart from the pain of witnessing human suffering, and deprivation of innocent and refreshing recreation; apart also from trials of temper and patience, provoked by unreasonable or ungrateful patients, fellow-workers, and officers of the hospital; there are others, of a twofold and moral character, against which the nurse should be watchful herself, and carefully guarded by those in authority. Her position, whether in the hospital or in a private house, is a difficult one. She is in continual attendance on persons of a different sex, a connection of extreme intimacy and confidence must exist between her and them, more especially dangerous in private houses. Almost as great an intimacy, of a certain description, must also be involved between her and the doctors with whom she is associated. Thus, the natural bulwark of reserve between the sexes is broken down to a considerable degree, and ceases to prove one of those natural safeguards that shield a woman under different conditions

of society. In every word, look, and action she must, therefore, be the more scrupulously circumspect, and, without making any guardianship irritatingly evident—to the insult of the feelings of doctor, patient, or nurse herself—a watchful care for her protection is highly desirable.

I said that the nurse's moral trials and dangers were of a twofold character; under the second head is the temptation to drink.

"In bad cases of cancer especially, and of fever" (says Lady Bloomfield, in her article which appeared in *The Day of Rest* of May 16th, 1874), "the air she breathes is so vitiated, she is unable to eat her meals without a stimulant, and this, alas! frequently engenders a habit of drinking, the bane of many good nurses, and otherwise well-conducted women." Against the inroads of such a vice I warn those of my young readers who desire to adopt the vocation of nursing, and all those, likewise, who may ever employ their services.

Having drawn your attention to the trials, temptations, dangers, and ultimate penalties inseparable from the pursuit of such a vocation, I feel pleasure in making the following announcement:—

A certain benevolent lady residing in London, who lost her health, and sacrificed nearly all her bodily powers, as an amateur nurse, has ever since made the interests of sufferers, of her own class of life, and those nurses, the special object of her consideration and active sympathy. To the institution of a home, based on peculiar and very superior principles, she has devoted all the energies of her mind, her influence in high quarters, and her own pecuniary means. No longer able to devote her hands to the work of personal attendance on the sick and bed-ridden, and as much broken in nerves as in muscular power, she commenced those "labours of love" that were steadily prosecuted through a course of some years, and have now reached that maturity of perfection, of which we are henceforth to reap the most invaluable fruits. The scheme consisted in the formation of a home, chartered by Government, the first expenses of which being paid, it should thenceforth be self-supporting. This institution was inaugurated no less for the sake of paying patients, of both sexes (of the gentry), than for the benefit of the nurses employed therein, and sent out professionally into private houses. It was intended to supply to the former class all the appliances and benefits of hospital treatment, each being under the care of his (or her) own specially chosen doctor; persons who would otherwise have been obliged to content themselves with the scanty comforts of a lodging in town, or else to accept the sole alternative of obtaining admission into a public hospital.

So much for the scheme as regards the patients and doctors. And now a few words with reference to the nurses. Their many deprivations, varied dangers, physical and moral; their precarious condition, as to the limit of their professional career; its possible extension under the influence of sanitary conditions; and lastly, their prospects on retirement from service, when too invalided or aged to commence bread-earning. All these questions have been thought out, thoroughly discussed with those most competent to advise or assist, and been ultimately provided for by this sympathetic lady.

At her quiet bedside I received from her own lips a list of the objects and the rules of this new and valuable institution, all devised in that dim chamber of suffering and of truly Christian patience. See, my young sisters, what may be accomplished, even under the most adverse circumstances of bodily helplessness and pain.

Shortly after my last visit, I was invited to

the opening of the home, now known as the St. Helena Home, at Grove End Road (No. 1) N.W., close to Lord's Cricket Ground. The house is large, very suitably appointed in every respect, and stands in an extensive garden. There the inmates can refresh themselves amidst the flowers, in the intervals of blessed sunshine, as few have the means, if the leisure or health, to do in this dark London of ours; and the songs of the birds can at least reach the ears of the sick and sorrowful, while yet confined to their beds.

Of the rules and advantages connected with this home, so far as they concern the interests of the nurse, I now add a few words in conclusion.

In this, as is usual in all institutions of the kind, the nurses consist of two grades. All dine together with the lady superintendent so long as located in the home, but when sent out to attend cases in private houses, those of the first grade dine with the family, those of the second in a room as near the patients as possible, but not with the servants. Their earnings are rated at from one to two guineas a week, and when the staff is augmented to a certain number, and all in full work, their combined earnings will suffice to pay the current expenses of the institution, and the surplus laid aside to form a nucleus for a Pension Fund for the nurses.

Their salaries will vary according to their individual qualifications, from £20 to £30 per annum. They will be provided with a uniform, with their washing, postage, telegraph, and travelling expenses gratis.

It is expected that they shall lay by a small sum out of their salaries, to form their own Provident Fund, from which they can draw what they may require, as occasion may demand.

The home is non-sectarian, but is governed by religious as well as moral influences, and there are family prayers night and morning. On Sundays the nurses attend their own places of worship, each respectively.

Dr. Hicks of Brompton has kindly offered his services to the nurses, when needing medical advice, and when change of air and rest are prescribed they will enjoy the privilege of being sent to some convalescent home. But care will be taken not to over-tax their strength, so far as may be possible, and on that account no nurse will be permitted to undertake two serious cases successively, without a proper length of interval for rest between them; nor to leave the shelter of the home without the permission of the doctor. A fortnight's vacation, or three weeks, will be allowed to each nurse during the year, which if desirable may be spent in a convalescent home.

For all further particulars, and printed circulars, our readers should write to the lady superintendent, at the address already given. I have supplied you with an article on "Nursing as a Profession" (page 454, vol. i.), and have now supplemented what I then told you by a special recommendation to your notice of an admirable field for the labours of any fully trained nurses, under exceptionally advantageous circumstances. A visit to the institution will repay you for the time expended on it. Go, and judge for yourselves.

S. F. A. CAULFIELD.

