

limbs battered from a pit or railway accident—more frequently from the former; or just as they are sleeping the sleep of the just and weary, a man or woman will come with a scalp wound. This is generally a Saturday night's occurrence. We have had two cases of cut throat admitted in the wee sma' hours. It is not so bad when the patients are sober, but having no porter makes it awkward when they are drunk.

With so small a staff it is not possible to arrange for regular time off duty; each Nurse goes out when it is possible. This is one of the disadvantages of life in a Cottage Hospital. The work is hard, and we do not get the changes Nurses in a larger Hospital do; but it is a useful, busy life, and very good practice in Surgical work. Owing to there being no resident, a great deal of the work, such as dressings, &c., has to be done by the Nurses. I think, too, that the Nurses get to know the patients better in a small than in a large Hospital.

There is no change of Ward; Probationer and assistant are not moved from Ward to Ward. The same work has to be done day after day, except so far as the change of patient goes, so that life in our small Hospital would seem very flat to a Nurse fresh from a large metropolitan Hospital. No lectures, medals, or examinations fall to our share; yet, as with patients, so with Nurses, there is a homely feeling about it, which more than compensates for the disadvantages it may have; and some of my happiest days have been those spent hard at work in a Cottage Hospital.

H. M. KEMP.

"MY MASSEUSE."

HOW well I recall her! How often I wonder whether she is tormenting anyone else now, as she used to torment me! Perhaps those who have never undergone "Massage" on the Weir-Mitchell system (*i.e.*, that of complete isolation and seclusion for six weeks or more) cannot realize how everything really depends on the kind of masseuse you have. I may throw a new light on the subject for these, and perhaps spare them a little unnecessary torture should they ever wish to undergo this treatment. But if I mistake not, the hearts of a good many of my readers who have already gone through this course, will vibrate to the echo of my experience.

But to begin from the beginning. The gradual failing of health and strength, that many a chronic invalid knows so well, the result of overstrain of mind and body, the inability for exertion of any kind, the attacks of faintness, are all too well known to be repeated here.

The multiform prescriptions of the various leading physicians are also too well known to be dwelt upon. "My dear lady, just a question of nervous exhaustion; you must go to Switzerland for three months"; or, "It is not medicine you want, but complete rest from work; go about and amuse yourself with cheerful society"; or, "Regular work, but under proper limits, is the cure for you. Fight your sensations."

And the poor invalid tries all remedies, and finds the one as powerless as the other to touch her case.

"Try massage," say her friends.

"Yes, I am half inclined to."

Stepping into her carriage, she goes to one of the great authorities on massage.

"Yes, that is what you want, my dear lady. You will be perfectly well. But you must go into some Home to be treated properly."

"Could I not be treated at home?"

"Impossible! Waste of money and waste of time, and disappointment."

"But it is not as if my mind were at all at fault."

A quiet smile the only reply.

Still I shall be treated at home, whatever Dr. — says, the conclusion to which I came after serious consideration.

Then followed the choice of masseuses, who came in numbers in answer to my advertisement. All so respectful, quiet, and reassuring in their manner, when one lay on one's sofa to receive them, and to compare one with another, and to wonder which understood their business best.

My after experience showed me there was a wide difference between the way they treated you *then* and *afterwards*, when you were in bed and more completely at their mercy.

Certainly my judgment must have been very much at fault that day. I could not decide on any one of them. And at last the head of an institution for rubbers called, and whether it was she had more self-confidence than the others I do not know, but I took the foolish step of pledging myself to have one of her staff—foolish, I call it, because I never even asked to see the person she promised to send me. "And I will call myself sometimes and see how you are going on," said the *chef*. And I rather congratulated myself I was well off.

The day arrived on which I had decided to retire from the world, and I wished a farewell to all those in my household from whom I was to be exiled for the space of six weeks, and lay waiting for my masseuse. The thought did flash across me then—what if she were very disagreeable; but I hoped for the best.

The door-bell rang, a sound of puffing and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)