

"health." * Of course all this occurred before my time, but it is only fifty years ago that such experiences were common.

The condition of our hospitals has much improved since my student days. The small, narrow, dark, and ill-smelling wards have given place to large, spacious, well-ventilated apartments, presided over by a young woman of pleasant appearance smartly dressed in washable garments, and assisted by two or three more like her, who take accurate observations of the temperature, pulse and respiration, and put them on a chart so that he who runs may read. In my day, age and frowsiness seemed the chief attributes of the nurse, who was ill-educated and was often made more unattractive by the vinous odour of her breath. Cleanliness was not a feature either of the nurse, the ward, or the patient, each one did as best pleased her, and her "langwidge" was "frequent and painful and free." If the day-nurse was bad, the night-nurse was worse, and as a *solatium* to help her to bear the burthen of the night, the stimulants which were then freely prescribed for patients, to make up, perhaps, for the lessened tone due to purging and sepsis, often found their way down her throat. One nurse had charge of several wards on different flats, and if a patient was violent, or even delirious, he was strapped down to his bed. This has occurred since I was on the staff of the hospital, before the introduction of the modern training school for nurses. I remember on one occasion, having operated on a man for strangulated hernia, and, there being no one to restrain him, the patient got out of bed and sat out on the back gallery, then he helped himself to tap-water and drank milk which was at the bed-side of other patients and also ate bread. I found this out accidentally from another patient and complained about it, so next night, when I went down, I found my patient gagged and strapped hand and foot to the bed to prevent him from misbehaving again. The man got a pneumonia of which he died. Armies of rats frequently disported themselves about the wards and picked up stray scraps left by the patients and sometimes attacked the patients themselves. This is all now changed, and the modern hospital is something to be proud of though it errs perhaps on the side of luxury. The beautiful rows of spotless beds, the shining dustless floor, the fresh air, the order and freedom from sadness, in fact, the universal cheerfulness (especially in surgical wards) of the patients, and last but not least, the nurses of whom I have already spoken. The operating rooms nowadays are palatial marble halls where formerly they were shambles, furnished with pulleys for reducing dislocations, reeking with odours and adorned with the blood-stained and blood-soaked table. In a celebrated hospital I saw in Dublin the operating room was built over a cess-pool. When I was in Vienna in 1874 and 1875, antiseptic surgery, which I had seen under Lister in Edinburgh, had not yet penetrated so far and the mor-

* The Semi-Centennial of Anæsthesia, Boston, 1887.