

# MALE NURSE?

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housekeeping money back to her when she gets up, not, as she will undoubtedly tell her friends, because you have not paid the weekly bills.

The food problem is one of the easiest to solve these days. Lay in plenty of eggs, potatoes, fat, cheese and chocolate biscuits, and you will last out a week-end easily; that is if you can get the kids invited out to tea on the Sunday. If not, get in extra chocolate biscuits.

Don't bother too much about the downstairs rooms for the first day, because it will be tea-time on the second or third day that a wan face will appear round the sitting-room door, take a comprehensive glance around the room, finally coming to rest on you with your feet on the mantelpiece, the newspaper in your hand and a guilty look on your face.

The wan face will disappear and you will hear the remark: "Men—useless beings"; so play the game, chaps, don't keep the place too tidy; she will only resent it.

Care and attention to the sick room is a horse of another colour. You must put your best work in there, but don't forget to leave just one little thing out of place so that she can boast that she had to get out of bed to put things straight.

You will find that the best stuff you have in those drawers you've been dared to open the past five years will have to be fished out—that nightgown and bedjacket you last saw in the Nursing Home, the cream bedspread that Auntie Jemimah brought home from the Mediterranean cruise and from which she forgot to remove the Utility tab, the duchess set to match, and several other things you didn't know existed.

Arranging the bedside table is of great consequence—reading lamp, carafe and inverted tumbler and, always remember, a soda water syphon is a positive must in setting off a sick room to best effect.

Don't worry about your clothes being in the room, as she'll remind you to remove them before the doctor calls, but don't expect to find room in the wardrobe for them. There never is, but this is one of her big occasions when she cannot say, "I haven't got a thing to wear."

Care of the patient is very important. Always be on hand at medicine time. Women, unlike men, stick religiously to the instructions on the bottle, and always let her mix it herself, unless whisky is prescribed. Then it is advisable to pour out a stiff dose every time because there is always the off-chance that she can't drink it all. Even if she can, you can be comforted by the thought that it will send her to sleep for an hour or two.

Whatever else you do, for heaven's sake read the thermometer a little on the high side. She'll never forgive you if you try to do her out of a degree or two.

After a few days you will, no doubt, be wondering when she will be getting up and you will be looking for signs. The two infallible indications are (a) the pop down for a minute's visit previously described, and (b) the finding of lipstick and powder compact under the pillow. You may rest assured that, whatever the medico says, she will be down the next day if only for a few hours.

You may be wondering how I have become so knowledgeable about these things and thinking that my wife must have had a score of influenza bouts but, in all honesty, I must admit that in the 10 years we have been married she has never spent a day in bed with influenza. I've got all this story from my brother."

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Near a little Irish village there is a stream which can usually be crossed with safety, but which is dangerous at high water. The villagers know this, but they think it is necessary to warn strangers and wayfarers. They have painted on a stone in the middle of the stream the following warning:

"Notice: When this sign is out of sight it is unsafe to cross the river."

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"I cooked my first meal last night—it was a grand success."

"Really—how nice!"

"Yes, my husband is going to engage a cook right away."