

undergo as great a surprise as I had done the night before. The door opened, and two men entered. The likeness between them was very noticeable, though the doctor, I thought, seemed younger and brighter than I had ever seen him, while his nephew looked older and graver, with a somewhat anxious expression on his face. Aunt's look of bewilderment at the whole scene was a study!

Dr. Vernon gravely introduced the young man to her, and then, turning to me, continued—

“My nephew, Mr. Harry Vernon—Miss Alice Wingfield. Dear me! no introduction seems necessary. That is strange. And you are flushed, Miss Alice. Ah! those walks by the river. I fear the harm they did can never be undone. Well, young people, since you seem to be perfectly acquainted with each other, I dare say you will not object to a stroll in the garden this bright morning, while I have a little conversation with my friend here.”

He turned with such a tender smile to my aunt, as he finished his speech, that I loved him for it. Then Harry and I wandered down the shrubbery, and out into the dewy fields, and the seeming mystery was explained to me and to auntie at the same time.

Like many mysteries, it was simple enough when solved. Dr. Vernon, although untoward circumstances had separated him from the girl he admired when young, had always retained a vivid remembrance of her charms; and when he unexpectedly met her again, the former influence, notwithstanding years of changes and absence, instantly revived.

Along with the kind, unselfish, truthful nature of old, the penetrating eye of the doctor did not fail to perceive the little foible that had caused us girls so much annoyance; and with characteristic readiness he had availed himself of it to further his own plans. He

soon perceived that there was no fear of his troubling my peace of mind, while had it not been for my presence, the opportunities of free intercourse between White Hall and Daisy Farm might have been stopped. When his nephew arrived, he saw an obstacle. If the aunt caught sight of the young man, might not her plans for her niece change, and would the old doctor be as warmly welcomed? Harry's accidental meeting with me was unfortunate, but could not be helped. Indeed, so long as it did not come in his way, he approved of our intimacy. The good doctor felt no compunction, even when his nephew openly remonstrated, and I looked silently miserable. He was an old man, he reasoned, and the young folks, with their lives before them, could surely wait a little while.

Their affairs were progressing favourably enough, and he had his eye upon them; but he felt very doubtful about the success of his own. Fortune favoured him, however, as we have seen. Two happier faces than those which looked out of the window to welcome us, when at last our stroll was over, could scarcely have been seen, unless it were the two that looked in.

Then came more explanations and congratulations, and the letter that I had written to say I was going home next day was publicly destroyed.

Not long after this happy day there was a quiet wedding in the little village, and the house on the hill had found a mistress.

Among the vows registered by Aunt Bessy on her wedding-day, was a private one that she would for ever give up her besetting sin. Whether or not she has kept it, I am not prepared to say; but as she has a good husband, and I have one, and one of my sisters subsequently married a friend of Harry's whom she met at our house, I do not see that we can any of us complain of Aunt's Match-making. F. M. S.

## WOMEN WHO WORK.

### THE HOSPITAL NURSE.



**G**RATEFUL, ma'am? Don't mention it. I'm just as glad as you to have got her round; but still it's kind of you to say so, an' makes me doubly pleased to have been of use. Well, it has been a wearing case; but nothing to what some are. Why, I've had three weeks' night duty in the depth of winter, the air bitter cold enough to freeze the toes in your boots, an' my patient in a burning fever, an' couldn't bear no fire at all the whole time.

Wrapped up? Well, no, m'm, I couldn't wrap up much; for the people of the house they wouldn't give me so much as a blanket, lest I should roll myself in it

an' go to sleep. Ay, m'm, they even took the pillers off the sofa for the same reason, an' had the arm-chair took out of the room as well; so I just sat there freezin' up with cold, an' welly in the dark the livelong night; for the patient he couldn't bear more than the glimmer of a night-light under a shade in the corner.

Ah, m'm! I can tell you I was glad when a little arter seven in the morning the housemaid would bring me a cup 'of tea an' a bit of bread-an'-butter to stay me till ten, when the family had breakfasted, an' I could go down to the back kitchen, an' get my meal of what was over, half-cold bacon and warmed-up tea in general, all among the pots and pans there. I didn't get much warmin' even then, an' as soon as I'd done I had to go back to nurse the poor gentleman again till half-past one, when I got my dinner as soon as the servants had done theirs, and went to sleep arterwards, like a log, dead beat.

Is there anything that takes away the appetite, an'



gives one a sort o' distaste to food that's at all badly cooked or served, like the close air and confinement of a sick-room, with no exercise an' no rest? Why, m'm, the very thing we live chiefly on—tea, which people don't mind giving us because it "keeps us awake so nicely"—is the very worst thing, doctors tell me, that we could take; for it prevents us digesting our meat properly, an' turns acid on the stomach; an' you know, m'm, yourself, how much more difficult it is to do any sort of work well if your food's disagreeing with you all the time; and you can't get it at regular times, nor comfortable. You was thanking me just now for singing to your little girl in the night, an' keeping up her spirits when she were in pain, an' couldn't sleep; but it was your own doing; for the nice hot little supper an' bowl of cocoa you made ready for me before you went to rest, set me up as spry as a lark for the night, an' made me twice as fit to cheer an' tend to your child as I should ha' been otherwise.

Ay, it's wonderful how fond some sick people are of being sung to. I remember when I was nursing in a hospital once, there was a poor little boy about six years old dying of rheumatic fever. I was night-nurse in that ward; and regularly, when the attack of pain came on, he used to scream out for me—

"Nurse, sing. It hurts me. Sing the hurt away."

So then I'd prop him up on my arm an' sing one song arter another, from "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" to "Black-eyed Susan," till the paroxysm of pain was over, an' he'd quieted down again. I always knew when that was by his joinin' his voice in too—such a weak pipe of a voice, poor lamb! but I was better glad to hear it than any music, for it telled me the pain was gone for awhile, an' I could lie him down to sleep again. No, he didn't like hymns.

Poor wee mite! I was singing "Little Bo Peep" the night he died. I had him in my arms. He'd been sinking all day, an' the last attack had finished him. I knew he couldn't last out another; an' though he tried to join in as usual, his voice went into a gasp an' broke. I'd been sometimes used to call the children in the ward my little sheep; an' when I came to the end of the verse—

"Little Bo Peep she lost her sheep,  
An' doesn't know where to find 'em;  
Let 'em alone, an' they'll come home,  
An' bring their tails behind 'em."

he looked up in my face with a bit of a smile on his poor little drawn white mouth, and said—

"Nurse'll know where to find her lickle sheep when he goes home. Will I be long going home now, nurse?"

*Long!* Ah, poor lamb! ten minutes later an' he'd gone home. The Shepherd he knew where to find that little sheep, and take care on him better than nurse.

Yes, ma'am, I nursed wholly at a hospital in the beginning. I was a young thing when I married, just nineteen; an' in three years I lost two children an' my husband—all I had in life. The elder babe died o' cold caught arter the measles. I hadn't known about guarding against it. The other was but six months

old when his father was brought home to me, crushed in a railway accident. They said from the beginning he couldn't live; but I wouldn't have no one to help nurse him as long as God spared him to me; an' I put my healthy, handsome babe out to nurse, that I might give my time to his father only. He lay ill for ten weeks, an' before I laid him in his coffin there was little sprouts o' grass showin' green over the bairnie's grave! It was only some simple ailment, which he might ha' got roun' as easy as easy with care; but the woman who nursed him didn't understand, or take note of the doctor's directions when she'd got 'em, an' confused the medicines somehow. I try not to blame her, for she cried dreadful when he was gone.

Ah! it don't do to talk about those times even now, m'm, but it was them as made a nurse of me. I didn't feel fit for nothing but a sick-room arter all was over; an' I made up my mind I'd give my life to learnin' how to help the doctors by nursin' other people's husbands and children, an' bringin' 'em back to life if the Lord willed 'em to live anyhow.

I went to a big hospital first, to be trained for a year. They call you a probationer during that time, an' give you ten pounds in wages, some of your clothes, and all found; but you've first to sign an agreement to serve as hospital nurse for three years at least; an' that's what I did. Arter the first year my wages was raised of course, to twenty pounds, with board and lodgin' as before. No, I don't complain of the pay itself, though it was hard earned, for I'd none to keep but myself, an' nothing much to spend it on besides clothes; but I didn't like hospital work all the same; an' I don't think nurses get a fair chance there. I know when I was night-nurse I'd to come on at 11 p.m., an' stay till 4 p.m. on the following day. I'd to give the patients their meals an' medicines, cook my own food an' some of the patients', an' do all the dressings; an', ma'am, I think it was too much for one woman to do properly.

As to my own meals, I could hardly get time to take 'em at all. It was generally a chop or steak, because that took quickest to cook; but bless you, m'm, it as often as not got charred up to a cinder, an' then as cold as ice twice over afore I'd time to eat it; an' then only by a mouthful at a time. As to vegetables, they was out of the question; an' the tea stood on the hob all day simmerin' and stewin', till it was more like boiled cabbage-leaves than anything else.

There are black-enough sheep even among our sick. Ay, an' among the women as well as the men. I've spent hours by some beds, listening to language and blasphemies which makes you wonder whether they're human beings at all, an' not animals possessed. An', you see, we can't go away from such as them an' leave 'em to themselves. They requires just as patient lookin' arter an' care (an' often a good deal more) than the decent ones, and we nurses have to give it, let it take never so much out of our nerves and courage. Yes, m'm, courage too. I've known a great brute bite a nurse's wrist through on one occasion; an' on another a nurse was nigh strangled by a woman, who got her by the throat and tried to choke her to death,



because she wouldn't let her have a larger allowance of wine than the doctor had ordered.

As soon as I left the hospital—and I didn't leave it as strong a woman as I entered it—I joined one of the charitable institutions for nurses, of which there are about a dozen in London, and from which I was sent out to all sorts of cases, rich an' poor, returning for fresh orders as soon as I'd finished with each case.

I've been nursing for that institution for six years now. I've been paid £20 a year; an' I've had six months less one week's holidays out of all that time. One of those months I was an invalid myself in a convalescent home belonging to the society, recovering from an infectious fever caught from the patient I'd been nursing.

Yes, ma'am, those institutions are well managed, and presided over by pious, charitable ladies and gentlemen, who take great care of 'em, select the nurses with judgment, and provide a comfortable, quiet home for 'em when they're off duty. The only drawbacks (and they're great an' grave ones) are these. A nurse has no power of choice herself where she'll go, or what she feels best up to. She must go where she's sent. Also a nurse must *live* in the home, whether she likes it or not, if it's to support her, an' whether she's got mother, or sisters, or children whom she'd like to be with, when she's out of work, for a little; for it's clear she can't support herself, an' lay by anything for a rainy day, out of the pay given.

An' then, m'm, all these homes an' institutes (except one in Bond Street, and one other) have a rule which I don't think it's fair at all. No matter what people are willing to pay for a nurse—an' some give as much as two or more guineas a-week for a good one—the nurse she never sees it, an' only gets at most the half, an' often only a less part, from the institute which pays her, so that she's bound in a way

to stick to it for the rest of her life, for she can't never hope to lay by enough to retire on.

Yes, m'm, they do say it's all fair, for they keep us in regular employment, give us a nice home an' every comfort when we aren't nursin', an' in some homes a small pension to retire on arter twenty years' good service. But when *aren't* we nursin', m'm? You see how many my holidays have been; an' any doctor'll tell you there are not nigh enough nurses to tend one-third o' the sick in London only. The institutions know perfectly well how many they're each likely to want on an average, an' they don't get one over it; so that a clever, reliable nurse (an' they're very particular about most o' theirs) is hardly done with one case afore she's sent to another, an' so on through the year; an' as to the pension, who's to guarantee your living twenty years in a profession which takes so much, mind an' body, out of a woman as nursing? Besides, it isn't difficult for even a good nurse to give offence to the committee now and again, an' what becomes of her good service pension then?

At the association in Bond Street the nurses are allowed to be with their relations between their engagements. They are given whatever they earn, be it much or little, an' the superintendent keeps them supplied with better and more regular places than they could find of theirselves. I wish there were more like it; an' I'm going to join it at the end of the year, for I do think it's fairer that what we nurses work for so hard we should have as it is given, an' not only such part as a committee of rich people think good for us.

Ay, ma'am, there are few women have more trials than a nurse; an' yet for sure it's a happy an' a blessed life, if one can only keep in mind that it's all spent in doin' real homely good to those who can't do it for theirselves, or their dear ones.

## DRAWN FROM THE LIFE.

### I.—THE UNEMPLOYED.



YOU may see him, and the wretched class which he represents, any day that you please to take your walks abroad.

His sudden and spasmodic simulation of alertness and activity when he sees you looking at him, and thinks it possible that you may be able to give him a job; the way in which he takes his foul stumpy

pipe out of his mouth—furtively slips it into his pocket, and rubs his hands down the sides of

his shiny threadbare trousers; the pace at which he shuffles out of the corner whence he has been blankly watching the drizzle of the rain—the half-reluctant manner of his parting with the post, against which he has leaned till it has seemed to grow shabby and rusty from the contact; the abjectly wistful expression with which he touches his greasy hat—partly as a token of subserviency, and partly for the purpose of pulling it on more firmly before running to do your bidding—are illustrations of his condition.

It is a condition of hopeless, helpless poverty; and yet beneath that deprecatory, anxious, hungry look you may often trace something of defiance, of suspicion, of resentment, of indifference, which seems to say, "Things can't always go on like this. It doesn't matter much whether you give me a job or not. Nobody ought to starve, and I'd better eat in gaol, where they are bound to give me victuals, than die for want of a meal, that the likes of you would never miss,