

and undemonstrative little person as she appears, possesses an unlimited supply.

Sister Doris is pale, and small, and slight, with no noticeable beauty about her beyond a pair of lovely, pathetic grey eyes, through which one catches glimpses, every now and then, of the great, pure spirit which has chosen her poor little body for its mortal coil, and from which it would appear to have cast out everything carnal. She is essentially an elevating and soothing woman, and in the Hospital our friendship is pronounced inexplicable.

I regret to own—but I am nothing if not honest—that I am widely known as “*that* Sister Damian,” an expression which I believe implies the possession of innumerable evil propensities and undesirable qualities, by no means the least undesirable being “a tongue.” Doris has done much to subdue this unruly member, and I have promised her, penitently, that, for the future, it shall be kept in reserve, as a weapon of defence only, and never used for aggressive purposes.

In fighting my battles in the old probationary days, it was miraculous how subdued little Doris always came off victor, it being handed down to the Probationers of posterity that, upon one occasion, she became almost satirical for so sweet a person. She was seated one day in the recreation room, and after listening quietly to a lengthy discussion on my numerous shortcomings, she rose up and questioned my detractors with that calm courage for which she is remarkable. “Is the P.M. quite over?” she said; “apparently you have found every organ diseased; you have omitted, however, to examine the great warm heart. Truly, you do well to keep your keen knives out of it, for I promise you therein will be found neither speck nor flaw.” And then, ashamed, perhaps of her bitterness, she exhorted her fellow-Nurses to be more gentle and considerate in their judgment of one another, and, with sisterly love, to look only for one another’s virtues, and except, when duty demanded it, to be blind and deaf to faults and failings. It was from the time when this little speech was repeated to me that I began to really love Doris. Now we have been friends for six years, and it is difficult to imagine an existence in which she has no share. We made it a rule not to visit one another during our hours on duty, but often meet at eight, in her room on our evenings off, and sit and chat over our cups of cocoa, which we have proved to be more digestible and sustaining than tea.

To-night is Thursday, a night of unusual excitement in our somewhat monotonous existence, as the *Nursing Record* is always delivered to us by the evening’s post. The usual scrimmage ensues as to who shall seize and cut open its interesting

pages. Having come off victorious, I seat myself in a low chair, my toes on the fender, with Doris on the mat at my feet, and beginning with the smart editorial, read aloud, steadily, but, it must be owned, with many interruptions and much discussion, down to the very last letter; indeed, I believe I include that most interesting page of advertisements, which must be eminently instructive to the mother of a family. Of course, we find a vast amount to criticise, to admire, and condemn, but dare not venture to repeat all that we say in the seclusion of our own little “sanctum,” where we are in the habit of settling the affairs of the nation generally—entirely to our own satisfaction—but, luckily, free from the obtrusive presence of that objectionable being, the reporter.

“Why don’t *you* write a Competitive Prize Essay?” says Doris, suddenly. “With your bump of organisation, I feel sure you could write something instructive and useful, and it would be occupation for you, these wet evenings.”

“If the truth must be told,” I answer, laughing, “I have just jotted down my humble opinions concerning the relative duties of Sister, Staff Nurse, and Probationer, but courage failed me, at the last moment, to forward it to that satirical editor. I trembled to think what remark he might choose to make in the ‘Echoes’ concerning my spelling and grammar—for which, you know, I am not famous.”

“Oh! you mean old thing—never to tell me,” exclaims little Doris; “go immediately and fetch your paper, and, by way of penance, you shall read it to me, and I will point out all the defects, with the utmost candour, after the habit of real friends.” I do as I am bidden (by way of change), and, when reseated in my comfortable chair, beg she will not be too severe, cough hesitatingly, and begin.

THE WARD.

A Ward may be “properly organised,” and yet not sufficiently perfect to describe and extol in an essay. Therefore, in my paper, I intend to draw largely on the imagination, representing things as they ought to be, and as doubtless they will one day become, rather than as they are now generally to be found, owing to defects either in Ward construction, or lack of appliances, and obtainable labour. In the Hospital Wards the division of labour, and the relative duties of Sister, Staff Nurse, and Probationers so largely depend upon the individual requirements of each Hospital, that it is most difficult to describe what would be necessary in one, with any hope that it would apply to all. We will, therefore, imagine that my Ward, containing 30 beds, is one of many in a large general Hospital, to which flourishing medical and nursing schools are attached. Upon

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