

are some lines of Robert Browning's, in which I have often thought he might have been describing the ideal Nurse :

" One to count night day for thee,  
Patient through the watches long,  
Serving most with none to see."

### SOME PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A DISTRICT NURSE.

AFTER a good breakfast at 7.30 a.m., my Superintendent and her Probationer (your humble servant) started out on their rounds, at eight o'clock.

*First case*—in the neighbourhood of South-church, a rather long but pretty walk, about a mile or mile and a-half from the town—was that of a little boy about three years, with a fractured *femur*, caused by the fall on to his leg of a heavy pipe, with which he was playing. Being rather a trying case, I didn't go in, but sat waiting in the house of neighbours (the Hodson's), whose child M. had attended previously—nice respectable people for a coal miner's family, the father a very fine fellow. Of course they took me for the new "help," but I managed to delude them a little by stating I was merely on a short visit. Being in the uniform of a Nurse, it was best to let them think I was one.

*The second case* was in town, in a respectable street—a young man about eighteen or nineteen, with a diseased ankle-bone, rather bad, but he evidently seemed to make the best of it. M. took off the old plaster, &c., dressed it with carbolic and water, put fresh plaster on, and bound it up again, the leg not being quite ready for the next operation.

*The third case*, a street or two further on, was that of an old woman of seventy years (Mrs. Shaw); her ailment—general debility and weakness—needing a little daily cheering and looking after. Her room, up a curious pair of stairs, served as a workshop, as well as a sleeping apartment. Her husband is living. M. washed her, arranged her hair for her, and cleaned out her mouth with Condy's fluid and water. She was quite communicative with me about her relations, who live near Wensleydale and the neighbourhood; and M. showed me some very pretty old white embroidered caps the old lady used to wear, but she wouldn't consent to be dressed up in them then, on that occasion.

*The fourth case* was at the "Bats"—a place we took a walk to the night before (M. visited the same patient), close to the side of the Wear. It might truly be called the "Lowlands" as well as

the "Bats." Besides the long line of dilapidated-looking houses (though better inside), there is a wide expanse of field, &c. In the distance, the other side of the river, can be seen the Bishop's Park. This man, our *Case four*, who is by occupation a collier, has recently had an operation. Both he and his wife are very nice people; the man naturally of a very shy disposition, and, perhaps, didn't care for Nurse M. to bring another Nurse, although they expressed themselves pleased on M.'s account. The wife took rather more interest in me than I liked, while M. was taking the temperature, &c., of her husband. Of course, I was, thank goodness, not quite devoid of Nursing information, having attended the Nursing Lectures and Examinations of the Ambulance Association, besides having had some practical experience. She showed me a magazine with an account of Sister Dora's life, which I had read, and confided in me a little as to her own weak state. As a rule of course I kept wonderfully quiet, though taking a keen interest in all that was going on. I had a few instructions from "my Superintendent" beforehand as to how to behave—to throw off my cloak on entering, *not* to sit down (as a rule), and so on.

*Fifth case*, and an interesting one, was that of a boy of about fifteen or sixteen, who had received an injury, in a coal pit, to his leg, which was fixed in a proper iron and wooden "cradle." At the calf he had what *had* been a large and severe wound, which is now getting nicely covered over, and had been in bed just a month. His mother and step-father were evidently very kind to him. He had a stringed musical instrument to play in bed, which he had done too much at, and his poor elbow had got sore with leaning on it, and had to be plastered up. We were rather a long time at this case, there being more to do. I was able to give a little assistance, in moving the leg, handing one or two things required, cutting the plaster, &c. I was struck with the neatness and dexterity with which M. made the poultices, &c., on tow, which she carried in her bag. The Nurse's bag is a good weight to carry always, although only the size of a gentleman's small black bag. It certainly is "*multum in parvo*." This soft tow is very useful sort of stuff, and is used for washing, cleaning, packing, and poultice-making, or to lay the poultice on, which I noticed was always covered with oil, when made.

Just as Nurse had finished, in walked the Doctor, a short, dark Scotchman. I thought, Now for it; I shall get found out if I don't mind; but luckily for me I was seated taking my ease, after my exertions (!) and was not introduced till the Nurse and Doctor had finished taking and giving directions and consulting. Of course, we just bowed,

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