

disease of the breast, and an operation was imperative. He advised me to enter a "Home," of which he gave me the address, and arranged with a celebrated London surgeon to perform the operation. I followed his advice, and went, accompanied by a friend. I was terribly nervous, and very confused upon arrival, and a little upset to find no Nurse to greet me, and that the lady of the house was out. However, I was shown to a good airy room—a drawing-room arranged *pro tem.* for the reception of an invalid, containing two beds. Being an orderly person—an "old fidget," I overheard later—I set to work and unpacked my box, in the hopes of putting them tidily away. Not so. The drawers were full of odds and ends of paper, bits of string, dirty dusters, and other untidy rubbish, and had evidently never been dusted since the departure of my predecessor. The general public, I believe, are judged incapable of forming opinions on professional matters, such as germs, bacteria, &c.; but some of us know the significance of *dirt*, Mr. Editor; and from the moment I opened those drawers my confidence was shattered, and I became nervously suspicious. My first impulse was to pack up again and depart; and I have never ceased to regret that I did not act upon it. Instead, I rang the bell, and asked that the drawers might be prepared for the reception of clean clothes. With many apologies this was done. Two hours later a young Nurse appeared, and informed me, "I am your Nurse;" and divesting herself of her outdoor garments, placed them in a box, and put her muddy shoes under one of the beds. She then proceeded to titivate her golden frizzy fringe, and adjust a coquettish thing in caps, before entering into further conversation. Suffering makes one peevish, and, maybe, ill-natured; but I could not help surmising that this smart young thing in Nurses would have been in her element behind the bar. Lack of experience of life, lack of education, and, in consequence, lack of sympathy made her somewhat unsuitable for the work she had undertaken. Before retiring to bed, I ascertained that my Nurse did not belong to the Home, and knew nothing of its arrangements, but came from a neighbouring Private Nursing Institution, by the week; that she had had one year's training in a country Hospital; was "thoroughly trained"; and that my bedroom was all the accommodation provided for her, as she "objected to sleeping on a shake-down in the bath-room."

My operation took place next morning, and I

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have an imperfect remembrance of early waking, busy housemaids, fuss and confusion, hurry-scurry in and out of my room, and then nerving myself to leave my bed, and mount the terrible operating table. What an effort! A few words of support from some kind, strong woman at that moment would have been invaluable. Bear this in mind, Sister Catherine.

I spent a horrible day, but I suppose that was inevitable; but good nursing would have greatly alleviated my discomfort. As I was placed in bed by the surgeons, so I remained for four-and-twenty hours, excepting that, as I am a small person, I slipped and slipped farther down in the bed, until my toes rested against the bed-rail. No effort was made to support the elbow of the arm bound tight across my chest, and relieve the strain upon the wound. The day and evening passed, and I suffered in silence; and it was not until half-past ten o'clock that the gas was lowered, a novel laid aside, and Nurse began to prepare for bed. At this hour she gave herself what she called "a good wash"—no end of splashing and rubbing—to my horror with my towels—and these slops were left uncovered till morning: then the hair was briskly brushed, and fringe curled, with much fizzing and singeing, and fumes of spirits of wine. At eleven o'clock—thank Heaven—her toilet was complete, and by twelve o'clock I was listening to grunts and snores. I had been ordered a sleeping draught, but "the chemist forgot it"—one of the numerous omissions not reported to the medical man.

I suppose I shall be accused of exaggeration when I state that the operating surgeon fished me up from the bottom and made my bed on the following day; that when he asked for a clean sheet—"it was airing," and must have been unusually damp, as it never made its appearance during the four weeks I was in the Home; and that he made my bed for *seven days*; that, with the exception of my hands and face, I was never washed *for a month*; that my Nurse propped me up on the third day after the operation, and left me hungry and helpless to move for three hours and a-half, with the result that the whole operation broke down. This is absolute truth; and so great was the incompetence of this so-called Nurse and the lady of the Home (who came to see me occasionally and talked of the weather, and who had never been inside a Hospital in her life, and yet had the sublime assurance to superintend the nursing of critical operations), that I felt I should die if left in their charge.

Growing weaker and weaker day by day, and suffering intensely in mind and body, I at last determined to leave the Home, and told my kind

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