

wriggle for half-an-hour in order to get into a position from whence a book could be reached. My reward would be a stern lecture. A blind might flap till my senses flapped with it; and instead of getting credit for not summoning an attendant, I would probably be told in circumlocutory language that I was by no means remarkable for my intelligence.

And, as a climax, the result of all my efforts to save the hard worked Nurses was, that I was told that they had never known such a sulky patient as myself! Truly, the rewards in this life go to the unworthy.

Day after day, glided past with astonishing speed, and the hideous tediousness I had pictured of being inactive for so long faded from my memory. A fortnight had seemed, whilst in anticipation, an eternity, but here the term had almost sped to the debit of my life's account, and it seemed but a day ago I was hearing the doctor's verdict. Even bed making had lost some of its terrors, and as for the Nurses—why, where my alarm at the prospect of them had fled to, I don't know, for I began to rather look forward to the hours when their duties in my room relieved my hitherto loved solitariness—not that I in any way showed this; indeed, I was always particularly absorbed in reading on such occasions, and apparently impatiently resented being disturbed.

These days of illness had had an effect, not only on the body, but also on the mind; for my charity had grown to such an extent, that I recognised that the "policeman" really had a good point; and I trusted, that if ever sickness laid me low again, I might have such a reliable "Sister" to tyrannize over me. I should mention, that I found out that even her adamant heart felt some compunction for the way she had treated me, by the fact that she left for her holidays, shortly before my release, without taking a farewell; and remorse would evidently have made the interview too painful.

To-day, the Nurse informs me that I may try to toddle into the next room, and I agree to the experiment, providing I am left alone, as I have no intention of making an exhibition of my shakiness. There is nothing so very delightful in being up after all, except that one's sense of inferiority, from having been a fixture so long, diminishes.

The morning has arrived on which I am to take my first walk out of doors. Carefully warned to keep near the railings I, of course, wander far away from them, and waddle in as dignified a manner as possible round the neighbouring streets.

How grimy, dusty and miserable everything looks; what a noise the traffic makes; and how, careworn, and often sordid, seem the faces of the people. The world, at first contact, seems to give one a slap in the face, instead of a welcome to the

ranks. There is no pleasure in the first walk; I return home weary, disgusted, low-spirited, shuddering at the thought of having to re-enter the lists, and half wishing I had slipped the cable of life and sailed to what awaits us as servants of the "great unknown."

Perhaps, as something seems to suggest, this is meant as a lesson. When in good health, it is easy to censure in a scoffing spirit those, who from bodily weakness, have not the stamina to strive against the physical and moral rapids, with which it seems our fate ever to have to contend. Little grace is shown to those thus handicapped, because the majority of the world cannot realise that hopeless wretchedness—that sinking void at the heart, which arises from a feeling of such total inability to struggle with the breakers; that, did one know they were sweeping one to an abyss, to which the falls of Niagara were but as the rung of a ladder, one could not resist.

An illness should form part of everyone's education; there would then, probably, be no necessity to hold up the bait of a title to the sufficiently charitable. Strange to say, I feel more depressed this my last evening in the Hospital, than I did on the first.

The fourteenth day. My time is up; trunks are packed; a last look round the room—shall I ever be its tenant again? Good-bye to the Nurses—good-bye. I have often said that word, and usually felt exceedingly glad it was time to say it, but it seems to have a new significance to-day. Well, good-bye, and London's gondola ferries me into life again.

Oh! those weary days, when nature's repairs are going on; the barometer of one's spirits seems to need a lot of vital force to raise it a few degrees above zero. One regrets that no enterprising promoter has started a company to provide convalescents with a simple means of self-extermination—something poetical and sweet, that, in the style of Pope's lines, one might—

"Die of a rose in aromatic pain."

But I by no means regret my illness, notwithstanding the losses it caused. I look upon it as a great blessing, for though hitherto I had felt pity for the sick and the helpless, it was a pity allied with involuntary contempt. Sympathy, in its true sense, was to me, like to so many people, an unknown quantity. Not having experienced the necessity for it, I did not understand what sympathy proper really meant.

As I do not reveal my identity, and confession is the order of the day, I will acknowledge another "betterment."

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