

may attempt to describe the rougher fringe of the tale of a probationer. No more complex theme has been attempted. The merry, the sad, the good, the bad, and the distractingly pretty and the woefully plain probationer, to be faithfully and adequately portrayed, must wait and wait.

The piano is shut with a bang, for at the same instant arrive a Sister and a housemaid, who are only alike in the particular and acute astonishment displayed on both their countenances.

"'As once in May,' did you say?" exclaims the Sister, with an effort to remain perfectly calm and with an interrogative and bland expression. "My dear, let this occasion be the only once in May or any other month that you touch the piano keys before breakfast."

The probationer is prettier than the Sister, and she is happier, and richer perhaps, but there is not a moment's thought given by her to words for an answer. She simply casts her eyes down and betakes herself off, the picture of abject humility.

That morning in May was the first time that I had ever sat in the midst of a group of my porters for the purpose of being photographed. The man carrying the heavy camera arrived at seven o'clock, and the young man with the long hair and the tapering fingers who so gracefully arranged and instructed us arrived—by design, of course—just five minutes later. How irritating that young man with the long hair was, too! He may have been an artist, but he certainly was a most provocative person. He upset all my carefully laid plans entirely. I had chosen the exact spot where we were to sit and stand and lean and lie in captivating attitudes for the picture-taking. But he—he, the youth with the tapering fingers—who knew nothing of the rule that my word is law so far as the male servants are concerned, changed us about light-heartedly at his own sweet will. He declared the light was too strong at the spot I had chosen, and with that 'bald' excuse he moved us from place to place as if we had been so many young pupils of an ambulance-drill class. Not only was his action exasperating in itself; it was aggravating in the extreme that he should hold us up to the amusement of the tittering nurses and the guffawing convalescent patients, who quickly discovered the hitherto profoundly-kept secret of the photograph-taking. We had hoped that the little group would nestle down in the allotted spot, that the camera cap would have been silently removed and replaced unnoticed, and that, as Arabs, we might have crept stealthily away, leaving all the other inmates of the institution in total ignorance of the whole affair until the supremely happy moment when we would be able to proudly display to their bewildered gaze a handsomely-framed portrait of the manly band of men who in reality make the wheels of the hospital go round so smoothly.

But no! the young man with the long hair and the greasy waistcoat could not have given greater publicity to the little occasion had he rung a bell and proclaimed our intention from the topmost rung of a step-ladder than he did by moving us about from one side to the other side, and from one corner to the very middle of the quadrangle.

Even the boy of fourteen who waits upon the curator of our museum, and who was, at my leniency, included in the group, became excited, for he remarked that the photographer was like a handful of shotcorn in a colander: "blest if 'e know which way ter go."

Then, just as we were settling down, the "operation bell" rang out lustily. It is a sign that must be regarded in any circumstance with the utmost celerity, so off ran Sandy and Adams to carry the case from the theatre, while the rest of us bore as best we could the critical inspection of everyone, from the young man with the long hair to the small boy whose daily routine seriously begins by delivering the newspapers in the wards of the Royal Central West.

"Are yer going to be 'took?'" he asked, fugitively approaching the point of the group nearest his mate, the museum boy.

"Be off!" I shouted, causing every head to turn as if on one body, much to the unconcealed disgust of the photographer, who had by that time reached that stage of the proceedings when every self-respecting camera-man deems it a duty to go about on tip-toe, as if in the event of the slightest noise the sensitive plate of his apparatus would explode with the violence of a new electric road vehicle.

On the return of Sandy and Adams, and the hurt departure of the newspaper boy, matters shaped promisingly once again, but there was one other interruption. The Sister in Southampton Ward (always a somewhat difficult though well-meaning creature in her dealings with me) sent a nurse to inquire whether it was the Steward's wish that she and all the patients in the ward should be brutally murdered, as she and two nurses found it impossible to hold down the gentleman in No. 18 bed, who had just developed *delirium tremens*, and she had been telephoning for some minutes for a porter without any result. I expressed deep regret, briefly explained the reason of the grouping of the porters, assured the nurse that I hoped Sister and patients alike had many, many happy years before them, and prevailed upon a passing house surgeon to go and calm the unruly patient.

At last we were settled and quite ready to be "took." The beautiful young man with the long hair stepped backwards some feet behind his camera and eyed us admiringly. We all concluded that he did it admiringly, for he put his left ear almost on a level with his left shoulder, and he

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