

putting sheets on the narrow stretcher, that was the sole piece of furniture in the cubicle, went away, and I followed. There was a meal served in the dining-room, but I was not invited to the table. As I sat at the fire my sympathy grew for the man who sold his birth-right for a plate of stew; at that moment I would have parted with mine for a cup of tea. Another bell rang, and the dozen nurses who had "breakfasted" hurried away. In a few minutes others dropped in, they were all young-looking, healthy, and refined, but my ideal nurse was missing, and from that hour I accepted the inevitable and the real. The buzz of conversation ceased suddenly, as the Matron entered with a small book in her hand. She took a chair at the head of the table and began, "First evening of the month; Psalm six."

After prayers she called out a string of names and numbers, my name amongst others, then with a "Good night, nurses" she was gone.

I was given a chair at the "Probationers' Table," and brought a cup of coffee, by a nurse who remarked,

"This is a savage feast, you must fight for what you want." Then by way of explanation for her condescension to a raw probationer, she said "You are in my ward, try and get there before half-past six to-morrow morning."

After supper I went to my cubicle and sat on my box in the dark, until the sounds died away on the landing below, then I scrambled into bed. The night nurses had left every available window and door open, and it was bitterly cold. I was awaked in the morning by a voice calling "half-past five." It was dark, and a frosty breeze was blowing in my face. Then a bell rang and I began a hunt for matches. I learnt that morning that the one thing a nurse never leaves about her cubicle is a box of matches. However, there was a jet of gas burning on the landing below, and from this, with the aid of an envelope I lit my gas and found an empty bathroom.

There was plenty of hot and cold water, and I had the place to myself for two minutes, when there was a thundering sound at the door, and a sleepy voice said,

"Do hurry up with the bath, nurse, I have been waiting here for ages."

I hurried up, and in a short time I had got into my new uniform and felt like a "trussed fowl." A stiff collar cut my chin, cuffs chafed my hands, and a pair of starched strings caught on my hair. As I went downstairs the nurses rushed past me as if the stairs were the decline of a switch-back railway. Several nurses were having tea at the side-board, but not finding

any of the probationers among them, I went on without. I saw a charwoman scrubbing the hall that I had passed through the evening before, and from her I learnt that "No. 12" was the women's surgical ward at the top of the house. I found my way there, and seeing no nurse in possession I ventured in. A hospital ward at 6 a.m. bears very little resemblance to the same place later in the day. There were fourteen beds in the ward, all more or less untidy. A few of the patients were walking about, several were having breakfast, and some were still asleep.

An old woman in a red flannel jacket beckoned to me, and asked,

"Are you a new nurse? Well, then just ask me anything you don't understand. I have been here—with this knee—for eight months. The nurses call me Granny." We were interrupted by the entrance of a nurse, carrying a jug of water and several basins. "You have no right in the wards at this hour," she said, by way of greeting, and then, finding that I was a new probationer, she asked me to give the patients who were sitting up water to wash. When I had been getting into trouble with the patients because the water was not warm the Staff Nurse came in, and, saying "Good morning," asked me not to mind the work much but to get familiar with the surroundings, &c., and went with the night nurse behind a screen. Then my friend of the night before entered.

"That's the night nurse's duty," she said. "Bring some water here, and help me to settle Lizzie."

Lizzie was a very pretty girl, with small, regular features, and big violet eyes. I had been admiring her and thinking that if I had lost my ideal nurse, the ideal patient remained. She was in splints, and almost as helpless as a baby, but when I went near her bed she screamed,

"She don't know nothing about me, she is only new, an' I aint goin' to have any new nurse touch me." Then, turning to me, she added, "You leave me alone." The other probationer took little notice of Lizzie's outburst, except to say,

"Don't be naughty, you are the most tiresome patient in the ward." Then to me, "Lift her so—with the splint—thank you." Lizzie screamed. "Now, stop that this minute, or I will call Nurse McFell."

Lizzie must have had a vivid recollection of the nurse mentioned, for she became quiet in a moment. The other patients were indifferent to new nurses; and shortly after eight o'clock the ward was transformed. The patients were all tidy, Lizzie, with her hair bound with a white ribbon, and a pale blue jacket on, looked

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