

these sort o' things when I'm reely gawn—I ain't dead yet."

* * * * *

It was a week later that Agnes started off to the P—— Hospital with a bunch of wall-flowers and a sponge cake for Martha. She had received a postcard the day before from John telling her that Martha had changed her mind and was going into the hospital at once. Martha was propped up with pillows, and the red flannel nightingale she wore only accentuated the pallor of her face. She smiled brightly when she saw Agnes. "I reckon you're surprised at seein' me 'ere," she remarked as she sniffed at the wall-flowers.

"Well, I am a bit—wot ever mide you chinge your mind?"

Martha avoided looking at her. "Oh! I just got thinkin' o' things, and then John sed as 'ow 'e thought I'd better come. Lor! these pillers is 'ard" (she gave one a vicious thump as she spoke).

Conversation flagged. Martha was provoking reticent, and could not be induced to consider herself a martyr chained to a hospital bed for an indefinite period.

"Well," exclaimed Agnes, as she rose to depart, "I think, considerin' wot old friends we 'as always bin, you might 'ave told me why you come 'ere after runnin' down the 'ospital like you did the other day."

Martha reddened with anger. "You're the last person wot I'd tell, and, wot's more, you can tike yourself off, and I don't care when you come back." She was trembling with rage. "Don't you trouble yourself—I shan't come back," snapped Agnes. She walked out of the ward with her head in the air.

One of the nurses came hurrying up the ward with some sheets over her arm. Martha signalled to her with an air of mystery.

"Well, number six, make haste and tell me what you want; there's a new patient coming in, and I've got to make the bed."

"I won't keep you a minute, my dear," purred Martha, "but did you 'appen to notice that young female wot 'as just gone out?"

Nurse Brown nodded.

"I thought she was very pretty," she said, as she prepared to move away.

"Just 'alf a minute," coaxed Martha; "she sez to me last week that when I was dead she'd see to John."

"That was very kind of her," murmured Nurse Brown.

If she 'adn't said that about seein' to John," said Martha, slowly, "I'd 'ave stuck at 'ome; but I went back, an' I thought it over, and I sez to myself, 'Martha Todd you'll go the 'ospital to-morrow,' so that's why I'm 'ere."

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