

They found out that this was a peat railway still in use, but where were the workers? How can a railway be worked without a man, or peat stacked and sent to its destination without human aid? This thought made them refuse to be daunted, and at length, after further search, they came across evident and cheering signs of human life, in the form of a bright peat fire in a little hut, and on the fire a homely kettle boiling. This was a sight, it cannot be denied, to cheer benighted travellers, and very soon after, two Devonshire workmen arrived on the scene to partake of dinner.

It is not difficult to imagine the amused astonishment with which they greeted the occupants of their hut, which gave place at once, however, to the most courteous welcome. They politely invited them to partake of their tea, which was made in a jug, in the most primitive fashion; they ransacked the hut to find a cup *with* a handle to offer them; and they treated them in every way as most honoured guests. It must have been a curious sight, to see those two Nurses in that tiny hut, sitting on improvised seats, around the peat fire burning on the ground, drinking tea with those two workmen—the elder, a bronzed, strong, vigorous man, with a keen, intelligent face, speaking of wisdom and experience that years had brought to him; the other, a tall, handsome, dark young fellow, with eyes dancing with fun and merriment, keeping well in the back-ground, but intensely interested in everything that was said or done, and ever on the alert to see if anything was wanted. Greater courtesy or kindlier consideration they could not have met with in the most polished society, or in the most frequented West End drawing-room.

After they had conversed on many subjects, in all of which the two men took keen interest, they consulted the elder of the two about the way to Okehampton; but he would not hear of their attempting it over the moor in such rain and mist, saying that he should not consider it safe to go himself, although he had been working on the moor for eight years, and knew it well from boyhood. Accordingly, they were forced reluctantly to give up their plan, and tamely submit instead to follow for five miles the whole length of the peat railway in drenching rain, until it brought them to a village, where they were thankful to obtain rest and such dry clothes as their knapsacks could supply them with. They did in due time reach Okehampton, but by a much more ordinary and matter-of-fact route than that they had planned, and they found it another little old-fashioned charming town. From there they made their way to the Cornish coast, in order to get a whiff from the Atlantic to brace them up finally before returning to their respective work.

The ten days had passed all too quickly, and the walking tour was at an end; but not before our two Nurses had attained their desired object, for their pleasure had been keen in the extreme, their enjoyment most real, their friendship was cemented yet closer, their health was vigorous, their brains were cleared of all cobwebs, and their walking powers were established, for at the end of the time they were able to walk fourteen miles a day without undue fatigue, and from first to last they had experienced nothing but kindness and courtesy from all with whom they came in contact.

Although the time had been short, yet it was long enough to leave behind it an abiding impression of beauty and of pleasure, for they had been living almost entirely with Nature, seeing her in all her many aspects, in storm and sunshine, in mountain and valley, in all the gradations of light and shade, by banks and rivers, by sea and land. They had laid up a rich store of her beauty, upon which they might call at any time in the future, to brighten them when sad, to cheer and comfort them when weary, to refresh and reinvigorate them when worn out and downcast with the close and constant contact with suffering and disease, whether in the Hospital or the sick room.

“It was a gleam to Memory dear,  
And as I walk and muse apart,  
When all seems faithless round and drear,  
I would revive it in my heart,  
And watch how light can find its way  
To regions farthest from the fount of day.”

### HOSPITAL SKETCHES.—No. 8.

#### A WORD ON WARD-MAIDS.

UNDER the old system of Nursing the sick in our Hospitals, the Ward Nurse was generally a woman drawn from the lower domestic classes, and the primary duty for which she was engaged was to keep the Ward clean—or, rather, what was considered clean, in the days before antiseptic surgery came into vogue. The Ward was her home, and, as a rule, she eat and lived in it, and slept in a small room, with her fellow Nurses, in close proximity to it. The Nursing of the sick under these circumstances naturally became of secondary consideration, the duties which were unavoidable in connection with it being performed by the Sister or Head Nurse, who was often a woman possessed of great skill and experience, and was usually an excellent Ward Manager, or House-keeper.

When later, however, it became an acknowledged fact, that there could be no hope of progress in

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