

prefer to travel in company, and may insist upon your joining a reluctant stranger, a proceeding likely to be embarrassing; and Nurses also are not usually provided with the necessary equipment for horse exercise in a populous neighbourhood. She will have long passed the fascination of sand pies, but may still enjoy concocting them for the little ones, and thus experience reflected pleasure. Punch's show may have no charm for her, though the audience is usually composed of adults; but the nigger minstrels, attired in coats many coloured and patched, and fine with large white collars, cannot fail to be amusing, though a little vulgar, and if Nurse, with her insight into the darker and sadder side of human life, where she may have tended some of these itinerant caterers for public hilarity, pictures the frequent heavy heart beneath the gaudy trappings and the "Punchinello" history hidden by comedy, she may remember, too, that the hearts of the watchers know how to ache, and that actors and audiences alike are learning the lesson of forgetfulness.

Altogether the seaside offers endless variety, and may be diversified with coaching expeditions inland, trips that are moderately inexpensive, and a capital mode of taking air without fatigue. In Wales these tours are frequent and delightful, coaches proceeding from a central point for distances of varied extent, and returning the same day; there are also trips by steamer to places of interest in the neighbourhood. It must not, however, be overlooked that there are persons for whom the sea has no charm, to whom it suggests shipwreck, and a voracious desire to generally engulf mankind. The break of its waves to them is wailing and dismal, like the groan of a heavily-laden spirit, and they grow depressed and nervous in its vicinity. This condition may be connected with the liver, or may be purely nervous, but from whatever cause, a diversity of opinion is a wise provision for general enjoyment, and tends to the equalisation of population, and as freedom of thought is necessary to individuality, not to be condemned. To these persons, circumstances being propitious, I suggest bonnie Scotland, somewhere near the moors, as high a latitude as possible, with a good prospect of hill and valley, and peaks over which that thin transparent blue hangs, like a gauzy veil, giving a weird mystical appearance to the jagged rock "where mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely trod," and away to the left of which the sun sets in splendour.

On these hills there may sometimes be found (inquiry and recommendation obviate risk and disappointment) a homely cottage nest, accessible to a visitor whose habits are not luxurious, and who can thrive upon a simple diet; here, if the turmoil of the city have wearied her, and if soli-

tude and commune with Nature's beauties be not oppressive to her, Nurse may spend a very happy time. Rising early—once early enough to see the sun rise—and after taking refreshment, such as milk and home-made bread and butter, wandering over the heather, she may obtain a ravenous appetite for breakfast, of eggs and bacon, or trout from the nearest stream; after which, on a sure-footed mountain pony, she may explore for many miles, carefully noting her track, for though these ponies are proverbial for their instinct, they cannot always be trusted to find the pathway home. Here she may sketch and botanize to her heart's content, or employ herself profitably writing articles for the *Nursing Record*—articles likely to be of the optimist order, and welcome in the Nurses' sitting room. I would not advise her to succumb to the temptation of constant reading, but a few pleasant, healthy stories will help to pass the time pleasantly, though in this kind of rambling the best book to secure is a really kindred spirit. Possibly this applies to life in every phase, but a companion who is company in the happiest sense, is especially welcome on the moors, and a Hospital acquaintance may there develop into a friend, one with whom silence is not solitude, and who understands allusions without necessity of diffuse explanation, who is sweet tempered, merry, and wise, and who will agree to leave the Hospital behind in every sense, but not leave the pleasure when the holiday is over; that may revive during the winter evenings before the Nurses' fire, in the half hour after supper, when together they can almost smell the heather, and see the sunset, doubly enhanced by the glories of imagination and the charm of memory.

It is possible, and would not be quite unprecedented, to find that Nurse could shoot, but I should be sorry to see her. It is sad enough that the sweet singing voices have to be hushed, that the swift velvety feet have to grow rigid and still; but let not the hand of a woman bring this to pass, lest, also, the woman's heart harden in the process, and it is difficult to reconcile the character of a tender Nurse with that of a sportswoman, who can see, unmoved the bright round eye glaze, and the pretty plumage all ruffled and stained with the colour she knows so well. Women are competing with men in the labour market, and with the preponderance of sex, necessarily so; but let their mission be to save life, never to destroy, and so keep intact that tenderness of heart essentially womanly. Out of doors all day, extemporising picnics, with a basket of provisions and a stout alpenstock, Nurse will grow as "brown as a berry," brownness that will give a refreshing country aspect to her white cap, but which will fade quickly in the Wards, though the renewed store

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)