

hot, too cold, and neither one nor the other at the same time ; at night, I will be thirsty and hungry, during the day, I will obstinately sleep. All offers I will receive with a frigid scowl, laughs and aches of all sorts I will develop, inflammation of the lungs shall follow, and finally, out of sheer spite, I will try to burden the Nurses' consciences (if I find that they have any) by dying. Should I get well again, I will write to the papers about the disgraceful charges, and the inefficiency of the members of the so-called "noble profession."

I studied rival newspapers, with a view of developing my vocabulary of sarcastic personalities, and having duly fretted myself to an explosive point of irritability, consigned myself and goods to a "hansom," and was soon deposited, in an exceedingly critical spirit, at the door of what was to be my home—I had almost written my penitentiary—for a fortnight.

A rather æsthetic-looking house, but what business has a private Hospital to look æsthetic? Doubtless, it will be dingy enough inside. The now opened door reveals, why, really a neat hall—just so, innocent patient, but what is beyond that hall? sighs and groans seem to reach my ears.

I am cheerfully welcomed by, to be truthful, a kindly lady, with trust-awakening features. I must be careful, this looks most suspicious, a trap, if a gilded one ; but what a pretty cap !

I try to carry my luggage upstairs, but it is seized upon, and I am ushered into my room ; the carpet, the curtains, and the screen (such a dainty screen) actually match ; the bed has no canopy, the walls are not papered with green roses, or yellow violets ; in fact, it is a pleasant room, a decidedly tastefully furnished room. Now, don't be hasty in your approval, I thought ; as a careful bachelor, look under the bed, pass your hand round the looking-glass ; "matter out of place" you will surely find. No ; well try the chairs, their backs and legs must be rickety ; disappointment again awaits me. Then the desired *causa justa* for complaint will evidently be found to rest with the Nurses. Better so, one cannot make sarcastic remarks to "still life."

So for thirteen days I shall not leave this room. Thirteen ! The unlucky number, how it seems to din on my mind ; it dawns upon me that I shall never leave this room body and soul united. I try to be melancholy, to weep at my prospective fate, but long disuse has dried the tear wells, and, frankly, I feel more lively than the circumstances would seem to warrant.

It would probably have been most sensible to have retired early, considering the morrow ; at least

the Nurse seemed to think so, but it would have shown a lack of obstinacy, so I stayed up till twelve p.m. ; the Nurse's disgust was most gratifying.

I hardly had time to step into bed and raise a rampart of philosophical works round myself, when the Nurse appeared again. "Do I want anything?" Now what should I want—I knew they would be officious—a snappish 'no' clears the room. Buckle's essay, "The influence of women on the progress of knowledge," is what I chose for the night's delectation, for I had determined to carry out the policy of contrariety to the full and keep a literary "wake" till dawn.

Knowing that I was expected to remain "twixt the folds" till the fatal hour, I got up at 4.30 ; the Nurse expressed her surprise at my being up when she brought my breakfast at seven o'clock. Clearly a covert insult ; as if Nurses were the only people who got up early !

A cup of tea and two microscopic slices of toast for breakfast. So this explains the luxurious equipment of the room ; starvation is the régime.

The Nurses actually attempt to screen me off whilst the 'preparations' are being made—another insult ; but I am not helpless yet ; it is a legitimate occasion for weapon flourishing. I, accordingly, sarcastically (to my frame of mind at the time) inquire whether private theatricals are about to take place. Another Nurse appears on the scenes, whose personality and characteristics I will briefly describe by mentioning the name I subsequently allotted to her—the policeman. The campaign is opened by a sneering remark, that I don't appear to be nervous (there was no looking-glass near, so I could not see what my complexion was like). But to intimate that I, one who had reached man's estate, could be nervous, deserved prompt chastisement. The ill-natured retort, however, which was on my lips, was checked by a certain resolute steady look in the "policeman's" eyes, which, combined with a contemptuous dexterity of movement, quieted my ruffled feelings. So I decided that it would not be polite to say anything disagreeable, and confined myself to sincerely hoping that she would break something.

Manly steps approach : that bag, my imagination darts at it, pierces its swarthy hide, and reveals to pulsating nerves, fiercely gleaming lancets, spatulas, directors, scalpels, tenotomes, tenaculums, bistouries, and a host of other fantastically named instruments, viciously eager for employment. The bag really contained some innocent looking, though important, bottles, the use of which, with sardonic friendliness, a gentleman in black kindly explained to me:

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