

somewhat unpromising-looking partner of her fate. I asked him if he had written to her friends. He informed me he "warn't no scholar," and went stolidly on with his work—boot-making. When I reached home I copied out the letter, and added a postscript urging the immediate attendance of the addressee. We marked down the trains in our local time-table, and enclosed the page containing them; reflecting also that the best of strategy may fail for the want of the sinews of war, forestalled possible defeat in that quarter. It was afternoon before I posted the letter. The next day (Tuesday) I visited the patient, and assured her I had written to her mother. She was no better. It was the following Wednesday afternoon before I visited her again. It was, I remember, an intensely sultry summer's day, and the atmosphere of Crowley's Court was more oppressive than usual; the room in which my patient lay was large, and not otherwise than well ventilated, but poorly furnished enough. The patient was depressed at the non-arrival of her mother. I tried to comfort her, but confess I had some silent misgiving on the subject. Had that fateful missive ever reached "Withy Brook"? Had it proved too much for the scholastic attainments of "our Jim" to make it out? At this moment I heard steps on the stairs. I go to the top of them, and find myself almost face to face with a cheery, pleasant-looking country woman, her face browned by the sun, her cheeks ruddy with health. We are all familiar with the gay check shawl and the quaint bonnet fitting round the face with a cap in it of her class. "These stairs is o'r hard to them as ar'n't used to them," she remarked, as she scaled the somewhat tortuous ascent. I was under an impression they were not much better for those who were, and hastened to relieve her of her umbrella—a distinct impediment under the circumstances—and a basket, which, she informed me, had got "a bit of summit in it for her poor wench." On the top of the rhubarb leaf that covered the "summit" lay a gay, sweet-smelling posy, that served to remind us life was not *all* Crowley's Court. "Are you Mrs. Burch?" I asked. "Yes, ma'am. Are you the good lady as wrote?" "Yes." Whilst the worthy soul was disembarassing herself of bonnet, shawl, and bundle, I turned my eyes towards her daughter. No words of mine can depict the rapture of joy that irradiated that wan young face. "My mother! my own mother!" she exclaimed; and rising from her pillow, flung her arms round her neck. The weary head drooped on that honest loving breast, and sorrow and suffering were alike forgotten in the deep oblivion of death.

(To be continued.)

PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION.—XX.

Linen required for Refurnishing a Hospital consisting of 50 Patients, 20 Nurses, 12 Servants, Surgeon and Matron.

By MRS. J. G. TAYLOR,

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THE furnishing of a house is a subject which at first glance perhaps appears exceedingly commonplace and matter-of-fact. In many cases, where money is plentiful and luxuries abound, handsome dining-rooms, lovely drawing-rooms, artistic bed-rooms, rich carpets, and the thousand other luxuries attending such homes are simply taken as a matter of course. To such the idea of cost naturally never occurs. The home, possibly in preparation, is a matter merely for the consideration of tradesmen, parents, or the future sharer of it. It will be ready when required, and doubtless expected to be perfect. To others, however, the subject of a home is a very serious matter indeed, and frequently involves some years of anxious economy, to accomplish the fact of a home of one's own, shared probably by one who has been saving out of very tiny earnings, and for long looking forward to the time when the cherished idea shall be realised and life's journey can be commenced together. Like every hard-earned pleasure it is appreciated to the fullest extent.

The subject of household linen should be an important one. In Germany girls of all ranks consider it so, and not only make it up, but spin the flax. Many girls of our own commence on leaving school to prepare linen and to lay by large and well-made supplies for what they hope is the good time coming—that is, when they leave the home of their childhood for the untried future—and as it is one of the most important features in furnishing a home, too much thought cannot be devoted to it. Nothing shows a house-keeper to greater advantage than shelves of good linen in use and out of use—for house, children's, and servants' use. Nothing is more essential to health than plenty of linen, as it of course means also cleanliness as well. It is one of the luxuries of life within the reach of many who do not appreciate it, as perhaps half the value depends on the industry of the owner, not quite on the material—meaning that six yards of material if made up is considerably added to in value; and I think the head of a household who takes pride in this particular department may be surely expected to provide comforts for those under her care in any other.

The providing a house with linen must depend

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