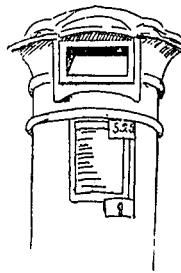


CHAPTER III.—MY WEDDING.

I CONFESS the first thing I did when I knew myself the next morning was to have a good cry. To leave the place where I had been born was like forsaking the laws and order of the nature I knew for some other—nature it might be, but not known to me as such. How, for instance, could one who has been used to our bright white sun, and our pale modest moon, with our soft twilights and far, mysterious skies of night, be willing to fall in with the order of things in a planet such as I have read of somewhere, with three or four suns, one red and another green and another yellow? Only perhaps I've taken it all up wrong—and I do like looking at a landscape for a minute or so through a coloured glass; and if it be so, of course it all blends, and all we want is harmony. What I mean is, that I found it a great wrench to leave the dear old place, and of course loved it more than I had ever loved it. But I would get all my crying about that over beforehand. It would be bad enough afterwards to have to part with my father and mother and Connie and the rest of them. Only it wasn't like leaving them. You can't leave hearts as you do rooms. You can't leave thoughts as you do books. Those you love only come nearer to you when you go away from them. The same rules don't hold with *thinks* and *things*, as my eldest boy distinguished them the other day. But somehow I couldn't get up and dress. I seemed to have got very fond of my own bed, and the queer old crows, as I have called them from babyhood, on the chintz curtains, and the Chinese paper on the walls with the strangest birds and creeping things on it. It was a lovely spring morning, and the sun was shining gloriously. I knew that the rain of the last night must be glittering on the grass and the young leaves, and I heard the birds singing as if they knew far more than mere human beings, and believed a great deal more than they knew. Nobody will persuade me that the birds don't mean it; that they sing from anything else than gladness of heart. And if they don't think about cats and guns, why should they? Even when they fall on the ground, it is not without our Father. How horribly dull and stupid it seems to say that "without your Father" means without *His knowing it*. The Father's mere *knowledge* of a thing—if that could be, which my father says can't—is not the Father. The Father's tenderness and care and love of it all the time—that is the not falling without him. When the cat kills the bird—as I have seen happen so often in our poor little London garden—God yet saves His bird from His cat. There is nothing so bad as it looks to

our half-sight, our blinding perceptions. My father used to say we are all walking in a spiritual twilight, and are all more or less affected with twilight blindness, as some people are physically. Percivale, for one, who is as brave as any wife could wish, is far more timid than I am in crossing a London street in the twilight; he can't see what is coming, and fancies he sees what is not coming. But then he has faith in me, and never starts when I am leading him.

(To be continued.)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

We shall be happy to answer, as far as we can, all questions submitted to us.

Communications, &c., not noticed in our present number will receive attention when space permits.

THE LONDON HOSPITAL SCANDALS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Comprehensive, terse, and studiously moderate, with chapter and verse quoted in support of each statement, the article in the Supplement of the *Nursing Record* of the 1st inst., on the London Hospital scandals, should be read by everyone interested in that Institution.

Those of the House Committee whose time is too much occupied to permit them to wade through the Blue Book might at least refer to the questions and answers particularised in your epitome.

In the inquiry by the Lords' Committee it was elicited that certain reports emanating from the Matron had been incorporated in the official minutes of the Hospital. The following are extracts from minutes reflecting on my sister and myself:—

"I cordially assented to her proposition that she should go and discuss the matter" (that was the application for thirteen guineas forfeit) "with her bother, giving her a special extension of time for the purpose, and *they returned together* in about an hour." (6,509.)

"She and her brother *appeared one day* announcing her intention of leaving the House immediately, wholly declining to give any evidence that her father's health necessitated her constant attendance. The brother was especially insolent, and afterwards wrote violent letters to the Chairman, to the Committee, and to the Court of Governors. He appeared to be an extremely exciteable person, and was perhaps scarcely to be held responsible for his extraordinary conduct and inaccurate statements; at least this was the most charitable view to take of his conduct. The sister's services were not valuable, and in addition to being essentially common, and lacking in refinement, we had already received considerable evidence of her troublesome temper before the final outbreak, and nothing could have developed her into a good Nurse." (6,510.)

In answer to Q. 5,755, copies of these letters described as

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