

In these what may be called "topsy-turvey" days, it is said in some occupations one woman is equal to one man and a-half (*figuratively*, of course). This looks *bad* or *good*, according to the view we take of it. In the dim and distant future there is a probability of "see me reverse," meaning more than an old song. Men will be allowing their more advanced "halves" the privilege of becoming the "bread-winners" whilst they remain at home minding the babies and doing the domestics generally. These are only ideas, originating from the present tendencies to assume higher positions in the world, and it is amusing to wonder, if these ideas are ever realised, whether, with a change of position, there will be a change of garment more *suited* to the position. There is, without doubt, a little leaning that way even now, but this will be food for reflection and another subject for the oratory of the woman of the period. When this time arrives we shall take no part in the momentous questions of the day—our ideas will have ceased to flow. As *they* are *our* future, *we* shall be *their* past; and however wide our aspirations now, a very narrow portion of Mother Earth's surface will suffice us then.

However, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," the future is not our concern. We can only, through our imagination, raise the veil, and give way to a little impertinent curiosity. Beyond this, we have nothing to do with it; so we will turn to our own business and resume the study of a branch of woman's work connected with the Hospital, which for its extreme uninterestingness and uncompromising usefulness must in Hospital life certainly "take the cake," and that is soap-suds and the wash-tub!

I believe it is a well-known rule that our sex is divided into two classes—those who do not belong to one must belong to the other—useful and ornamental. Doubtless, had we a choice we should, with few exceptions, choose the *latter*, and it must be confessed we allow ourselves a tremendous margin on this all-important point; and when at last the sad reality dawns on us, when our looking-glass and the flattering opinion of our nearest and dearest *compel* us to acknowledge the disappointing fact, we make a virtue of necessity, and assert our claim to be at least *useful*, and what we unwillingly accept as a *second*, sometimes proves a *first* chance in the lottery of life. It is not surprising, when we know its irresistible power, that the gift of beauty is so eagerly coveted. There is, however, a beauty of the mind, which

is more lasting in its power, and within reach of all.

It is evident the Editor thinks that in Nurses the useful and ornamental qualities should be combined, as by selecting the subject of this essay he proves the first, and the prize offered for a becoming cap shows the latter; and it seems to me that we are expected to understand the details of that steamy and soapy district, the laundry, or forfeit the laurels already won on other, but more attractive, work in Hospital administration. Cleanliness is next to godliness, we are taught, and it appears as difficult to be clean as it is to be good. Perhaps, on looking below the surface, we may discover roses where we expected only thorns. Certainly we shall find a little useful information, and it is even possible that we might acquire a taste for dabbling amongst the soap-suds, and enjoy it equally with the mud-pies of our childhood.

A *little* knowledge is esteemed a dangerous thing—so it is better to be thoroughly well up in every subject we undertake. I know a Hospital Matron *very intimately* indeed, who proved the truth of this by ordering the blankets boiled. The laundress replied that she might as well boil the patients. The Matron—fresh from a London Hospital—who, to do her justice, immediately recognised the disadvantages that *might* arise from boiling patients—accidentally or otherwise—gave way at once, and has since discovered that it would be equally ruinous to both. Experience has always shown me that a Nurse cannot know too much in general housekeeping (*and it seems now that millinery must be added*). Nurses look forward to having homes of their own, and it would be an unfortunate drawback to the domestic arrangements if they only understood their requirements scientifically, and could only be of use to their husbands or children when they were dying. This would, to say the least, be very inconvenient, so we had better step down into the laundry and discover, if possible, why, amongst all other employments, this is the only department where *ladies* never apply; it is a stronghold that has never yet been attacked, and will remain, so I fear, until washing can be reduced to a fine art. We shall find, for one reason, that it is all work and very little play. System is required in *all* work, but *here* it is a positive necessity. If once it gets mixed up, the jumble at the end of the week is something to be imagined rather than described. In this Hospital machinery is dispensed with, possibly on the principle of "Labour

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