

told me that she truly thought that Barbara saved her little Harry's life.'

'Well, I reckon she did! You see, he was taken awful sudden with the croup. They sent over for me, but I wasn't to home, an' so Barbary went. They said she worked like everything over that child, an' before an hour passed he was a-sweatin' like a harvester, an' with his throat all loosened out. Yes, Barbary is handy in sickness, I would not have you think that I believe her a natural-born fool. Only, she is kinder odd, an' don't seem to have the knack of doin' work like other women.'

The gate-latch clicked, and a young girl came up the walk. She was tall and slender, but her brisk pace and easy carriage suggested robust health. Her complexion was brown, but enlivened by a glow of rich red on the round cheeks. Her mouth, though large displayed clear coral lips, behind which gleamed even white teeth. Her luxuriant, chestnut hair hung in school-girl fashion in one long thick braid down her back. Her plain, dark-blue dress was brightened by a bunch of golden rod fastened in her belt. In her arms she carried a huge bundle of greenery.

'Ben' after simples, Barbary?' her mother called out, in a half-amused, half-vexed tone.

'Yes'm. How do you do, Miss Mayberry? Excuse my not shaking hands, but you see my fingers are all groundy. I found some "gold thread," but as I didn't have any trowel, I had to dig it as best I could.'

'Oh, Barbary! how can you bear to muss yourself so!' sighed Mrs. Sparks.

A cloud stole over Barbara's bright face; but without making any reply, she turned away and went upstairs to the old garret. Here, under the brown, time-stained rafters, festooned with a filmy drapery of cobwebs, she sat down, first opening the large, latticed window, at the end of the long room, so that a gust of air might penetrate the dust-smelling interior. Then, spreading out some papers on the floor, she proceeded to sort her herbs—crisp green spearmint, garnet-stemmed peppermint, pale-hued catnip, pungent pennyroyal, and thoroughwort, with its woolly leaves and white flowers. At last they were all arranged, and the fresh breeze coming in, mingled with the spicy, wholesome fragrance of the piles of 'simples.'

Then, with her firm, round chin resting in the palm of her hand, Barbara settled herself down for a good 'think,' as she termed it. A wrinkle of perplexity gathered on her smooth forehead, and the corners of her red lips had a downward droop. Evidently, her thoughts were not of the most cheerful nature.

But, as she sat there, a light footfall was heard on the garret stairs, and presently Miss Mayberry's gentle face, crowned by its soft, white curls, appeared.

'Well,' said that lady cheerily, as she carefully picked her way across the piles of herbs, and sat down beside Barbara, 'Well, your mother had a caller, and so I thought I would come up and have a little chat with you. I've become somewhat acquainted with all your sisters. Georgia showed me her baby's first tooth, and let me read a chapter of the medical book her doctor-husband is writing. Clorinda allowed me a glimpse of the ivory satin wedding-dress she is making for Miss Lane. And Maria let me examine a lot of new artificials she has just received from the city. Now I come to view your specialty!'

'There isn't any!' Barbara replied, with a rueful smile, 'unless it's those,'—indicating the pile of herbs.

'Well, and why not those, my dear?' said Miss Mayberry, with a brisk little nod that set her white curls bobbing. 'Why shouldn't

you become proficient in the noble science of healing?'

Barbara's face brightened. 'It is what I'd like to do,' she said, 'But it seems as though I ought to become a teacher, a dressmaker, or housekeeper; that is what is expected of a woman, you know.'

'Nonsense! I believe that all a woman has to do is to go ahead and do whatever she deems herself capable of doing. If she succeeds, few men will grumble and many will applaud and admire. Now, I have no girls of my own, but I take an interest in those of others. I have seen that you were unhappy and discontented. I knew that it was not because you were idle or peevish, but simply because you were not in the right groove. Here and there, I have picked up some information concerning you. I have heard how you have saved ailing babies and comforted helpless old people, and it seems to me, my dear, that God has given you a gift, the use of which you should not scorn. Cultivate it diligently, and in course of time, you will not only be happy, but also able to win an honest livelihood. In short, then, Barbara, why not become a nurse?'

Barbara's eyes shone. 'I do like putting among medicines and fussing over sick folks. I thought last night in prayer-meeting, when Mr. Gray talked so about every one of us having a mission, that maybe I might find mine in the sick room. Now it is so nice of you, Miss Mayberry, to speak to me about it. The only person who has given me any encouragement is Georgia's husband, the doctor.'

'And what does he say?'

'Oh, he has invited me to take a course of study with him.'

'The very thing!' Miss Mayberry exclaimed. 'It has always seemed to me that in order to be thoroughly well prepared, a nurse ought to understand anatomy and hygiene.'

'But, what do you suppose mother'll say?'

Miss Mayberry's blue eyes twinkled. 'Don't you remember the story about the hen that sat on some eggs among which was a duck's egg, and how, in course of time, she was much puzzled to find a mysterious young creature among her brood of downy darlings? And how that one odd little thing troubled her—its webbed feet, broad bill, and, above all, its strange proclivities for swimming! But after her astonishment and anxiety were past, she grew to be more proud of it than of any of her orthodox little chicks. That is the way I think it will be with your mother. She loves you dearly, I know. Her greatest wish is to see you happy and useful. As for myself, it is not my habit to meddle in family matters, but I am so old a friend of your mother's that I think I may venture to speak to her about this.'

'Oh, thank you!' said Barbara, with an enthusiastic hug.

Good Mrs. Sparks was startled and mystified when the new scheme was presented to her. 'Wants to go a-nussin', does she! Well, who would have thought it! It's dretful hard work, what with bein' up nights an' runnin' against smallpox an' all kinds o' fevers. Of course, we ha'n't rich, an' its necessary that she should earn her own livin' somehow; but, land! why can't she learn the dressmaker trade with Clorindy? She could pull out bastin' threads, any how!'

Here Barbara mildly interposed, saying that such employment would be conducive neither to her happiness nor to the replenishing of her purse! She would much rather become a nurse.

'Well,' said her mother reflectively, 'It does seem about the only thing you can do well. Objections, did you say? Well, I dunno as I have any, seein' as you're heart

it. I'm sure I hope you'll have good luck.'

And Barbara did have good luck—she won it by her own exertions; and to-day, for many miles around her home her fame as a kind, competent nurse, has spread. She is the ideal attendant of many a sick person. Her gowns never 'swish' and rustle; her hand is cool without being clammy, tender without being limp. She steps quickly but not nervously, and her step is always light. She anticipates her patient's wants. She cheers them up when they are gloomy, and she is silent when they are sleepy. And above all, she tries to heal them with that grand medicine—faith in God and Nature! —'Christian Intelligencer.'

## Sister Phoebe's Salvage Corps.

(By Elizabeth P. Allan.)

'Dr. R. H. Haywood—Throat and Lungs—No. 61 Cortlant Street.' This was the lady's destination, and she stopped and rang the bell. It was several minutes before nine, and the office-boy who answered the bell asked her in with some remonstrance in his voice and manner, at which the lady smiled. The smile lingered on her pleasant face, as if it had forgotten to take leave, and before the long suffering boy could finish setting his chairs in painful order around the wall the bell rang again. This time it was a pale young lady, who was evidently disturbed at finding any one before her. She approached the first-comer in a nervous, uncertain manner. 'Oh, I hoped so much to be the first,' she said flutteringly; 'if you would only let me go in before you, it agitates me so to wait.'

'I don't believe I can let you do that,' said the first lady, in clear, soft tones, 'but I can promise not to keep the doctor but ten minutes by the clock.'

'Oh, thanks,' sighed the pale young lady resignedly.

Then the doctor threw open his folding-doors, and the young man, quickly disposing of his duster, ushered in the first patient. She declined the seat offered by the doctor, and spoke her errand with admirable clearness and promptness. 'I am not a patient, Dr. Haywood,' she said, 'but come to leave a proposal for your consideration.'

The doctor's brows lowered slightly; this was his time for patients, not proposals; but the lady went on quickly:

'My name is McVeigh, Mrs. Phoebe McVeigh; I am a widow, living with my two married daughters; I am fifty years old, in good health and independent circumstances; I am not needed by my children, and I feel as if I had some years of good work in me. I wish to help somewhere, and I think I have a faculty for nursing the sick. My children will not let me adopt nursing as a profession, but have consented to my offering myself for service in emergencies, when hired nurses cannot be had and help is needed. Of course I would not take any compensation, nor would I undertake any heavy work, such as cleaning or cooking. When not in your hospital ward, I should prefer going into the homes of the poor, when such need nursing. If, however, you sent me among rich people, I should expect them to place in your hands the wages usually paid nurses, to be used for your poor patients. I have had some experience in nursing consumptives—here a faint shadow fell upon her face, as when one holds up a hand between the eyes and the sun—' and if you think my plan practicable, I will give you my references, and—'

'Have you any hereditary tendency to lung