

dead. A generous and benevolent lady, who knew the circumstances under which she was placed, offered to provide Lucy with a situation—but what situation? She looked too delicate, too refined for service; and she was not sufficiently accomplished to undertake the duties of even a nursery governess. 'Have none of their slavery, dear,' exclaimed poor Mary, while weeping bitterly; 'take your pick of the things to furnish two little rooms, Miss Lucy, and sell the rest. I've a power of friends, and can get constant work; turn my hand to anything, from charring to clear-starching; or if the noise wouldn't bother you, sure I could have a mangle; it would exercise me of an evening when I'd be done work. Don't leave me, Miss; don't, darling, anyway, till you gather a little strength after all you've gone through: the voice of the stranger is harsh, and the look of the stranger is cold to those who have lived all their days in the light of a father's love. I took you from your mother's breast a weesome woesome baby, and sure, my jewel own, I have some right to you. I'll never gainsay you. And to please you, dear, I'll never let an ill-word cross my lips.' But Lucy Joyce was too right-minded to live on the labor of an old servant. She retained enough, however, to furnish for Mary a comfortable room, and accepted, much to the faithful creature's mortification, a place in a family—one of the hardest 'places' to endure, and yet as good, perhaps, as from her father's position she could have expected—as half-teacher, half-servant; a mingling of opposite duties, against the mingling of which reason revolts.

The duties incident to her new position (in a gentleman's family at Putney); the exertion which children require, and which is perpetual, though parents are the only persons who do not feel it to be so; the exercise, the necessity for amusing and instructing the young, the high-spirited, and the active; these, added to the change of repose for inactivity, of being the one cared for, to the having to care for others; the entire loneliness of spirit; all combined to make her worse, to crush utterly the already bruised reed.

Lucy was fully sensible of the consoling power—the great pleasure of being useful—and her mind was both practically and theoretically Christian, so she never yielded to fretfulness or impatience; but her heart fluttered like an imprisoned bird as she toiled and panted up the high stairs, while the children laughed and sported with the spirit and energy of health, and called to her to 'come faster.' No one was cruel, no one even unkind to her; the cross cook (all good cooks are cross) would often make her lemonade, or reserve something she thought the young girl might eat; the lady's-maid, who had regarded her at first as a rival beauty, won by her cheerful patience, said that even when her eyes were full of tears, there was a smile upon her lip; all the servants felt for her; and at length her mistress requested her own physician to see what was the matter with 'poor Joyce.'

There are exceptions, no doubt; but taken as a body, medical men are the very souls of kindness and generous humanity. How many have I known whose voices were as music in a sick chamber; who, instead of taking, gave; ever ready to alleviate and to sustain.

'Have you no friends?' he enquired.

'None, sir,' she replied; 'at least none to support me; and,' she added, 'I know I am unable to remain here.' While she said this she looked with her blue, truthful, earnest eyes into his face; then paused, hoping, without knowing what manner of hope was

in her, that he would say—'she was able; but he did not; and,' she continued, 'there is no one to whom I can go, except an old servant of my poor father's; so, if—' there came, perhaps, a flush of pride to her cheek, or it might be she was ashamed to ask a favor—'if, sir, you could get me into an hospital, I should be most grateful.'

'I wish I could,' he answered, 'with all my heart. We have hospitals enough; yet I fear—indeed I know—there is not one that would receive you when aware of the exact nature of your complaint. You must have a warm, mild atmosphere; perfect quiet, and a particular diet; and that for some considerable time.'

'My mother, sir,' said Lucy, 'died of consumption.'

'Well, but you are not going to die,' he replied, smiling; 'only you must let your father's old servant take care of you, and you may soon get better.'

Lucy shook her head, and her eyes overflowed with tears; the physician cheered her after the usual fashion. 'I am not afraid of death, sir,' said the young woman; 'indeed I am not; but I fear, more than I ought, the passage which leads to it; the burden I must be to the poor faithful creature who nursed me from my birth. I thought there was an hospital for the cure of every disease; and this consumption is so general, so helpless, so tedious.'

'The very thing,' said the doctor, who, with all his kindness, was one of those who think 'so and so,' because 'all the faculty' thought 'so and so,' for such a number of years—its being tedious is the very thing; it is quite a forlorn hope.'

'But, sir, answered the soldier's daughter, 'forlorn hopes have sometimes led to great victories, when they have been forlorn, but not forsaken.'

The doctor pressed into her hand the latest fee he had received, and descended the stairs. 'That is a very extraordinary girl, madam, in the nursery,' he said to the lady; 'something very superior about her; but she will get worse and worse; nothing for her but a more genial climate, constant care, perfect rest, careful diet; if she lives through the winter, she must go in the spring. Lungs! chest! blisters will relieve her; and if we could produce the climate of Madeira here for a winter or so, she might revive; but, poor thing, in her situation—'

The lady shook her head, and repeated, 'Ay, in her situation.'

'It is really frightful,' he continued, 'the hundreds—thousands, I may say—who drop off in this dreadful disease—the flower of our maidens, the finest of our youths—no age, no sex, exempt from it. We have only casual practice to instruct us in it; we have no opportunity of watching and analysing it, *en masse*, as we have with other complaints; it is turned out of our hospitals before we do what we even fancy might be done; it is indeed, as she said just now, 'forlorn' and 'forsaken.' Why I know not; I really wish some one would establish an hospital for the cure, or at least the investigation of this disease; many, if taken in time, would be saved. Suffering the most intense, but perhaps the best endured, from the very nature of the complaint, would be materially lessened, and a fresh and noble field opened for an almost new branch of our profession.'

The physician prescribed for Lucy. He saw her again, and would have seen her repeatedly, but the family left town suddenly, in consequence of the death of a near relative, and the very belief that nothing could be done for her, circumstanced as she was, contributed to her being forgotten. The human mind has a natural desire to blot out

from memory objects that are hopeless, Lucy went to Mary's humble lodging, and fancied, for a day or two, she was much better. She had the repose which such illness so naturally seeks. Mary's room was on the ground floor of a small house in a little street leading off Paradise-row. The old old pensioners frequently passed the window; she could hear the beat of the *Arylum* drums; sometimes they awoke her out of her sleep in the morning, but she liked them none the less for that. Mary put away her poor master's hat (which she brushed every morning), his sword and sash, and his gloves, in her own box, when Lucy came, lest the sight of them should make her melancholy; but Lucy saw their marks upon the wall, and begged she would replace them there. She gave her little store, amounting to a few pounds, into the nurse's hands, who spent it scrupulously for her—and yet not prudently, for she ran after every nostrum, and insisted upon Lucy's swallowing them all. Sometimes the fading girl would creep along in the sunshine; and so changed was she in little more than a year, that no one recognized her, though some would look after her, and endeavor to call to mind who it was she so strongly resembled.

The little store was soon expended, though Mary would not confess it. Lucy, skilled in the womanly craft of needle-work, laboured unceasingly; and, as long as she was able to apply to it, Mary found a market for her industry. But as the disease gained ground, her efforts became more feeble, and then the faithful nurse put forth all her strength, all her ingenuity, to disguise the nature of their situation; the expense of the necessary medicine, inefficient as it was, would have procured her every alleviating comfort—if there had been an institution to supply it.

I have often borne testimony to that which I have more often witnessed—the deep, earnest, and steadfast fidelity of the humbler Irish! yet I have never been able to render half justice to the theme. If they be found wanting in all other good or great qualities, they are still true in this—ever faithful, enduring, unwearied, unmoved—past all telling is their fidelity! The woman whose character I am now describing was but one example of a most numerous class. Well she would have known, if she had given the matter a thought, that no chance or change could ever enable Lucy to repay her services, or recompense her for her sacrifices and cares; yet her devotion was a thousand times more fervent than if it had been purchased by all the bribes that a kingdom's wealth could yield. By the mere power of her zeal—her earnest and utterly unselfish love—she obtained a hearing from many governors of hospitals; stated the case of 'her young lady,' as she called her, the child of a brave man, who had served his country, who died before his time from the effects of that service; and she, his child, was dying now, from want of proper treatment. In all her statements Mary set forth everything to create sympathy for Lucy, but nothing that tended to show her own exertions; how she toiled for her night and day; how she was pledging, piece by piece, everything she had to support her; how her wedding-ring was gone from off her finger, and the cherished Waterloo medal of her dead husband (which, by some peculiarly Irish sort of the imagination, she said 'was his very picture') had disappeared from her box. She whispered nothing of all this, though she prayed and petitioned at almost every hospital for medicine and advice. Dismissed from one, Mary would go to another, urging that 'sure if they could cure one thing they could cure another; anyhow they might try,' and if