

HOME AGAIN FOREVER.

The phantom flag fades away. The silvery waves recede. The boat is my high white bed. By the screen stands the doctor, and by the doctor the white-clad nurse.

"Doctor, I shall get better."

"Humph!" said the doctor, non-committal.

For the sake of those hands and the flag.

The return home from the hospital was coincident with a great sorrow, the illness and death of her darling eldest niece and namesake—Florence Ellen Kinton—a girl of lovely character, who adopted the profession of a nurse and died at her post. Several little girls were called after Florence from time to time, rather against her wishes. She said the gift of her name seemed to bring ill-luck; either the child or a parent, or both, were sure to die.

Happily a distinct improvement in Florence's health took place at this time, so that until nearly Christmas, though very feeble, she was able to go out and enjoy the marvellous autumn scenery around her home. We all tried by every means we could think of to make her happy and comfortable. Yet these long months of endurance were doubtless the most trying of her life. She had to learn to exercise the passive graces; to be made perfect through suffering—a hard lesson to her active temperament, and bitterly hard to those who loved her and went through the valley of suffering with her. At times she seemed to dwell afar (not aloof) in spirit—to be able to withdraw herself into remote recesses of her being, into which one could not follow her.

After Christmas she spent her time almost entirely on the sofa; even then she was always occupied. Often only the tips of her poor crippled fingers could be used, and then delicate paper flowers, such as the night-blooming cereus, and passion flowers for Easter, to remind her of the wonders of tropical lands, were twisted into semblance