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Sermons in Splints.

It had been a hard day for nurse Kennedy. Her ward, the male surgical, was crowded to its utmost capacity. All the long day she had been going under high pressure. In the operating room she had cleaned and disinfected, prepared the patients for the operation, then danced vigilant attendance upon the doctors. In the ward she had dressed wounds, served meals, dealt medicine, performed the numberless tasks, large and small, that fall to the lot of a nurse.

Through it all, the "perversity of things" had seemed to mock her impatient spirit. The man with the bandaged chest, who was under orders to keep his arms motionless, persisted in dropping them heavily over the sides of his cot the moment her back was turned. Twice she had caught the circus-rider with injured head, who was slightly deranged at times, executing a tight-rope performance on the backs of chairs. Each time she brought his drink to the old man with one side paralyzed, he overturned the cup in his spasmodic efforts to swallow. Her relief at the dinner hour failed to appear, and supposing her detained, Nurse Kennedy had remained on duty, missed her dinner, and received a severe reprimand from the head nurse. Then she had come perilously near giving the wrong medicine, and that had been almost the proverbial "last straw."

Finally, toward night, she was ordered to the children's ward to do "specialling"—soothe a fretful, crying child, who was disturbing the others, and whom none could manage so well as Nurse Kennedy. For more than an hour she walked with the restless little one, singing softly until its pitiful crying quieted down to moans and sighs, and finally peaceful sleep.

Nurse Kennedy was crying too, all the time, but none knew it—crying with dry eyes, and her lips screwed into a smile, and a great ache in her heart. "When you are a woman, little one," she murmured to the baby, "you'll know how to cry my way; it's much more becoming than yours,"—surveying critically the distorted little visage in its abandonment of distress—"but I'll tell you a secret, baby, it hurts worse, and its not half so satisfactory. I wish I could adopt your way, and I advise you to keep on it while you have the opportunity."

The rebellious little novice in suffering stared a moment or two in open-mouthed silence, then, as if realizing the restrictions and limited opportunities of womanhood in the matter of expression, lifted up afresh its voice like a trumpet, and proceeded to vocalize depths of woe hitherto unsounded.

The ache in her heart was responsible for the trying nature of that day's events. Nurse Kennedy knew that, and now that her evening off duty had come, she hastened to her room, thankful for relief from the tension of the day. Alone there with her pain, still as if turned to stone, wondering dully if people died of feeling as she did, the one thought that had surged for days through her under consciousness, reverberating there like some loud and sudden sound, confessing and stunning all her thoughts, assumed now full control, and banished all other ideas.

It was the remorseful thought of her unkindness to the one she loved best in all the world. The vision of Jack, as a few days before he had sought her, clad in his volunteer uniform, and told her he had enlisted, was still fresh in her memory. Every cruel, scornful word she had spoken in her anger at what she called his "foolishness" for enlisting, and then for wanting her to marry him and accompany him as a Red Cross nurse, came back with sevenfold power to torture, now that her wrath had subsided. The love and longing in his eyes, as he held her hand in parting and searched her stony face in vain for some sign of relenting, were a lash of memory to her now. They parted in anger, but she had hoped to see him and make all right between them before he left the country. To-day, however, had come news of the sudden departure of his regiment for Manila, and now her punishment seemed greater than she could bear.

The blessed relief of tears came at last, and she thanked God for this opportunity to let them flow unchecked.

Nurse Kennedy was a Christian, accustomed to making her faith a practical part of her daily life. All day she had been groping for some hold upon her religion which should serve as a prop to her fainting spirit, but groped in vain. Through it all, too, there had been in her heart the half defiant question, "of what use is my faith, in a personal, living Saviour, if he does not help me in a time like this?"

She was asking herself the same question again, as she sat with her face in her hands, on the narrow white cot, contemplating in dreary misery the suffering months—perhaps years, before her. Mechanically she took up her Bible, thinking again that if its words held any help for hours of need, this was the time for its power to be revealed, thinking half unconsciously also that if it failed her now, all her faith would fail. Listlessly she turned the leaves, until something written in red ink over a chapter in Isaiah arrested her attention. "The

programme of Christianity" was the writing, and underneath she read:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the Lord hath anointed me
To preach good tidings unto the meek,
He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted."

She read no farther. Like a flash the experiences of that day—and of all her days, lighted up that expression: "to bind up the broken-hearted." Over and over she repeated it: "the broken-hearted—the broken heart, to bind up—bind up" while with each repetition came fresh illumination.

Eagerly her thoughts moved onward now to overtake all its meaning. "What was the difference," she meditated, "between a broken heart and a broken limb? Was not the heart the spirit, the vital energy, and when broken, was it not in the same condition as the broken limb, which lacked the power to uphold itself and the parts dependent upon it, because severed from the upholding forces of the body? What, then, was a broken spirit, or heart, but the vital energy laid low, unable to support itself and the activities of life dependent upon it? How had they been dealing with broken limbs that day? Just as this passage said the Great Physician dealt with broken hearts—binding up. What did that binding up mean to the limb? support, chiefly; rest, ease from pain, eventually healing and strength. Could the Great Physician's treatment mean less than that for the broken spirit? No, it must mean all that," she mused, "it must mean that he will support the limp and helpless thing my spirit is now, giving it ease from its pain, and that I am then to rest in spirit until the healing is complete."

More and more forcibly the beauty of the lesson in its application to her present need was impressed upon her. She was not—must not, she saw, suffer and go halt and lame of spirit, when such help was promised. If she truly believed her God was Spirit, she should and must believe in his power to minister to that in her which was spirit. Like Saul of Tarsus, Nurse Kennedy never thought she "verily ought" to do a thing without doing it. Next moment the little blue-clad figure slipped to the floor, and the plain, bare room had become a Holy of Holies.

"Lord bless her sunny face," said one of the patients next morning as she went her rounds among them, "seems like that child couldn't lose her spirit's no how, spite er seemin' ter feel so fer us." Nurse Kennedy heard and rejoiced, and knew then that the wonderful sense of strength flowing into her spirit as she prayed, had been no mirage of the brain, but in deed and in truth the work of the Healer binding up a broken heart. "My mouth shall praise him with joyful lips," she murmured, and curved them at once into a sweeter smile.

Her sorest need came later, for one night she knelt in the soldiers' ward by a still, white face, with closed eyes, into which the light had come only long enough for her to learn that he forgave her. Then she realized afresh the value of knowing how a broken spirit can be bound up. Through the dreary, empty days that followed, those who watched her said—some of them—"how lightly she bears her sorrows;" others "of them that have understanding" said, "how sweetly."

When she had fully learned her lesson she was given an opportunity to pass it on. It was a broken arm she was bandaging. The Celtic face above it was hard and set, with stony eyes. Not a word did the man speak until the task was almost completed, then he said, "lassie, gin ye could bind oop ma broken heart sic lak, ye'd be doin' me gude service. It's sair plight ma heart's in ilka ane, wife and bairns, gane doon wi' the ship wha' was bringin' them over, an' noo I'd as soon a' ma bairns was snappit; 'twould only match the state o' me wi' in."

While she finished her work, Nurse Kennedy told of her lesson, and as she talked the hard lines softened in the face beside her, the stony look faded from the eyes, and once a tear splashed down on the white bandages. As the nurse turned away, all the Celt could say was: "it's gude work ye've done for me, lassie." Next morning though, as she came to inspect his arm, it seemed another face that greeted her, so changed it was. With a smile of peace the man exclaimed: "It's mair than ma' arm that's booned up noo, lassie; it's unco' marvellous how he can bind oop a broken heart, but he does, an' I'll pass on the lesson as ye have to me."

Nurse Kennedy's life is still passing the lesson on, for out in Manila, with the Red Cross on her arm, day by day, her life's sweet interpretation of the meaning of suffering, goes preaching like another Ugo Bassi in the hospital.

Bonnie Brownhair's Birthday.

BY LILY MANKER ALLEN.

What a dear child, Bonnie Brownhair was, with her loving, helpful ways, and her sunny thoughtfulness for others. No wonder papa and mamma Brownhair felt that, even if they were rich,—and they were far from it,—it would be hard to find anything nice enough for Bonnie's birthday.

But they knew that loving hearts atone for the lack of many things, and that loving thoughtfulness is far too precious to be bought with earthly treasure. So mamma Brownhair began to think.

Now Bonnie and her little sister Blue-eyes, slept together in the front bed-room. The bed was big and the bureau was high and everything in the room was grown up, so that it never seemed as if the girls and the front bedroom really belonged to each other. But when mamma Brownhair began to think she remembered the little room off the kitchen, which was used as a sort of storeroom. Though small, it had a tiny closet and two windows, one of them a cunning little swinging sash.

Scarcely any one ever went in there except mamma Brownhair, and she usually came out with a sigh, because things would accumulate so in a "lumber room!"

Now when mamma Brownhair had progressed as far as the storeroom in her thinking, she set papa Brownhair to thinking too, and then the extra accumulations began to travel up to the attic while Bonnie was at school, and the woodwork was painted a dainty light green, and shelves—and clothes-hooks were put into the closet, and the door was kept locked. But Bonnie did not discover any of these things.

Then mamma Brownhair found that there was enough good matting among the pieces that had been used in the dining-room to cover the floor, and that the small bedstead in the attic would just fit in between the windows and the wall, and the secretary papa Brownhair had made for the little Brownhairs' Christmas before was just right for the space between the door and the closet.

Now you must not think, because these things just fitted, that this is only a story-book story, for in real life things do fit a great deal oftener than we think they are going to.

Next, Grandma Brownhair, whose hair wasn't brown at all, but a color much more beautiful and appropriate for grandmothers, made a pretty shoe-bag for the closet door, and some dotted muslin curtains for the windows. And Grandma Brownhair, whose hair was so scarce it was difficult to tell what color it had been, produced a Japanese letter-holder and a little pink night lamp.

Then a neighbor heard of it, and she had a bright picture that would just fill the space over the secretary; and Miss Ravenhair, across the street, mounted an engraving on a heavy mat for the largest wall space, and dear Auntie Silverhair had a beautiful motto to put above the small window.

Kind Mr. Blackhair heard of it too, and he remembered the tiny green benches he himself had made for a kindergarten which Bonnie had attended before the dear kindergarten had been called to higher, sweeter work than earthly kindergartens, beautiful as they could ever be; and straightway one of these was elected to a place in the little room.

And even Mr. Queue, the Chinese friend, who considers birthdays very important occasions, had a dainty cup and saucer for the shelf.

And then there were other pictures for the walls, a slide for the daily texts to stand on the home-made bureau beside the two small Bibles and Sunday-school quarterlies, which were to be kept always in readiness for Sunday mornings, and various other articles, each of which should be given to Bonnie, in future days, as the smile of a friend, telling of loving thoughtfulness.

When the great day came, Bonnie chose to wait until after school for her gifts, so that she would not be obliged to go away again, and leave them.

The smaller gifts had been wrapped up and laid aside for the little mistress herself to put into place, and so it came to pass that, coming in from school, she found a pile of packages on the centre table. As she unwrapped them one by one, she wondered to herself where she was to keep all these things.

Last of all, underneath the others, was a tiny package, containing only a key.

What did it unlock? Bonnie went from room to room to find out. She even tried it in the bureau and the cupboard, and finally in the door of the old storeroom. Perhaps they had hidden something in there for her.

She opened the door, and stood for an instant half dazed at the transformation, and then awoke to the blissful understanding of the case.

What visits she and Blue-eyes would have at bedtime in that little white bed, as they should talk over the day's events.

What happy morning wakings, with eyes first opening on the picture over the secretary of the child, seated among the flowers, feeding a yellow chick that had hopped on her toe!

What faithful little housekeepers they would be, with such a dainty room to keep! What important Saturdays of sweeping and dusting visioned themselves to her happy eyes!

After supper that evening, papa Brownhair said: "Let's go into Bonnie's room and have prayers."

So they all went in and knelt by the bed, and papa Brownhair prayed that the little room might be a source of happiness, not only to Bonnie and Blue-eyes, but that they might sometimes have opportunity to use it in making others happy.