

MY NURSE AND I.

NOTES OF A LONG ILLNESS.

Her very presence makes me strong
Before or touch or word,
Like thrill of an approaching song
Ere theme be heard.

Promptly at midnight she comes in
From her accustomed cot,
To add to nasty medicine
Delicious apricot.

She moves like moonlight in her dress
Of fresh and comely white,
Bringing the cheer of morn to bless
The long and fitful night.

I often think how many a one,
Worse off than I,
Longing in shadow for the sun
Welcomes --- the sky.

Her voice so gentle that reproof
From her seems praise;
Her eye angelic looks aloof
If I but gaze.

She is my guardian angel true
Waking or sleeping,
Oft when I wake I see her through
The door crack peeping.

She keeps me posted on the news
In daily papers,
And sees, as here, my skittish Muse
Cuts no great capers.

No exile mine:
I reckon on
My friend or crony,
So life becomes a kind of conversazioni.

She writes sweet notes to those who send
Me dainty presents -
Jellies and fruits from the world's end,
And quail and pheasants,

Such flowers sent by Iolanthe,
You never heard!
If talismans are gone, chrysanthemum -
Mum's the word.

A silken robe of gorgeous hues
Fit for a prince;
A book to stimulate the Muse,
Bound in soft chintz.

As I am blind she reads to me
My mail epistolary;
She knows my faults, and is, you see,
My secret-ary.

I've learned with that sweet certainty
Experience lends
That sometimes relatives may be
Your best of friends.

Notes, love for love, must have replies
Sooner or later;
She writes the words, I add the sighs
I, the dictator.

Sometimes the notes are writ by me,
My loss concealing,
A blind man's letters, you must see
Are full of feeling.

A president can't be neglected
To whom I wrote
To mention he was re-elected
By my lost vote.

To Disney too I wrote - ah! he,
Joys gay creator,
Who sent his Mickey Mouse to me
Picture and letter.

Now sturdy Hobson droppeth in
With news of Tesla ill -
Friends all, as we for years have been
Sage, hero, man of quill.

And once a cable greeting came
When love the sea outran
From Paderewski, thrice of fame,
As artist, statesman, man.

The radio tells me plots of plays;
And Flagstad's singing
Thrills with delight on fortunate days,
Old romance bringing.

My nurse goes cheerful to the toil
Which she disdains -
The binding-up my wounds, the oil
Poured on my pains.

If you should need a perfect nurse
I'll gladly tell
Who are the heroines of my verse
When I get well.

January 12, 1937

This copy
is presented
to my friend
Mrs Agnes
Rock-Rise
with regard
and affection.
Eion

Sept. 12, 1937
R. U. J.

Robert Underwood Johnson.