

# The Civil War in Art

TEACHING & LEARNING THROUGH CHICAGO COLLECTIONS



## Lesson Plan

### ***“The art of sketching”:* Looking through the Lens of Visual & Written Hospital Sketches.**

Winner: Honorable Mention, 2012 Civil War in Art Lesson Plan Contest

**Author:** Kathleen Ann Harsy, Riverside Brookfield High School, Riverside, IL

**Grade/Subject:** Grade 11, American Literature

**Schedule:** 2 days

**Lesson Summary:** Students will study the significance of visual and written accounts of hospitals during the Civil War through the examination of Louisa May Alcott’s 1863 series of stories *Hospital Sketches* and the illustration *The United States General Hospital [at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.]*, in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*. The final assessment will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of author’s voice and purpose.

### **Artwork on Which Lesson is Based:**



Unknown Artist

[\*The United States General Hospital \[at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.\]\*, July 6, 1861](#)

Engraving

*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*. No. 294 Vol. 12, page125

Newberry Library, Oversize A 5 .34, Vol. 12.

## Big or Main Ideas Students Will Understand

- The significance of visual and written “sketches” during the Civil War.
- Women played important roles on the homefront and Louisa May Alcott contributed to Americans’ understandings of the Civil War.
- Art can tell us about the past. The war inspired authors and artists to record and analyze their experiences.

## National Standards and Lesson-Specific Objectives:

Standards	Objectives—Students will...
<b>Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts</b>  Writing Anchor Standard 3 (W.11-12.3)	Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
Writing Anchor Standard 3 (W.11-12.4)	Students will produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Reading Anchor Standard 6 (R.11-12.6)	Students will assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

## Vocabulary Students Will Learn:

See Civil War in Art Glossary, <http://www.civilwarinart.org/glossary>, and other sources mentioned below for definitions and information.

- **Engraving**
- *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*
- **Genre**
- **Homefront**
- **Illustrated newspapers**
- **Sketch**
- **Style**

Additional terms:

- **Author’s purpose:** The reason why an author writes a story; the author’s argument.
- **Literary devices:** Writing tools that the author uses to achieve his or her purpose; i.e. detail; author’s voice; and appeal to audience’s ethos, logos, and pathos.

## Key Information for Understanding the Artworks:

The sources below are intended for teachers to use in support of this lesson, but portions could be used as readings for students as well.

## About the Time Period

- Women took on more responsibilities at home and in society during the Civil War.

- Information on women's increased responsibilities during the Civil War: "The Northern Homefront" from *The Civil War in Art*.  
[http://www.civilwarinart.org/exhibits/show/military\\_experience/introduction](http://www.civilwarinart.org/exhibits/show/military_experience/introduction)

The evolving roles of women in wartime (and post-war) life are examined through the wider context of life away from the battlefield during the Civil War.

- Soldiers had to rely on makeshift hospitals and health care was frequently inadequate during the Civil War. Hospitals relied heavily on volunteers.
  - Contextual information on makeshift hospitals and reliance on volunteerism during the Civil War:  
[http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentgallery/exhibitions/nursing\\_1.html](http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentgallery/exhibitions/nursing_1.html)
- Illustrated newspapers brought images of the war into homes across the Union.
  - Information on the importance of Illustrated Newspapers during the Civil War:  
<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/descriptions/civilwarnewspapers.html>  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/civwar/>
- American abolitionists published magazines that promoted their anti-slavery message and provided other articles of interest to their community.
  - Context about *Boston Commonwealth*, the abolitionist magazine where much of *Hospital Sketches* was first published:  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/civwar/>
- In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many novels and stories were first published in serial form.
  - Information on historic serial fiction:  
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/interpret/exhibits/winship/winship.html>
  - Information on serial fiction in a contemporary context:  
<http://entertainment.time.com/2012/10/08/margaret-atwood-on-serial-fiction-and-the-future-of-the-book/>

## About the Artworks and Text

1) **Engraving:** *The United States General Hospital [at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.]*

"We see women--volunteer nurses--looking after the sick and wounded soldiers at the United States Army General Hospital in Georgetown, D.C. The high ceiling and windows, large chandeliers, ornate beds, and fancy ceiling decorations don't look like they belong to a hospital. In fact, the building used to be the Union Hotel, described by hospital supervisors as "well-adapted to hospital use." **Author Louisa May Alcott, who volunteered as a nurse there in 1862, disagreed that the building was suitable and thought the hospital was terribly run.** And indeed, the closeness of the latrines to the kitchen facilities made the problem of disease very serious. The facility was shut down for renovation in 1862, and then opened again briefly the next year, only to be abandoned again for good within months. It was common for large buildings like this, as well as churches, schools, and large homes, to be converted into hospitals to help injured soldiers fighting nearby.

Source: <http://www.civilwarinart.org/items/show/26>

**2) Book:** *Hospital Sketches*, A three-part novella inspired by the author's service in a hospital during the Civil War.

Both the engraving and the book show how first-hand observations of the Civil War were not limited to news reports. They made their way into visual art and literature. The truths of artists' and authors' observations were shaped by their unique purposes and voices. These works were also shaped by the perceived expectations of their contemporary audiences.

## About the Artist and Author

### 1) About Sketch Artists:

- National Geographic: "A Sketch in Time" <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/05/civil-war-sketches/katz-text>

This article provides more information on "sketch artists." Such information on sketch artists would help students understand why these images were made, how they were made, and why they were important. It's also important to make it clear that the images "sketch artists" made for newspaper sources were reproduced as engravings; they are not actually "sketches" in the art historical sense. The images were based on sketches, but disseminated in print.

### 2) About Louisa May Alcott: (see reading attached at end of plan)

- Kevin Konrad, National Museum of American History: "Scenes from the Hurly Burly Hotel: Louisa May Alcott's Civil War"  
<http://blog.americanhistory.si.edu/osaycanyousee/2011/07/scenes-from-the-hurly-burly-hotel-louisa-may-alcotts-civil-war.html>

This article provides information about the text *Hospital Sketches* by Louisa May Alcott, and about Alcott's service as a Union nurse. It discusses the well-run Armory Square Hospital in Washington, D.C., in contrast to the less-than-exemplary Union Hotel Hospital where Alcott worked.

- HistoryNet, "Louisa May Alcott" <http://www.historynet.com/louisa-may-alcott> (see article "Louisa May Alcott Goes to War")

In this article, Alcott's personal experience as a nurse is examined in the wider context of women's work in Union hospitals.

## Resources and Materials Needed for Lesson:

1. *Hospital Sketches* by Louisa May Alcott
  - <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/alcott/sketches/sketches.html>
2. *The United States General Hospital [at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.]*
  - Print or digital access to copies of both the image and text from *The Civil War in Art*: <http://www.civilwarinart.org/items/show/26>
3. Student Reading Journal or a space where students can write and take notes on their visual and literary analysis of the artwork and Alcott's work.
4. Biographical information about Louisa May Alcott (attached).

5. Guided thinking questions for close looking at art (attached).

## Classroom Activities Aligned with Standards and Objectives:

### Day 1:

#### **Class Work**

Introduce Louisa May Alcott's life and connect this to the Civil War era for the students. Teachers can introduce the material by pulling information from the "about the time period" and "about the author" sections above as well as the attached biographical information that discusses Alcott's motivations to become a writer. Material for students to read about the time period can be found at [www.civilwarinart.org](http://www.civilwarinart.org). Your students can also read one of the suggested passages on Alcott (or a selection) as a pre-activity or in class as time allows.

Select a passage from Louisa May Alcott's *Hospital Sketches* for students to read in class, with consideration to time available and the students' reading levels. Chapter 3, "A Day" is included at the end of the plan, but Alcott's full book is available online at: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/alcott/sketches/sketches.html>.

Discuss terminology: author's purpose and how is it achieved (literary devices)

Students will read and annotate the passage from *Hospital Sketches*.

Discuss first impressions of Alcott's writing:

- What is Alcott's purpose in writing this passage?
- Why might she have called the collection "sketches"?

#### **Student Prep Work for Next Lesson:**

Answer the following questions in your reading journal:

- What was Alcott's purpose in the passage you read?
- How did Alcott achieve her purpose?

### Day 2:

#### **Class Work**

Students will meet in small groups to share their reading journal responses to yesterday's questions: What was the author's purpose and how was it achieved?

View the illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper: The United States General Hospital [at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.]* If the class has internet access, they can zoom in online at: <http://www.civilwarinart.org/items/show/26>.

Read the accompanying text on the site and answer the questions from the site (also listed below):

1. The Union Hospital was so poorly run that it was reserved for enlisted men while officers went to nicer facilities. Would you have thought this to be the case when you first looked at the picture? Why do you think that the artist presents the hospital scene the way he did?
2. How does this hospital scene look different from today's hospitals? What kinds of problems could occur with this type of setup?

In their small groups, students will examine and annotate the artwork through the analytical lens of their guided thinking questions for close looking at art (see p. 17).

The goal of this examination is to answer the question: What is the artist's purpose and how was it achieved?

Group sharing of ideas.

**Comparing Sketches: Student Prep Work for Assessment**

Analyze the hospital illustration and Alcott's *Hospital Sketches* and write a comparison of the two documents. How are they alike? How are they different? Make sure to ground your assessment with textual and visual details from each source.

**Assessment:**

Students will write their own hospital sketches, inspired by the illustration *The United States General Hospital [at Georgetown, D.C., formerly the Union Hotel-Volunteer Nurses Attending the Sick and Wounded.]* using Louisa May Alcott's writing voice as inspiration as well.

Length: 250-500 words; written in the spirit of the time. Students may pretend to be Louisa May Alcott if they wish, but it is not required.

**Optional Extension:**

Provide the students with an independent research project about women's work on the homefront during the Civil War. Students could locate a visual and a textual source about this work and then write a new "sketch," using Alcott's work as their inspiration. Visual sources could be pre-selected from [www.civilwarinart.org](http://www.civilwarinart.org), and students could conduct contextual research to support their observations from the images.

## Information about Louisa May Alcott

Excerpt from: "Suffer and be still":  
*The Victorian Era Governess as a Figure of Gothic Horror*  
By  
Kathleen Harsy  
M.A. Thesis, Northwestern University

Louisa May Alcott is commonly associated with *Little Women*, a novel designed to inspire within the reader nostalgic scenes of sweet young girls and their kind mothers reading by the fireplace. When considering nineteenth-century America, Alcott's novels are at the center of thought. *Little Women* is a childhood treasure that is shared between generations of mothers and daughters. It comes as little surprise though that Louisa May Alcott's imagination wove mysterious gothic tales. Louisa's father, Amos Bronson Alcott, was an extreme idealist and significant member of the Transcendentalist movement. The Alcotts lived for many years in Concord, Massachusetts, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson were among their friends and neighbors. One significant difference between the Alcotts and their friends was that they had very little money. Due to Mr. Alcott's radical philosophical ideas raising and inability to secure a steady income, extreme living conditions plagued the Alcott family. Louisa grew up in long periods of poverty. Amos Bronson Alcott was the founder of Fruitlands, a small utopian experiment to live off the fruits of the land and in a communal environment. At the end of six months, the experiment was halted because of a lack of food and blankets. In Ednah D. Cheney's *Louisa May Alcott: Her Life, Letters, and Journals*, we find this significant anecdote about Bronson Alcott:

Returning from a lecture tour, Bronson Alcott was asked, "Did people pay you?"

He opened his pocketbook, flourished a single dollar bill, and replied, "Only that!"

My overcoat was stolen, and I had to buy a shawl. Many promises were not kept, and travelling is costly; but I have opened the way and another year shall do better.

(qtd. In Stern, viii)

Louisa and her father had a strained relationship that was punctuated by poverty, and she began working to help support her family. Alcott "went out to service and garnered from her experience no money but a villain [governess] for her tales and a consuming inner fury to explode" (Stern, ix). Louisa's service experience was not pleasant; after four months she left her governess position and returned her payment of four dollars to her employer.

Not surprisingly, as a budding author Louisa was a lover of theater and reading. She lived her whole life in the middle of two oppressive forces—her father and societal expectations of women. These forces contributed to her compulsion to write. Following her frustrating work experience as a governess, she took up writing and began churning out stories. As a means of expressing her frustrations and earning an income, Louisa May Alcott began writing "blood and thunder" tales or Gothic short stories. She explained, "I intend to illuminate the Ledger with a blood and thunder tale as they are easy to 'compoze' and are better paid than moral...works" (qtd. in Stern, xiv).

Stern explained that Louisa drew upon her own life circumstances to write these tales: "She could stir in her witch's caldron a brew concocted from her own experience, her observations and needs" (xiv). Stern further describes how Alcott developed femme fatale characters in her thrillers that were charged with electrifying energy:

While her plots were violent enough and her backdrops remote enough to merit classification in the Gothic genre, Louisa was principally concerned with character...so different from the submissive heroine of the Gothic formula-Louisa May Alcott could distill her passion and her feminist rage...At the same time she could win a sorely needed hundred dollars. (Stern, xv)

Additionally, Alcott served as a nurse during the Civil War. These three brief "sketches" recount her experiences, though she gives herself a pseudonym. Alcott's nonfiction writing was not her typical writing, but Alcott was driven to write and be published. She churned out all different styles of writing in the hopes of earning an income to support her family. The first sketch recounts her decision to become a nurse and her journey from Massachusetts to Washington, D.C. She was part of the Army's medical department. Her writing addresses the popular notions that female nurses would be distracted from their duties by flirting and depicts a definitively opposing picture (Moore). Alcott authored for herself a world where she could access power while creating her own literary space that provided freedom of expression and financial sustenance. Behind the veiled pseudonym of A. M. Barnard, she was able to express her frustration about the domestic demands she experienced as a young woman.

### Essay Works Cited

Alcott, Louisa May, and Madeleine B. Stern. *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*. New York: Morrow, 1975. Print.

Keyser, Elizabeth Lennox. *Whispers in the Dark: The Fiction of Louisa May Alcott*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1993. Print.

Moore, Pamela. <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=289>

Stern, Madeleine Bettina. *Louisa May Alcott: From Blood and Thunder to Hearth and Home*. Boston (Mass.): Northeastern UP, 1998. Print.

## HOSPITAL SKETCHES

By  
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT  
CHAPTER III  
A DAY.<sup>1</sup>

"They've come! they've come! hurry up, ladies—you're wanted."

"Who have come? the rebels?"

This sudden summons in the gray dawn was somewhat startling to a three days' nurse like myself, and, as the thundering knock came at our door, I sprang up in my bed, prepared

"To gird my woman's form,  
And on the ramparts die,"

if necessary; but my room-mate took it more coolly, and, as she began a rapid toilet, answered my bewildered question,—

"Bless you, no child; it's the wounded from Fredericksburg; forty ambulances are at the door, and we shall have our hands full in fifteen minutes."

"What shall we have to do?"

"Wash, dress, feed, warm and nurse them for the next three months, I dare say. Eighty beds are ready, and we were getting impatient for the men to come. Now you will begin to see hospital life in earnest, for you won't probably find time to sit down all day, and may think yourself fortunate if you get to bed by midnight. Come to me in the ball-room when you are ready; the worst cases are always carried there, and I shall need your help."

So saying, the energetic little woman twirled her hair into a button at the back of her head, in a "cleared for action" sort of style, and vanished, wrestling her way into a feminine kind of pea-jacket as she went.

I am free to confess that I had a realizing sense of the fact that my hospital bed was not a bed of roses just then, or the prospect before me one of unmingled rapture. My three days' experiences had begun with a death, and, owing to the defalcation of another nurse, a somewhat abrupt plunge into the superintendence of a ward containing forty beds, where I spent my shining hours washing faces, serving rations, giving medicine, and sitting in a very hard chair, with pneumonia on one side, diphtheria on the other, five typhoids on the opposite, and a dozen dilapidated patriots, hopping, lying, and lounging about, all staring more or less at the new "nuss," who suffered untold agonies, but concealed them under as matronly an aspect as a spinster could assume, and blundered through her trying labors with a Spartan firmness, which I hope they appreciated, but am afraid they didn't. Having a taste for "ghastliness," I had rather longed for the wounded to arrive, for rheumatism wasn't heroic, neither was liver complaint, or measles; even fever had lost its charms since "bathing burning brows" had been used up in romances, real and ideal; but when I peeped into the dusky street lined with what I at first had

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<sup>1</sup> *Hospital Sketches* by Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888). Boston: James Redpath, Publisher, 221 Washington Street, 1863.

innocently called market carts, now unloading their sad freight at our door, I recalled sundry reminiscences I had heard from nurses of longer standing, my ardor experienced a sudden chill, and I indulged in a most unpatriotic wish that I was safe at home again, with a quiet day before me, and no necessity for being hustled up, as if I were a hen and had only to hop off my roost, give my plumage a peck, and be ready for action. A second bang at the door sent this recreant desire to the right about, as a little woolly head popped in, and Joey, (a six years' old contraband,) announced—

"Miss Blank is jes' wild fer ye, and says fly round right away. They's comin' in, I tell yer, heaps on 'em—one was took out dead, and I see him,—hi! warn't he a goner!"

With which cheerful intelligence the imp scuttled away, singing like a blackbird, and I followed, feeling that Richard was not himself again, and wouldn't be for a long time to come.

The first thing I met was a regiment of the vilest odors that ever assaulted the human nose, and took it by storm. Cologne, with its seven and seventy evil savors, was a posy-bed to it; and the worst of this affliction was, every one had assured me that it was a chronic weakness of all hospitals, and I must bear it. I did, armed with lavender water, with which I so besprinkled myself and premises, that, like my friend Sairy, I was soon known among my patients as "the nurse with the bottle." Having been run over by three excited surgeons, bumped against by migratory coal-hods, water-pails, and small boys, nearly scalded by an avalanche of newly-filled tea-pots, and hopelessly entangled in a knot of colored sisters coming to wash, I progressed by slow stages up stairs and down, till the main hall was reached, and I paused to take breath and a survey. There they were! "our brave boys," as the papers justly call them, for cowards could hardly have been so riddled with shot and shell, so torn and shattered, nor have borne suffering for which we have no name, with an uncomplaining fortitude, which made one glad to cherish each as a brother. In they came, some on stretchers, some in men's arms, some feebly staggering along propped on rude crutches, and one lay stark and still with covered face, as a comrade gave his name to be recorded before they carried him away to the dead house. All was hurry and confusion; the hall was full of these wrecks of humanity, for the most exhausted could not reach a bed till duly ticketed and registered; the walls were lined with rows of such as could sit, the floor covered with the more disabled, the steps and doorways filled with helpers and lookers on; the sound of many feet and voices made that usually quiet hour as noisy as noon; and, in the midst of it all, the matron's motherly face brought more comfort to many a poor soul, than the cordial draughts she administered, or the cheery words that welcomed all, making of the hospital a home. The sight of several stretchers, each with its legless, armless, or desperately wounded occupant, entering my ward, admonished me that I was there to work, not to wonder or weep; so I corked up my feelings, and returned to the path of duty, which was rather "a hard road to travel" just then. The house had been a hotel before hospitals were needed, and many of the doors still bore their old names; some not so inappropriate as might be imagined, for my ward was in truth a ball-room, if gun-shot wounds could christen it. Forty beds were prepared, many already tenanted by tired men who fell down anywhere, and drowsed till the smell of food roused them. Round the great stove was gathered the dreariest group I ever saw—ragged, gaunt and pale, mud to the knees, with bloody bandages untouched since put on days before; many bundled up in blankets, coats being lost or useless; and all wearing that disheartened look which proclaimed defeat, more plainly than any telegram of the Burnside blunder. I pitied them so much, I dared not speak to them, though, remembering all they had been through since the rout at Fredericksburg, I yearned to serve the dreariest of them all. Presently, Miss Blank tore me from my refuge behind piles of one-sleeved shirts, odd socks, bandages and lint; put basin, sponge, towels, and a block of brown soap into my hands, with these appalling directions:

"Come, my dear, begin to wash as fast as you can. Tell them to take off socks, coats and shirts, scrub them well, put on clean shirts, and the attendants will finish them off, and lay them in bed."

If she had requested me to shave them all, or dance a hornpipe on the stove funnel, I should have been less staggered; but to scrub some dozen lords of creation at a moment's notice, was really—really—. However, there was no time for nonsense, and, having resolved when I came to

do everything I was bid, I drowned my scruples in my wash-bowl, clutched my soap manfully, and, assuming a business-like air, made a dab at the first dirty specimen I saw, bent on performing my task *vi et armis* if necessary. I chanced to light on a withered old Irishman, wounded in the head, which caused that portion of his frame to be tastefully laid out like a garden, the bandages being the walks, his hair the shrubbery. He was so overpowered by the honor of having a lady wash him, as he expressed it, that he did nothing but roll up his eyes, and bless me, in an irresistible style which was too much for my sense of the ludicrous; so we laughed together, and when I knelt down to take off his shoes, he "flopped" also, and wouldn't hear of my touching "them dirty craters. May your bed above be aisy darlin', for the day's work ye ar doon!—Whoosh! there ye are, and bedad, it's hard tellin' which is the dirtiest, the fut or the shoe." It was; and if he hadn't been to the fore, I should have gone on pulling, under the impression that the "fut" was a boot, for trousers, socks, shoes and legs were a mass of mud. This comical tableau produced a general grin, at which propitious beginning I took heart and scrubbed away like any tidy parent on a Saturday night. Some of them took the performance like sleepy children, leaning their tired heads against me as I worked, others looked grimly scandalized, and several of the roughest colored like bashful girls. One wore a soiled little bag about his neck, and, as I moved it, to bathe his wounded breast, I said,

"Your talisman didn't save you, did it?"

"Well, I reckon it did, marm, for that shot would a gone a couple a inches deeper but for my old mammy's camphor bag," answered the cheerful philosopher.

Another, with a gun-shot wound through the cheek, asked for a looking-glass, and when I brought one, regarded his swollen face with a dolorous expression, as he muttered—

"I vow to gosh, that's too bad! I warn't a bad looking chap before, and now I'm done for; won't there be a thunderin' scar? and what on earth will Josephine Skinner say?"

He looked up at me with his one eye so appealingly, that I controlled my risibles, and assured him that if Josephine was a girl of sense, she would admire the honorable scar, as a lasting proof that he had faced the enemy, for all women thought a wound the best decoration a brave soldier could wear. I hope Miss Skinner verified the good opinion I so rashly expressed of her, but I shall never know.

The next scrubbee was a nice looking lad, with a curly brown mane, and a budding trace of gingerbread over the lip, which he called his beard, and defended stoutly, when the barber jocosely suggested its immolation. He lay on a bed, with one leg gone, and the right arm so shattered that it must evidently follow: yet the little Sergeant was as merry as if his afflictions were not worth lamenting over; and when a drop or two of salt water mingled with my suds at the sight of this strong young body, so marred and maimed, the boy looked up, with a brave smile, though there was a little quiver of the lips, as he said,

"Now don't you fret yourself about me, miss; I'm first rate here, for it's nuts to lie still on this bed, after knocking about in those confounded ambulances, that shake what there is left of a fellow to jelly. I never was in one of these places before, and think this cleaning up a jolly thing for us, though I'm afraid it isn't for you ladies."

"Is this your first battle, Sergeant?"

"No, miss; I've been in six scrimmages, and never got a scratch till this last one; but it's done the business pretty thoroughly for me, I should say. Lord! what a scramble there'll be for arms and legs, when we old boys come out of our graves, on the Judgment Day: wonder if we shall get our own again? If we do, my leg will have to tramp from Fredericksburg, my arm from here, I suppose, and meet my body, wherever it may be."

The fancy seemed to tickle him mightily, for he laughed blithely, and so did I; which, no doubt, caused the new nurse to be regarded as a light-minded sinner by the Chaplain, who roamed vaguely about, informing the men that they were all worms, corrupt of heart, with perishable bodies, and souls only to be saved by a diligent perusal of certain tracts, and other equally cheering bits of spiritual consolation, when spirituous ditto would have been preferred.

"I say, Mrs.!" called a voice behind me; and, turning, I saw a rough Michigander, with an arm blown off at the shoulder, and two or three bullets still in him—as he afterwards mentioned, as carelessly as if gentlemen were in the habit of carrying such trifles about with them. I went to him, and, while administering a dose of soap and water, he whispered, iredfully:

"That red-headed devil, over yonder, is a reb, damn him! You'll agree to that, I'll bet? He's got shet of a foot, or he'd a cut like the rest of the lot. Don't you wash him, nor feed him, but jest let him holler till he's tired. It's a blasted shame to fetch them fellers in here, along side of us; and so I'll tell the chap that bosses this concern; cuss me if I don't."

I regret to say that I did not deliver a moral sermon upon the duty of forgiving our enemies, and the sin of profanity, then and there; but, being a red-hot Abolitionist, stared fixedly at the tall rebel, who was a copperhead, in every sense of the word, and privately resolved to put soap in his eyes, rub his nose the wrong way, and excoriate his cuticle generally, if I had the washing of him.

My amiable intentions, however, were frustrated; for, when I approached, with as Christian an expression as my principles would allow, and asked the question—"Shall I try to make you more comfortable, sir?" all I got for my pains was a gruff—

"No; I'll do it myself."

"Here's your Southern chivalry, with a witness," thought I, dumping the basin down before him, thereby quenching a strong desire to give him a summary baptism, in return for his ungraciousness; for my angry passions rose, at this rebuff, in a way that would have scandalized good Dr. Watts. He was a disappointment in all respects, (the rebel, not the blessed Doctor,) for he was neither fiendish, romantic, pathetic, or anything interesting; but a long, fat man, with a head like a burning bush, and a perfectly expressionless face: so I could dislike him without the slightest drawback, and ignored his existence from that day forth. One redeeming trait he certainly did possess, as the floor speedily testified; for his ablutions were so vigorously performed, that his bed soon stood like an isolated island, in a sea of soap-suds, and he resembled a dripping merman, suffering from the loss of a fin. If cleanliness is a near neighbor to godliness, then was the big rebel the godliest man in my ward that day.

Having done up our human wash, and laid it out to dry, the second syllable of our version of the word war-fare was enacted with much success. Great trays of bread, meat, soup and coffee appeared; and both nurses and attendants turned waiters, serving bountiful rations to all who could eat. I can call my pinafore to testify to my good will in the work, for in ten minutes it was reduced to a perambulating bill of fare, presenting samples of all the refreshments going or gone. It was a lively scene; the long room lined with rows of beds, each filled by an occupant, whom water, shears, and clean raiment, had transformed from a dismal ragamuffin into a recumbent hero, with a cropped head. To and fro rushed matrons, maids, and convalescent "boys," skirmishing with knives and forks; retreating with empty plates; marching and counter-marching, with unvaried success, while the clash of busy spoons made most inspiring music for the charge of our Light Brigade:

"Beds to the front of them,  
Beds to the right of them,  
Beds to the left of them,  
Nobody blundered.

Beamed at by hungry souls,  
Screamed at with brimming bowls,  
Steamed at by army rolls,  
Buttered and sundered.  
With coffee not cannon plied,  
Each must be satisfied,  
Whether they lived or died;  
All the men wondered."

Very welcome seemed the generous meal, after a week of suffering, exposure, and short commons; soon the brown faces began to smile, as food, warmth, and rest, did their pleasant work; and the grateful "Thankee's" were followed by more graphic accounts of the battle and retreat, than any paid reporter could have given us. Curious contrasts of the tragic and comic met one everywhere; and some touching as well as ludicrous episodes, might have been recorded that day. A six foot New Hampshire man, with a leg broken and perforated by a piece of shell, so large that, had I not seen the wound, I should have regarded the story as a Munchausenism, beckoned me to come and help him, as he could not sit up, and both his bed and beard were getting plentifully anointed with soup. As I fed my big nestling with corresponding mouthfuls, I asked him how he felt during the battle.

"Well, 'twas my fust, you see, so I aint ashamed to say I was a trifle flustered in the beginnin', there was such an all-fired racket; for ef there's anything I do spleen agin, it's noise. But when my mate, Eph Sylvester, caved, with a bullet through his head, I got mad, and pitched in, licketty cut. Our part of the fight didn't last long; so a lot of us larked round Fredericksburg, and give some of them houses a pretty consid'able of a rummage, till we was ordered out of the mess. Some of our fellows cut like time; but I warn't a-goin' to run for nobody; and, fust thing I knew, a shell bust, right in front of us, and I keeled over, feelin' as if I was blowed higher'n a kite. I sung out, and the boys come back for me, double quick; but the way they chucked me over them fences was a caution, I tell you. Next day I was most as black as that darkey yonder, lickin' plates on the sly. This is bully coffee, ain't it? Give us another pull at it, and I'll be obleeged to you."

I did; and, as the last gulp subsided, he said, with a rub of his old handkerchief over eyes as well as mouth:

"Look a here; I've got a pair a earbobs and a handkercher pin I'm a goin' to give you, if you'll have them; for you're the very moral o' Lizy Sylvester, poor Eph's wife: that's why I signalled you to come over here. They aint much, I guess, but they'll do to memorize the rebs by."  
Burrowing under his pillow, he produced a little bundle of what he called "truck," and gallantly presented me with a pair of earrings, each representing a cluster of corpulent grapes, and the pin a basket of astonishing fruit, the whole large and coppery enough for a small warming-pan. Feeling delicate about depriving him of such valuable relics, I accepted the earrings alone, and was obliged to depart, somewhat abruptly, when my friend stuck the warming-pan in the bosom of his night-gown, viewing it with much complacency, and, perhaps, some tender memory, in that rough heart of his, for the comrade he had lost.

Observing that the man next him had left his meal untouched, I offered the same service I had performed for his neighbor, but he shook his head.

"Thank you, ma'am; I don't think I'll ever eat again, for I'm shot in the stomach. But I'd like a drink of water, if you aint too busy."

I rushed away, but the water-pails were gone to be refilled, and it was some time before they reappeared. I did not forget my patient patient, meanwhile, and, with the first mugful, hurried back to him. He seemed asleep; but something in the tired white face caused me to listen at his lips for a breath. None came. I touched his forehead; it was cold: and then I knew that, while he waited, a better nurse than I had given him a cooler draught, and healed him with a touch. I laid the sheet over the quiet sleeper, whom no noise could now disturb; and, half an hour later, the bed was empty. It seemed a poor requital for all he had sacrificed and suffered,—that

hospital bed, lonely even in a crowd; for there was no familiar face for him to look his last upon; no friendly voice to say, Good bye; no hand to lead him gently down into the Valley of the Shadow; and he vanished, like a drop in that red sea upon whose shores so many women stand lamenting. For a moment I felt bitterly indignant at this seeming carelessness of the value of life, the sanctity of death; then consoled myself with the thought that, when the great muster roll was called, these nameless men might be promoted above many whose tall monuments record the barren honors they have won.

All having eaten, drank, and rested, the surgeons began their rounds; and I took my first lesson in the art of dressing wounds. It wasn't a festive scene, by any means; for Dr P., whose Aid I constituted myself, fell to work with a vigor which soon convinced me that I was a weaker vessel, though nothing would have induced me to confess it then. He had served in the Crimea, and seemed to regard a dilapidated body very much as I should have regarded a damaged garment; and, turning up his cuffs, whipped out a very unpleasant looking housewife, cutting, sawing, patching and piecing, with the enthusiasm of an accomplished surgical seamstress; explaining the process, in scientific terms, to the patient, meantime; which, of course, was immensely cheering and comfortable. There was an uncanny sort of fascination in watching him, as he peered and probed into the mechanism of those wonderful bodies, whose mysteries he understood so well. The more intricate the wound, the better he liked it. A poor private, with both legs off, and shot through the lungs, possessed more attractions for him than a dozen generals, slightly scratched in some "masterly retreat;" and had any one appeared in small pieces, requesting to be put together again, he would have considered it a special dispensation.

The amputations were reserved till the morrow, and the merciful magic of ether was not thought necessary that day, so the poor souls had to bear their pains as best they might. It is all very well to talk of the patience of woman; and far be it from me to pluck that feather from her cap, for, heaven knows, she isn't allowed to wear many; but the patient endurance of these men, under trials of the flesh, was truly wonderful. Their fortitude seemed contagious, and scarcely a cry escaped them, though I often longed to groan for them, when pride kept their white lips shut, while great drops stood upon their foreheads, and the bed shook with the irrepressible tremor of their tortured bodies. One or two Irishmen anathematized the doctors with the frankness of their nation, and ordered the Virgin to stand by them, as if she had been the wedded Bidy to whom they could administer the poker, if she didn't; but, as a general thing, the work went on in silence, broken only by some quiet request for roller, instruments, or plaster, a sigh from the patient, or a sympathizing murmur from the nurse.

It was long past noon before these repairs were even partially made; and, having got the bodies of my boys into something like order, the next task was to minister to their minds, by writing letters to the anxious souls at home; answering questions, reading papers, taking possession of money and valuables; for the eighth commandment was reduced to a very fragmentary condition, both by the blacks and whites, who ornamented our hospital with their presence. Pocket books, purses, miniatures, and watches, were sealed up, labelled, and handed over to the matron, till such times as the owners thereof were ready to depart homeward or campward again. The letters dictated to me, and revised by me, that afternoon, would have made an excellent chapter for some future history of the war; for, like that which Thackeray's "Ensign Spooney" wrote his mother just before Waterloo, they were "full of affection, pluck, and bad spelling;" nearly all giving lively accounts of the battle, and ending with a somewhat sudden plunge from patriotism to provender, desiring "Marm," "Mary Ann," or "Aunt Peters," to send along some pies, pickles, sweet stuff, and apples, "to youn in haste," Joe, Sam, or Ned, as the case might be.

My little Sergeant insisted on trying to scribble something with his left hand, and patiently accomplished some half dozen lines of hieroglyphics, which he gave me to fold and direct, with a boyish blush, that rendered a glimpse of "My Dearest Jane," unnecessary, to assure me that the heroic lad had been more successful in the service of Commander-in-Chief Cupid than that of Gen. Mars; and a charming little romance blossomed instanter in Nurse Periwinkle's romantic

fancy, though no further confidences were made that day, for Sergeant fell asleep, and, judging from his tranquil face, visited his absent sweetheart in the pleasant land of dreams. At five o'clock a great bell rang, and the attendants flew, not to arms, but to their trays, to bring up supper, when a second uproar announced that it was ready. The new comers woke at the sound; and I presently discovered that it took a very bad wound to incapacitate the defenders of the faith for the consumption of their rations; the amount that some of them sequestered was amazing; but when I suggested the probability of a famine hereafter, to the matron, that motherly lady cried out: "Bless their hearts, why shouldn't they eat? It's their only amusement; so fill every one, and, if there's not enough ready to-night, I'll lend my share to the Lord by giving it to the boys." And, whipping up her coffee-pot and plate of toast, she gladdened the eyes and stomachs of two or three dissatisfied heroes, by serving them with a liberal hand; and I haven't the slightest doubt that, having cast her bread upon the waters, it came back buttered, as another large-hearted old lady was wont to say.

Then came the doctor's evening visit; the administration of medicines; washing feverish faces; smoothing tumbled beds; wetting wounds; singing lullabies; and preparations for the night. By eleven, the last labor of love was done; the last "good night" spoken; and, if any needed a reward for that day's work, they surely received it, in the silent eloquence of those long lines of faces, showing pale and peaceful in the shaded rooms, as we quitted them, followed by grateful glances that lighted us to bed, where rest, the sweetest, made our pillows soft, while Night and Nature took our places, filling that great house of pain with the healing miracles of Sleep, and his diviner brother, Death.

## Guided thinking questions for close looking at art:

### Questions about the artwork:

1. Describe the scene. What are the women doing?
2. How is this hospital different from contemporary hospitals?
3. What role does the group in the foreground play?
4. Does the image give us a sense of why the men have been hospitalized?
5. Is this image meant to comfort its audience, or make them feel uncomfortable about it? Explain why you think that, using details from the image and text as evidence.
6. Why was this work of art made? Do you think it was made for, or commissioned by someone?

### Questions related to the artist:

7. What is the artist's purpose? What impression do you think the artist was trying to create?
8. What is the role of the artist in shaping the content and style of the artwork? Please point out some of the artist's choices and explain how they illustrate the artist's point of view.
9. What perspective [on the subject of this artwork, etc.] does the artist take in this piece? For example, is it positive or negative? How can you tell? Please give examples.
10. How else could the artist have presented this same content and created a different feeling or point of view? If you were the artist, what details would you imagine changing and how would you change them? Would you show certain elements closer-up or farther away? Would you lighten certain areas or add more movement to others, etc.?)
11. In what ways is the work a reflection of society or a product of its time?