

Name: _____

Date: _____

Student notes for: Hospital Sketches, Chapter III: A Day

Day: 2

1. Reread the paragraph on page nine that begins, “Having done up our version of the human wash, and laid it out to dry...” and ends with a poem. In the first sentence, who is the “our,” and what is the “human wash”? What connections is Alcott making with this language choice?
2. Later in that first sentence, Alcott states, “the second syllable of our version of the word war-fare was enacted with much success.” What work is Alcott referring to by “our version”? What two uses of “fare” does she use in this sentence?
3. Alcott also makes reference to war when she ends the paragraph with her own version the “Light Brigade”, a popular poem about a disastrous battle in the Crimean War. How do these war references affect our understanding of the nurse’s work? Find specific lines from the paragraph or poem to support your answers.
4. Reread the last paragraph on page 12, which continues to the top of page 13, and find places where Alcott describes the surgeon’s work with household metaphors. How does describing a man’s work with this language add to the effect of using household metaphors?
5. On page 7, a soldier says that the hospital work is unpleasant and difficult, perhaps even too much so for the women, when he says the cleaning up “isn’t [jolly] for you ladies.” How does the nurse respond? What does this response tell you about her opinion on this statement?
6. As we have seen, Alcott uses both language traditionally associated with women and language traditionally associated with men to describe the work that both the male doctors and female nurses are doing. How does the use of both help us understand Alcott’s views about female nurses?

