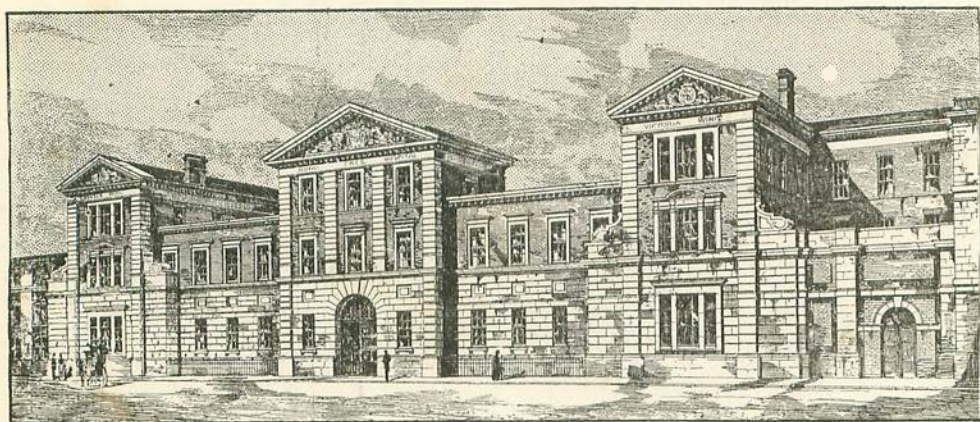


Hospital Days and Hospital Ways

BY AUGUSTA E. MANSFORD.



From a

THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL—LONDON.

[Drawing.]

THE great charm about it was its unexpectedness. I had planned to do all kinds of things that summer, to go up hill and down dale, to cull flowers and climb stiles; but Fate had a simpler programme in store for me: I was to spend ten weeks in the Royal Free.

Fate wasn't an ugly old woman this time, or perhaps I might have avoided her. No, the deceitful old thing took the form of a benign-looking physician, who invited me in the most cordial of tones to "come in." I had heard much of the Royal Free, of its skilful doctors and clever girl-students, and, having succeeded in puzzling many medical men, thought I would see what they said to me there, but an invitation to stay I had never expected. I did not want to "come in," and am inclined to think my response was not warm. Even when told I was "an interesting case," I did not feel flattered, but went home and packed with unwonted sedateness. That was easily done, hospital garb having the advantage of simplicity; so into the basket went my books, to be followed by such minor considerations as sugar, butter, and linen.

Half-past ten one morning I was duly deposited in Elizabeth Ward, and that being considered a suitable hour for retiring to bed, an overgrown clothes-horse, with numerous joints and crimson hangings, was put round a corner, and I bade a long farewell to my outdoor garb. Then my temperature was taken and proved uninterestingly normal. There

is a story going of a poor woman in Guy's, who, having had the clinical thermometer put under her arm for five minutes, exclaimed, on its removal: "Oh, nurse, that has done me good! I feel's a sight better!" I didn't, but perhaps that was my natural perverseness.

The screen being removed, I found myself in a most convenient nook, commanding a full view of the ward, and close to the ice-box and poison cupboard. The ward was a bright one, the nurse was bright, and so were the flowers, the tins, and the brasses, but brightest of all were the patients; I could hardly believe that the jolly-looking women sitting up in bed singing the "Fusiliers," "Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay," etc., were my fellow-sufferers. Having comfortably arranged my belongings in my locker, I found it was time to take out again knife, fork, and spoon for dinner, and with a newspaper for a tablecloth I duly disposed of stewed rabbit and pudding. As usual over a meal, the chat became general. One or two remarks addressed to a Mrs. Four did not meet any response, and I was meditating on the unsociability of that lady and the strangeness of her name when, chancing to catch sight of the number over my bed, I made the interesting discovery that the individual addressed was myself. I promptly apologized, and while disclaiming any legal right to the prefix, strove to bear the honour thus thrust upon me with becoming meekness.

"My! So you ain't married? And you've got to go through all that! It'll be all the harder for you then, won't it, Mrs. Six?" remarked Mrs. Seven.

"Won't it just!" agreed Mrs. Six; and they both sat up to look at me, whilst I promptly retired under the bed-clothes, wondering how in the world having a grief-stricken husband sitting at home tearing his hair (because, of course, he *would* have torn his hair) could in any way have lessened my sufferings. In the course of a week or two, when I learnt that matrimony often entailed a knowledge of new uses for poker and flat-irons, I could understand that blessed state might make one more or less inured to physical pain.

The next excitement was a visit from the clinical clerk, with whom I fell in love straight away; she was my idea of a strong-minded woman. Though her skirts were short, her hair was not, but lustrous brown plaits were coiled round and round a classic head, and her broad forehead, well-marked brows, clear grey eyes, and calm mouth, all inspired me with confidence.

Shut in by the screen, I went through the usual catechism, told her the ages of "my uncles, my cousins, and my aunts," and explained how any of them came to make the mistake of dying. She seemed very anxious for some of them to have been consumptive, had rheumatic fever, or even fits; but on those points I could not oblige her. One of her duties was to see that the new patient was all there; the medical authorities are very particular on that point, so she checked off the different organs by a kind of inventory. Her long, sensitive hands had a combined firmness and gentleness of touch that made even pain from them less hard to bear, so that when she had discovered what was wrong, and had drawn a little sketch of the state of affairs on my skin with blue pencil, I could still smile at the notion that I was like an ancient Briton with woad decorations.

The screen being removed, I re-entered public life, and found tea was being collected: they must get some rare blends in the hospital, as every patient contributes a spoonful to the general brew, which when made is poured into mugs that for size and thickness would satisfy Lockhart. I cared not for stimulants, so was spared their weight. Those versed in hospital records tell us that in the days when tea was so dear that neither hospital nor patient could afford to supply the luxury, beer was served out twice daily, and in many old institutions the flagons are still to be seen.

With the evening came letters and friends; at eight o'clock prayers were read, talking forbidden, the lamp lighted, and we were

told to "lie down and go to sleep." That speech seemed to take me back twenty years with a bound: still I could not sleep, so lay and admired the night nurse, whose rich, dark face reminded me of Luke Fildes's Italian pictures. Such thoughts at last beguiled me into a doze, but when night came so did the house-surgeon, and I awoke with a start to see him motioning for the now dreaded screen. The dim light, his whispered directions, the gleam of the instruments (of torture, I thought), the shock, the pain, made up a bad ten minutes, through which my pretty nurse held my hands, and smiled and nodded encouragement. When he left, she came back to cheer me.

"One must never mind what doctors do," she said, "as to them we are like so many chairs and tables."

It was such queer consolation that I laughed, and was then presented with a black-looking mixture, which she said she always took herself, and talked about as one's host would a favourite brand of wine, so that I had to drink it with an air of enjoyment. Sleep for me that night was out of the question; I could only marvel at the others who did, and amuse myself by watching from my window the ever-moving leaves of the aspen and the earliest traces of approaching dawn.

At five began our morning ablutions, and six o'clock found us with beds made and breakfast half finished. Snooks at that hour was particularly lively, and kept us constantly informed that he was a "pretty bird"—possibly he was correct in his opinion—but I prefer a thrush with a tail, which he seemed to think an unnecessary appendage. Subsequently he and I discovered that we agreed in a liking for new-laid eggs and hot-house grapes, and as I was kept well supplied with those commodities, he was graciously pleased to accept my overtures of friendship. What he liked best of all was to secure a stout fowl bone, which he would keep till the doctor was making the round, and then thump vigorously on the floor of his cage to show his contempt for professional instructions. His companion, Joey, a mule-canary, that had some of the softest and sweetest notes I ever have heard, took as much care of his voice as the well-known tenor, and honoured us only with one song daily.

Another popular favourite was Fluffy, a Persian cat, that, five or six years ago, was brought to the Royal Free with a broken leg. An anæsthetic was administered and the leg

set, and when entirely recovered Miss Pussy took up an official position in the hospital, and twice a day visited every ward as regularly as the doctors and matron, but with many more airs and graces.

Tuesday being what was known as "doctor's morning," there was even more than usual bustle and drive to have all in order by 9 a.m. The staff nurse came on duty at 7 a.m., in a pink cotton dress, did the regula-



THE STAFF NURSE.
From a Photo. by G. Jerrard, Regent Street.

tion arranging and dusting, vanished and re-appeared in the full glory of a blue gown, white cap, cuffs and apron. One of the patients amused us by observing some days after that the morning pink nurse was rather like our blue day nurse, but, on my keeping up the joke and inquiring which she liked the better of the two, was discreet enough to answer: "I h'aint no fault to find with neither of 'em," and it took the united efforts of the ward to convince her of the identity of the supposed two nurses.

Brisk steps and manly voices in the corridor announced the coming of the physician and his satellites. At a sign from the nurse, books and newspapers dis-

appeared into our lockers, and we lay down to await his coming, our courage oozing out through the bed-clothes, and our hearts marking the seconds with such powerful beats that we almost wondered his quick ear did not heed them. Not long were we kept in suspense, from one to the other he passed with marvellous quickness, heard a summary of the case from the student, asked a few pertinent questions of the house-surgeon, said a word to the patient, made a brief examination, gave a few penetrating side-long glances, nodded his head, washed his hands in many waters, and was gone.

"Thank goodness, we're at peace now till Saturday," said Mrs. Two, sitting up once more and getting out her work, and one by one we all emerged from our pillows, and tried to look as though we had not been using our pocket-handkerchiefs.

"Mrs. Four's going to the theatre on Saturday," observed Mrs. Seven, "I heerd 'im say so."

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"Oh, you'll be starved for some hours first, and then when you're in the theatre they'll give you some ether, and do what they like with you, and you won't know nothing. I can't abide ether!"

"I shall not mind if it takes away feeling," I answered. "I have felt quite enough this morning."

"I 'spect you 'ave! I heerd you giving kind o' gasps. It's that tall doctor what's the worst. 'Is 'ands do 'urt, they're so thin; he ought to eat more. I scream when he comes near me."

"That don't 'elp," replied Mrs. Two, philosophically, "it makes 'im all the longer. I stuffs the corner of the pillow into my mouth to stop making a noise."

"I daresay they do that, they're 'ard enough. What do you think they stuffs 'em with? Cokernuts?"

Shouts of laughter greeted this suggestion, but nurse re-appeared, and the conversation changed.

"Nurse," recommenced Mrs. Two, "don't you think I shall be a-going out soon? I 'eerd 'im tell the tall one that I 'ad got over my perrykomikalitis very well. There's Mrs. Four a-laughing! Wasn't that what he called it, Mrs. Four? I 'spect you're a speller."

I suggested peritonitis, but that did not please her, it was not nearly so long for one thing, and then she was sure "komikalitis" came in somewhere.

"I know as 'ow you'll be sorry to lose me,

nurse," continued the irrepressible Mrs. Two, "but I must go home, 'cos my 'usband's ill. I feel quite well now, only my arms hurt sometimes, but they says that's just my 'air fossicles, and that they don't matter."

"Now, Mrs. Two," said nurse, who was busy with the plates, "never mind the 'air fossicles' and 'perrykomikalitis'; what would you like for dinner—chicken or fish?"

"Oh, fish, please, nurse, if it's boiled fish; and Mrs. One will like chicken. If you give it over here, nurse, I'll cut it up for her. She's bashful, so I 'ave to talk for both. 'Ope as 'ow you don't think I makes a noise, ladies?"

A greater contrast than Mrs. Two and Mrs. One could hardly be imagined. Mrs. One was a quiet, refined woman, just recovering from an operation, and still so weak that it was an effort for her to speak, or, indeed, do anything for herself; so Mrs. Two, who was as good-natured as she was talkative, took her under her wing, shared lockers with her, cut her bread and butter, and alternately fussed over and teased her.

"Oh, Mrs. One," she would cry out sometimes, "how can you? Nurse, you can't think what awful things Mrs. One is a-lying here and saying, and her looking so good too! Oh, Mrs. One, I'm shocked, pos-i-tive-ly shocked!" and to prove the genuineness of

her sentiments, Mrs. Two would roll over to the extreme edge of her spring bed and only save herself by some wonderful gymnastic feat from falling on to the floor.

Wednesdays were usually calm days, forming a kind of background to the excitement of "doctor's day" that preceded, and "visitors' day" that followed, and nothing much occurred this first week to attract attention except the number of letters, books, boxes of flowers, newspapers, etc., that found their way into my corner. At every knock all would sit up expectantly, till the one nearest the door would call out:—

"Another package for Mrs. Four!" Then they would try to count up the number of communications I had had, but would get tired in the middle and lay down for a doze. Truly, I was amazed myself, and wished that those people who call the world ugly names could have had a taste of my experience: more kindly thought and gentle deeds could hardly have been compressed into the ten long weeks. Grave, busy men learnt to write humorous letters, light-hearted girls to express tender sympathy; acquaintances transformed themselves into friends, and wishes were carried out and anticipated as though I possessed the lamp of Aladdin. Then the flowers—I realized how the weeks were slipping away by the



From a Photo. by]

THE WARD. NO. 4 IS THE BED UNDER THE SMALLER WINDOW.

[A. & G. Taylor.

succession that came to me—red roses and white, sweet peas and daisies, lilies and honeysuckle, mignonette and cornflowers, poppies and grasses, clematis and pansies, carnations and asters: so ran the list. In days of rude health I had paid divers visits to the Royal Free, so that happily for me friends were scattered about in the building, and when it was known that I was in residence, the genial chairman of the board came and said all the kindly things he could think of, and the secretary brought me such a store of interesting books that it is hardly surprising that nurse announced her conclusion that I was a "very spoilt patient."

I shared my good things as much as I could, but was not always successful. The others would glance at the pictures in the illustrated monthlies, but as for the reading—well, as Mrs. Three candidly told me, "it didn't come up to Lloyd's penn'orth!" So, lacking the necessary experience to argue this point, I in silence returned to Grant Allen and Meredith.

Thursday was "locker morning," and blessed on that day were those with few possessions. I was nearly buried alive under mine, as we had to take out our belongings and pile them on our beds whilst the lockers were scrubbed and dried, and for a good hour I could hardly venture to breathe, lest I sent a toothbrush in one direction and a jelly in another.

The locker-scrubber was a character: a gaunt, bony Irishwoman, who mimicked the nurses, and was credited with a temper. Which of these two traits most attracted me I cannot say, but we became great friends, and she showed me the portrait of her son, who was "out in Canady, but a-coming home this autumn, bless him!"

Later in the day came the floor-scrubbers, three marvellous women, quite indescribable. I have never seen anything like them. One of the patients (not myself) watched them with envy. "Deary me, now," she said, "how I should like to get out and scrub that little bit of flooring down there: my fingers quite itch for the brush." Mine didn't; still, I did try my hand at all that I could: learnt to make nurses' frilled strings and many-tailed bandages, and with whiting and leather and Mrs. Two's help, polished up the artery forceps and other formidable-looking instruments, made the surgical needles shine, and arranged them in a striking design on their white flannel case. Our tall doctor, chancing to dart in for an

instant, smiled more than a little at our novel amusement.

Thursday, from 3.30 to 4.30 p.m. was to most of us the shortest hour in the week, and we always doubted that it contained the regulation number of minutes; whilst no sound was so harsh as the bell that announced its expiration; but to some—those forlorn souls who had no friends to visit them—it was the most trying of times. Someone else had noticed this too, and always on Thursdays the pleasant face of our hospital chaplain looked in at the door, and if his bright, brown eyes spied any bedside that seemed lonely, he was there in a moment, and ever left smiles even where he found tears. I had my own share of visitors and something over, so he came to see me at less busy times, when we talked about architecture and old city churches, generally ending with my favourite topic of workhouses, which we both agreed we should like somewhat improved ere we retired to their shelter.

That night there was such a ringing of bells, tramping of men, and running about with kettles, blankets, and hot-water cans, that I came to the conclusion that there had been a terrific smash on the Great Northern or Midland Railway, and that the adjoining accident ward was being filled with dilapidated railway servants and passengers; but it proved in the morning that only two men had been injured, one poor fellow fatally.

Saturday at 4 a.m. I had my breakfast—a mug of hot milk, and tried not to feel hungry by ten, when I was due in the theatre. A brilliant scarlet dressing-gown, and slippers warranted not to pinch a giantess, are reserved for one's *début* there. It seemed quite a little walk after lying in bed so long, and I crept into nurse's good graces by invoking memories of warlike ancestors, and marching along and mounting the operating table without any outward and visible signs of qualms and tremors. I am sorry I cannot tell everybody all about the examination; but beyond the fact that ether resembles London fog flavoured with lemon, and causes a sensation in one's ears like going down in the old Polytechnic diving-bell, I know nothing. After being heralded by the usual bell-ringing, I was duly brought back in the state carriage, coachmen and footmen in attendance (the uninitiated might describe the aforesaid as stretcher and porters, but, then, we haven't all had the advantages of hospital training). When everything was *quite* comfortable, pillows removed and hot-water cans arranged,



From a Photo. by]

THE OPERATING THEATRE.

[Elliott & Fry.

I "came to," and having arrived at the satisfactory conclusion that I was still alive, went to sleep till tea-time.

"How are you feeling, Mrs. Four?" asked Mrs. Seven, as soon as my screen was removed.

"Ve-ry com-for-ta-ble, and ve-ry hu-ng-ry!" The words came out in jerks, and I seemed to have lost control over my voice, but practice—and I had plenty—soon overcame that difficulty.

"'Aint you got a headache?" asked Mrs. Two.

"No; my head-never-aches-there's-not-enough-in-side-it!"

"My! ether don't seem to 'ave 'urt you much! You was still as death when they brought you in, and you'd quite a bright, pink colour. Some of 'em cries and struggles awful when they're carried back, but I guessed you'd be one of the quiet sort."

"I saved a little cold chicken at dinner: do you think you could take that?" asked nurse, doubtfully.

"I am ready for—for an ostrich!" I answered; so had my chicken forthwith.

Sunday we had service in our ward, and a number of flowers and plants were sent from

a neighbouring flower service. We kept early hours at the Royal Free, so dinner came up soon after eleven. We did not all feel inclined for our full portion of vegetables and pudding, but next to ours was a men's surgical ward, and there our varied contributions were always thankfully received.

From 2 till 4 p.m. our friends were admitted, and on this day men proved to be as general as on Thursday they were rare. I found other people's husbands and sweet-hearts very amusing, especially when they were shy, as their Sunday best generally made them. In the evening we sang Ancient and Modern Hymns to tunes we composed for the occasion, and by 8 p.m. were very tired and rather cross.

So sped the days, and for a week or two I felt so well that it seemed ridiculous to lie in bed, and my friends used to say my red face was a disgrace to the hospital, whilst to the house-surgeon's daily question of "How are you, Four?" I had to make the hackneyed reply of "Quite well, thank you." The order not to stand on my feet was hardest to obey in the early morning, when the most able of the patients would get up to help with the breakfast and have any amount of fun.

Mrs. Two would come round the ward *à la matron*, and to see her quaint little figure, in the tawdriest of dressing-gowns, attempting to personate the stately but kindly lady, whose dainty grey gown and spotless Normandy cap were so familiar, used to make us ache with laughter.

Our life could hardly be described as monotonous—we were somewhat passive ourselves, but the scenes and actors round us were constantly changing. Besides the scrubbers and the cleaners, we had regular visits from the sweep, coal porters, beef-tea boys, and other celebrities. Then, too, the weighing machine was in our ward, so that strange nurses were constantly bringing in tiny bundles that they called babies, and a broad-shouldered youth in a gay dressing-gown came every week with his attendant nurse, and informed us with much satisfaction how many pounds he had added during the last seven days. There was great excitement also one Saturday, when a shed in the building-yard next the hospital caught fire, and it seemed more than probable that the adjacent wards would follow its example. However, whilst the lady students and doctors transported patients to an opposite wing, the chaplain, steward, and porters did such wonders with the hospital hose, thanks to their regular fire-drill, that in an hour or two's time both patients and beds had to be carried back again. Our ward was considered quite safe, but one of the evolutions of the hose sent the water through an open window behind me, and I had the unexpected luxury of a shower bath.

As time went on I found plenty to do. A little story coming out in a current monthly brought my scribbling propensities into notice, and I forthwith received several commissions from Mrs. Six to compose begging-letters for her. "I can write well enough, Mrs. Four, but I can't *compact* like you can," she used to come and whisper flatteringly to me. She wanted some money to support her after leaving the hospital till she was strong enough to recommence work, so copied one of my epistles and sent it to a titled dame, and I have never written anything since that yielded so much per line (*Editors, please take the hint*). Then most of the women had husbands and children, and did not seem to know how to treat either; so, naturally, I had to instruct them on those points, and learnt a good deal in return about workhouse infirmaries, laundry-work, and barrack-life, all of which, no doubt, will be useful. My friends used to say it was

quite nice my being in the hospital, as they actually knew where to find me! I had some visits that made me feel quite honoured among women, but, perhaps, one that I enjoyed most was when a popular scientist came and sat on the ice-box and gave me an animated lecturette, which carried me right away to the woods and the moors, quicker than the fastest train.

After a week or two I went in for a little variety on my own account, developed one or two quite original symptoms, became "more interesting than ever," and from one till seven one morning indulged in unceasing cries and contortions; this performance I repeated at intervals, so that I was never again described as "one of the quiet sort." I lived for a week in hot fomentations; my temperature chart resembled an E. to W. section across Europe, with very noticeable Alps, and I soon contracted a strong antipathy to all words ending with "itis."

When once more I was free enough from pain to take an interest in my surroundings, I found most of the patients had changed, and especially was I attracted by the new Mrs. Five and the new Mrs. Two, who in my days of utter helplessness were wonderfully good to me, and took it in turns to act as lady's-maid. Mrs. Five had been born in Africa, married a soldier, travelled in China, was a Catholic, and a lover of dogs, so we had much to talk about; whilst the new Mrs. Two proved to be a delightful mixture of prettiness and comicality. What was left of me after my recent experiences was so weak, that I had to be nursed up for a long time ere any further steps could be taken, and, as the weeks went by, it seemed that I had become such a permanent part of the institution, that I wondered whether I should not be justified in applying to the Board for a uniform and a salary.

One evening Mrs. Five was in tears, in spite of having had visits from her priest and her husband, and I found the trouble was that the next day she had to appear in the theatre. I told her I envied her, as after a few days' rest she would be able to return home, but she would not be comforted. By that time I had learnt to like and to trust the once-dreaded house-surgeon, and had acquired a habit of waking as he made his last round; and that night, instead of the usual question in passing, he came and sat on my locker, and said, very gently: "I think, Four, to-morrow you had better have a little more ether, and we will see how you are getting on."

Anything that might terminate the perpetual lying in bed to me seemed welcome, so that my "Oh, *thank you*, doctor!" was so emphatic that he went away with query "delirious" writ plain upon his face. Four a.m. found Mrs. Five still much attached to her pocket-handkerchief, but I whispered that I too was going to the theatre, and she cheered up at once.

My turn came first, so that I was already half-conscious when Mrs. Five was brought back. My screen prevented me seeing her, but in spite of my stupor her voice reached me.

"Is Mrs. Four all right?" she asked. "Is Mrs. One all right? Is Mrs. Six all right? Is Mrs. Three all right? Is nurse all right?"

no precedent for such an irregularity, enjoyed a quiet chat with an Irish friend, whilst the others were peacefully dreaming. They said it was I who had been dreaming when I told them of my visitor, but I knew better.

When Mrs. Three's turn came to go into the theatre, she was decidedly conversational on the return journey, and as she was brought into the ward, protested loudly that she "hadn't heard no music," and then went for one of the porters in a most pugilistic manner, and informed him that if he "wasn't man enough, she was!" She explained to us afterwards on her recovery that she had mistaken him for her husband!

I soon lost my friend, Mrs. Five. Her husband caught cold, and she was perfectly



From a Photo. by]

A GROUP OF NURSES.

[A. & G. Taylor.

Is my husband all right? Is Mrs. Four all right?"

Such interest roused me, and at the top of my voice I called out: "Give my love to Mrs. Five, please, nurse, and tell her that I am all right, and hope that she is all right."

I was only conscious of making this tender speech once, but the others who had not lost their senses subsequently assured us that this affecting dialogue was repeated at frequent intervals, much to the indignation of Mrs. Six.

"Just hark at 'em, Mrs. Two," she said, "sending their loves to one another! Why can't they be quiet? As if we could be all right with their noise a-going on! How are we ever to get our afternoon nap, with the two of them at it?"

However, fortunately for the harmony of the ward, we too went to sleep, but after an hour I woke up again, and though there was

certain that unless she went home he would have asthma, bronchitis, pleurisy, and pneumonia all at once, so she asked for her discharge and stated the reason.

The house-surgeon looked doubtful. "What has come to this ward?" he asked, looking round at the empty beds. "One, two, three—you are the fourth patient who has asked to go home because her husband is ill!"

"Oh, but doctor, mine is real!" exclaimed Mrs. Five so emphatically, that I think it was just as well for her that the other wives had departed.

At the physician's next visit he told me my only hope was in operation, and to gain the necessary strength for that anticipated event, I was permitted to get up for an hour or two every day. I felt quite proud when I had once more learnt to stand alone, although even then I was anything but erect, and, to quote nurse's

description, "Hopped about the ward like a young partridge." However, after a day or two I became less like a right angle, and was then allowed in the hospital square. Among the many interesting sights I beheld whilst out and about was the doctors in full theatre costume. They wear a large, terra-cotta-coloured mackintosh apron with a bib, sometimes a cap to match, and with sleeves rolled up to their elbows; they look very like—please don't tell them I said so—very like carpenters.

If there is one thing I pride myself upon more than another it is upon being a judge of character. In the hospital I tested this faculty twice. Going to the service in the men's ward the Sunday of that week, I was much impressed by No. Sixteen. With his grand head, thick, snowy hair, and stalwart frame, he looked like a noble old general, and before the end of the last hymn, I had composed a mental biography of him, full of gallant deeds and high aspirations; but, thinking facts would probably prove even more satisfactory than fiction, I made a few inquiries of nurse.

She laughed.

"That man!" she exclaimed. "Old Sixteen! You were telling me that the last few nights you had heard cries of 'Murder!' 'Police!' That's one of his pretty little ways! He wakes all the patients in his own ward, and as many more as he can. Two women come to see him, and claim him as husband, but he declines to own either of them. Yes, he is a nice man!"

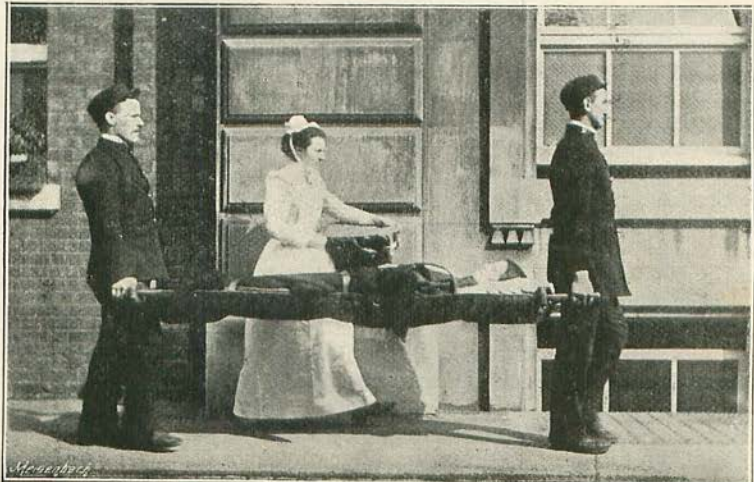
The other case was a young, pretty girl, with a soft voice and gentle manner. I think I cried when she went away. Well, I heard of her afterwards—she was in Holloway Gaol for assaulting a policeman!

After seven weeks, the day came to leave my corner in Elizabeth. Special nurses had been told off to attend me, the Isolated Ward had been disinfected, the silk had been sterilized, the dressings prepared, and what with personal applications of turpentine, carbolic, and ether, patient, as well as nurse, had had a lively time. I had many farewells

and good wishes that morning, the more touching, perhaps, as my predecessor in the Isolated had never returned. My old Irish-woman came over to see me, but when I shook hands and said "Good-bye," she replied: "You jist take that word back! It ain't lucky! I ain't a-going to wish you anything but a very good morning. I shall find my way upstairs to have a peep at you before many days are over, you be sure!"

I had quite intended, when being borne along on the stretcher, to show my appreciation of the stately procession by waving a triumphant farewell to my ward friends, but my handkerchief had most unaccountably got itself into a very limp condition, and refused to do anything but form itself into a nasty damp ball, which was most annoying. Talking of stretchers, I have tried a good many means of locomotion, from wheelbarrows and roundabouts to Atlantic steamers and Canadian hacks, and I really think stretchers compare favourably with any of them, so long as the bearers do *not* keep step; but unless the front man's right foot moves with the back man's left, the result is almost as trying as travelling over an American road. Of course, they manage this matter perfectly at the Royal Free, and I so enjoyed my ride that I longed to ask them to take one or two turns round the square, but resisted the temptation.

My next experience was chloroform, and plenty of it. I liked it better than ether. Then, for an hour, doctors, matron, and nurses worked their best and their hardest, and I was satisfactorily finished. I did not wake up to that fact for three or four hours afterwards; then, in a weak whisper, that I could hardly hear myself, I begged for water.



From a)

THE STRETCHER,

[Photograph.

A teaspoonful of hot water every ten minutes was all they dared to give me for hours and hours, and I felt I should die if I did not have gallons. I thought of Dives, Sir Philip Sidney, and Dante's Inferno, but nothing stopped that dreadful thirst.

Otherwise I was wonderfully comfortable, in spite of feeling somewhat like a mummy. I had no pillows for my head, but, to make up for that, plenty under my knees, which were also tied together, lest I should be tempted to try any pedestrian feats; but the arrangement that pleased me best was the cage on which the bed-clothes were supported. I saw at once that it formed a delightful nook in which to stow away letters and books, and confided that idea to nurse, but she did not seem charmed. My skilful physician came every day, and, what pleased me as much, so did his dog Peter, most intelligent of Irish terriers, who proved his nationality by his readiness to make friends even with such a blue-lipped, yellow-cheeked mortal as I was.

For days and for nights I lay perfectly still, and made the interesting discovery that not using one's muscles has the same effect as over-tiring them. My hands ached as though they would drop off, but strangest of all was the pain in my jaw. I bore it till I felt desperate, then motioned to nurse and whispered: "I am quite certain that I dislocated my jaw when I was under chloroform, nurse; it is dreadful!"

"You silly girl," she said, laughing; "of course it hurts you, just because you have been neither eating nor talking."

Apropos of eating, when the feeding-up process was supposed to begin, my poor nurse tried brandy, hot milk and cold, peptonized milk, beef teas and extracts, lemon and barley water, meat juices and jellies, but it was all wasted energy; my internal arrangements were on strike, and nothing could I take, and, to crown the situation, I announced

that I was suffering from acute indigestion. No wonder the physician shook his head at me!

"I should like to know how you manage that," he said, "when you will not take anything to digest. What is all this I hear about such constant sickness? You know we cannot have that kind of thing. A stop must be put to it! You will"—and he paused to think of a sufficiently terrible threat—"you will spoil your figure!"

When I did get stronger it was by leaps and by bounds. The house-surgeon being away, his duties were taken up by a *locum tenens*, on whom they sat somewhat more lightly. On one of his visits to the Isolated he informed me that I was getting on so well that I had "quite ceased to be interesting"; he really did "not know why he still came to see me."

"You see what I can do," he continued. "Yours is something like a cure; but, would you believe it? The other day I heard nurse trying to make out it was all her affair, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if the operating physician had the coolness to consider that he had had something to do with it. True merit never is appreciated in this world!" and, with a look of comic despair, he departed.

Most of my nurses were pretty, and the last, in addition, was a decidedly fashionable

damsel. One afternoon I saw her surveying my garments with considerable amazement: the shoes of manly breadth seemed especially to fill her with horror, but she was anxious not to hurt my feelings, so came over and said, with a forced smile: "Do you think with my help you could get into your—your high-minded clothes?"

The next day and the next I was carried down into the square and put in the sun to brown, and on the third day, much to my own surprise, I walked down the stairs and out of the gate, carrying with me more bright and pleasant memories than I ever thought could gather round a visit to a hospital.



"PETER."

From a Photo. by E. F. Gearing & Sons, Regent Street.