



BY HARRY HOW.



AMONGST the many philanthropic institutions of the country, one at least has not come in for that popular recognition which it undeniably deserves. Up to the moment of writing, no Lord Mayor of London has ever given a single thought to starting a subscription on its account, and its name has never appeared amongst the recipients of assistance from the coffers of the Hospital Saturday Fund. Still it has thrived for over twenty years, and has restored many a tiny patient—patients without whose presence in the home the lives of our youngsters would not be one-thousandth part so happy as they are to-day. For who could take the place of dolly, be she a humble rag or an aristocratic wax? And who more liable to meet with accident than the same young creature, to get her face smashed in by a wicked brother of dolly's owner, or her eyes gouged out by another equally bad imp of mischief? None, absolutely none. Hence a hospital is necessary, and it is gratefully recorded in these pages that the writer has discovered one.

Dr. M. Marsh, M.D.—M.D. stands for Mender of Dolls—presides over an establishment "down Fulham way." Her husband was a wax-modeller, and when the jointed dolls came into fashion, this enterprising lady conceived the idea of giving them her closest attention, from a surgical and anatomical point of view. She issued the following prospectus:—

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DOLLY'S HOSPITAL,
FULHAM ROAD, S.W.

Operations Daily from 9 a.m. till 8 p.m.

M. MARSH

Cures all Complaints incidental to Dollhood; Broken Heads or Fractured Limbs made whole, Loss of Hair, Eyes, Nose, Teeth, Fingers, Hands, Toes, or Feet replaced; Wasting away of the Body restored to soundness; all Accidents are successfully treated by M.M.

Patients leave the Institution looking better than ever.

DECAPITATIONS AND AMPUTATIONS DAILY.

Heads, Arms, Legs, or Bodies to be had separately. New Heads put upon Old Shoulders, or New Shoulders put to Old Heads. Wigs and Heads for the French Jointed Dolls.

Not responsible for Patients left after Three Months from Date of Admission to Hospital.

CHILDREN'S OWN HAIR INSERTED IN THEIR DOLLS.

Dolls Dressed to Order.

DOLLS CLEANED AND REPAIRED.

114, FULHAM ROAD, S.W.

I determined to become better acquainted with Mrs. Marsh. Accordingly, on a certain Wednesday morning, some few weeks ago, I arrived at the hospital just as the shutters were being taken down. Not a moment too soon—half-a-dozen little mothers were there before me, all waiting to see the doctor. They had brought their children with them, and their faces betrayed signs of inward woe and outward tears. Poor little mothers! Only think of it. Here was one child with a broken nose, no eyes, and the sawdust actually pouring out from a nasty cut in the big toe. Another had its scalp nearly torn off; and yet another had no head at all. I heard the story of that horrible decapitation. The little mother told me.

"It was Jack," she said. "Jack's my

brother. He was playing at executions, and whilst I was looking out of the window and listening to a piano-organ, he put Matilda—that's her name—over a big box of bricks and cut her head off with the shovel."

The doctor took charge of Matilda, and hoped she would be able to leave the hospital in a day or two. So the little mothers were attended to one by one, and they left by the dispensary door a great deal happier than when they entered.

I was just about to inspect one of the wards, and to be present at a very serious operation—it was a case of ten new toes being wanted and a pair of fresh thumbs—when a loud barking was heard. In rushed a little girl, followed by a dog. The child was crying and, between her sobs, called the dog many a bad name—bad for a little one of seven, I mean.

"Ah! this is a very disagreeable case," said the doctor.

The dog had positively eaten off one of the doll's legs! I ventured to remark that I should think the animal would soon be in need of medical advice, but he paid no heed to my sympathy, and only barked his regrets to his young mistress.

"It's very bad; but," and the doctor inspected it thoughtfully, "a few hours in No. 1 Ward will soon put it to rights. Can you call this evening?"



A CANINE DOLL-DESTROYER.

country and emigrated to America. By its side is a good-looking pug, which took the prize for two years running at the New York Pug Dog Show.

But the patients—absolutely of all sorts and conditions—present a pitiful appearance. Here are dolls of all nations: dark-eyed Spanish maidens and almond-eyed damsels from Japan; Scotch dolls, Irish dolls, Dutch dolls—dolls from every quarter of the globe where these silent witnesses to children's joy have their being. Here they lay huddled up in a corner—perfectly content to wait their turn—here they rest on a big table, an operating table in fact, many of them looking pictures of misery, whilst one or two still grin and bear it, though they have their



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

The little girl said she could call in the afternoon, or even before that!

"That operation will cost eighteen-pence," the lady medico informed me.

There was just then a lull in the business. The last case for the time being had been admitted, so we entered the principal ward together. Nothing extravagant about it—everything business-like and just as it should be. On the walls were a number of portraits of the doctor's intimate friends, the place of honour being given to the picture of a fine wax doll, who was born in this

legs and arms hanging to their bodies by a solitary thread. One patient I could not help admiring: she had lost both her eyes, her scalp was off, and a front tooth was missing. And yet she smiled. She was born smiling, and knock her about the body as much as you like, nothing save a total smashing-up of the head would interfere with her amiable expression.

And how resigned to their fate they all are. Near the window of the ward—a window, by-the-bye, which bears on its sill the flowers and ferns which are never absent from an hospital—lies a poor patient for repair in a cardboard box. One does not like to grow gruesome in a spot such as this, but the doll looks for all the world as though lying in a coffin. But not for long, not for long. The doctor will soon bring along the necessary needle and cotton, with a brand-new limb (two shillings and sixpence) into the bargain, and the terrible accident which befell the



broke her left leg. Please put on another and return the old support in life, as a relic of the best doll that ever made my little girl happy."

How suggestive are some of the notes which accompany these temporary patients of Dolly's Hospital, and how delightful!

Who could remain untouched when reading the letter, written in very big and irregular letters, from the child who wrote—evidently at the instigation of her sympathetic mother:—



PATIENTS.

favourite of the nursery will soon be a thing to be remembered no more.

Accidents! You could not name an accident under the sun from which the inmates of Dolly's Hospital were not suffering. Many of them were labelled with appropriate cards specifying their particular complaints.

A fine doll—as big as its own particular mistress—had a paper pinned on to its white lace pinafore, which read: "Please restore dolly's hair and renew her eyesight, and say when she can leave the hospital."

Another blue-eyed study in wax was ticketed: "Lady Violet fell down stairs and



ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF DOLLS.

—but what little there was I hugged and caressed until I nearly broke her all to pieces. Please send her to me by to-morrow, as it is her birthday, and she can't possibly pour out the tea at the party without her hands. Do"—and the "do" was underlined in red ink three times—"do make her better, and I will love you."

I visited many patients—I handled them and smiled at them! I laughed when-



TO BE OPERATED UPON.

"I am sending you, by Parcel Post, my darling Belinda Evalina. She has no nose. I have simply kissed it all away!"

And where is the hardened wretch—save myself, for I had no occasion to utilize a clean pocket-handkerchief which I had specially put in my pocket that morning in case of accidents—I repeat with fervour, where is the hardened wretch who could read, without a tear, the contents of the missive which stated: "Dear, dear doctor, my darling Polly was run over by a perambulator this afternoon. There was nothing left of her



INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DOCTOR.



TEA.

ever I spoke to the doctor—who laughed whenever I spoke to her, but the dolls never moved a muscle. Mind you, I wouldn't have laughed if the youngsters had been there, it would have broken their hearts; but they never knew, and the broken-up dolls— hearts and all— couldn't tell them.

But to serious work. The doctor begins to start on her rounds. First case.— New eyes and fresh front



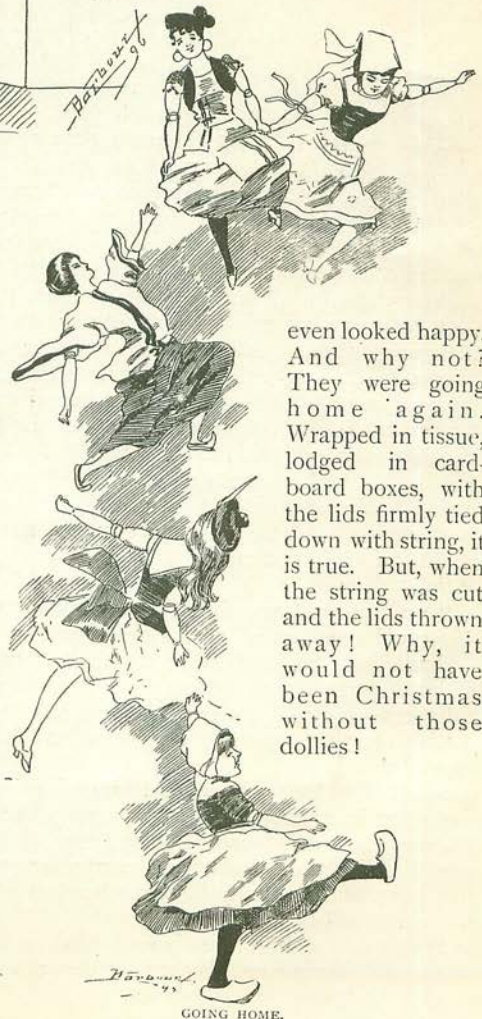
THE OPERATING TABLE.

tooth. Half an hour. One shilling to half a crown. Patient did not wince, and her new blue optics made her look herself again. Second case.—Broken legs. Nasty job this. Even dolls feel the loss of their legs. Capital patient; a model to humanity. Case number three.—Foot to be repaired, hair renovated, and face put right. Done in an hour. Fee, three shillings. Fourth case—but why cause the reader more pain than even the patients, by a recital of these sad, but necessary, operations? Sufficient to record the fact that the doctor was a merciful one, never applied the needle more than was necessary, never used more string or cotton than was absolutely needed, never wasted a drop of the spirits used when washing their faces—yet, never allowed them to leave her hands until they were renovated equal to new, with fresh stuffing in their bodies and new members to their system.

The doctor chats away, kindly and communicative. Last week there was a patient from Africa—travelled with a broken leg all that distance without a murmur, and alone. Sufferers come from the big drapers; artful drapers, they know this hospital.

It was a pleasant day I spent at Dolly's Hospital. I had seen them go in in the morning—the lame, the blind, the broken-up and broken-hearted. I had watched the faces of their owners who came to the door

more upset than their silent treasures. It was getting dusk when I left the doctor, and I lit up a cigar on the doorstep. What a thoughtless specimen of humanity! But I saw the erstwhile patients—alive, alive, oh! Yes, hand-in-hand and dancing together. The lame young lady was skipping with delight, the temporary blind was laughing at you with her bright blue though glassy eyes, and the broken-hearted were turning up their perky little noses at you. They



even looked happy. And why not? They were going home again. Wrapped in tissue, lodged in cardboard boxes, with the lids firmly tied down with string, it is true. But, when the string was cut and the lids thrown away! Why, it would not have been Christmas without those dollies!

GOING HOME.