

Some Friends I Have Met in Hospital.

By Miss MARY C. FAIR.

I.—THE BARBER.

He comes in with a fresh breath of the outside air from the great world beyond our gates. We are all pleased to see him with his cheery face and ready jest for us all as he lathers the first man—a prostrate wrestler of championship fame at Grasmere sports this year, who managed later on to break his leg in a winning fall at Tebay—while a ready convalescent performs the same kind office for the next gentleman to be operated upon.

II.—THE COOK.

Cook has ruled the domestic regions for over twelve long years, though her sway has been a merciful one. She can relate, when so minded, strange histories and awful happenings of bygone times and the doings of past Matrons and nurses. We listen with awe to the stories of the days when the hospital was in its infancy—a cottage hospital then with one nurse and its hard-worked Matron only.

Many is the hint she gives the puzzled pro., who wrestles in the back kitchen with the strange antics of the gas-stove and the playful tricks of Benger's Food. On occasions of great stress the great chair by the kitchen fire has been seen to contain a wailing scrap of infant humanity wrapped in a blanket, while Mary's kind



Trespassers in Matron's Marigold Bed.

He tells us, too, all the news from the town, and news telegrams from the evening papers of last night, and also how certain ex-patients whom he has seen are progressing.

Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal policy is discussed and almost universally condemned; indeed, by the time the wrestler is wiping the flecks of lather from his now smooth face we have worked through politics to the far more exciting local police news, and by the time our visitor's bag is again containing razors, brushes, and strops we feel quite cheered and brightened by his rapid sketches of events happening beyond our ken, as if, indeed, our minds had been shaved and burnished, as well as our heads "powed," and a four days growth of stubble removed from our chins by this twenty-years official of the hospital.

arms will hush the peevish cry, and under her auspices the most intractable howler will slumber—rather, it must be owned, to the indignation of Dorothy, the great tortoiseshell Persian cat, who regards Mary as her own property, and babies and dogs as invaders and abominations.

Cook, too, assists in spoiling our bairns. One old stager, aged four, occasionally persuades her to invite him to tea in the kitchen, a tea of jam and cakes and sticky delights, and strong arms to carry one when bandaged feet fail. Matrons and nurses come and go, but Cook and her colleague of the same date (the house ward-maid) are always there, and woeful indeed would be the hospital without their trusty familiar faces.

III.—HOSPITAL CHILDREN.

If the *enfant terrible* is a terror in private life, quaint

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