

excellent patient that he becomes nearly as popular, the appropriate title out of the "playbook Nurse had read," that was used by everybody in the Ward till he had recovered sufficiently to give his local habitation and his name, clung to him staunchly, and Hortensio he remained till we saw the last of him.

As for the children, the construction of the human mind, with an exacting and lively young colony on and in it, is unequal to singling out the individual Rosamond, Geraldine, Egbert, or Sydney, when the hour for apportioning pudding or cod liver oil is at hand. The generic titles of Tommy and Kitty, bestowed on the youthful scions of both sexes, supplant the baptismal register, and our Hospital babies soon settle, babies though they be, into our orderly ways, open drowsy eyes, and dutiful little mouths, like a nestful of contented fledging sparrows when the classic name of Tommy is breathed over half-a-dozen pillows in rotation, and each successive Tommy manfully tries to swallow the spoon, bestows a sleepy cuddle on Nurse, and retires to his pillow and to the rapt contemplation of an adorable tin parrot with a blue tail.

When the tears are dry that fall over the conglomerated woes of mother's departure, more or less of a tubbing administered by a conscientious stranger, some physical suffering, and an unexpected separation from a cherished rag-doll left behind by mistake, Tommy and Kitty, as a rule, philosophically decide to make the best of existing circumstances. They learn—those shrewd little observers in red flannel jackets—that a certain new and curious thing called method makes meal-time, play-time, and sleepy-time much less problematic than their own experience had ever shewed; that the conscientious stranger must have little brothers and sisters at home with whom she played as gently as she plays with one-armed Tommy now, and for whom she retailed stories as willingly as she somehow finds time to gladden Kitty's romantic soul with—Kitty who edges up to the side of her cot, splint and all, and dwells, open-eyed, on the entralling details of Cinderella's worldly career. In the midst, albeit, of childish sorrow and suffering, and childish courage in endurance—in the presence of skill and tenderness and care, our babies forget the dark waters that threatened to engulf them; forget the wild white horses and the flying spray; forget the cold waves that swayed and ebbd and flowed around them, and lay chilly and dreadful between the frail little bark and the shore. They remember only the present happiness and comfort of their surroundings, and the echoes of the storm and the distant tide dwell no longer in their recollection.

By-and-bye the little cot will be empty, or

re-filled with Tommy secundus, who is tubbed and comforted like his little predecessor—that little one-armed predecessor who has gone home—to what? To cleanly and decent poverty, maybe—to hard struggles with want and desolation—or into influences and companionship that curse and darken his young life's future, that shut out from him what he might be, and show him only what is, and what *he* is. "Give us a child till he is seven," says one of the greatest religious organisations in Christendom, "and anyone may bring him up." "Give *us* a child," say sin, want, and degradation, "and you, and education, and humanising influence, may do what you please."

If, in the dark and stormy waters of life's wide ocean, our elder shipwrecked mariners be the flotsam and jetsam that drift into our harbour of refuge, surely the other old law-term for all that is cast away on the high seas, Ligan—"that was attached to a float or buoy, and sunk where it could be found again"—applies to our Hospital babies, whose lives when they pass out of our sight it is perhaps better for us not to know. Yet though they have been sunk among the wreckage and the sliding ooze and sand; though foul weeds and the rotting timbers and rusty bolts of many a gallant ship are tangled together with evil creeping things, that make another garden to that of the little Sea Princess, nevertheless there is the link somewhere that binds the sunken treasure to God's sunshine and the upper air. Perhaps to some erring Tommy or Kitty, long ago a baby in our cots, the memory of kindly care and welcome somewhere, when the little boat floated within our reach, may be the bond between the neglected wanderer and the possibility of better things. It may be the beginning of a struggle for another anchorage, when the long-hidden treasure shall have drifted into purer waters, and Ligan, that lay, to all appearance, hopeless and forsaken in the fathomless depths of that great ocean, shall be lost among the ooze and wrecks and tangled weeds no more.

R. OLIVER.

### CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

MISS WOOD, in her most excellent paper—read before the British Nurses' Association, and which we reprinted last week—alluded at some length to a speech once made by the great novelist at a charitable dinner. It is so little known, that we think many of our readers would be glad to see it in its entirety, and so we now reprint it in full:—

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