

ous. One, I remember, was a great favourite, in which a visit to a haughty neighbour is described. There is great difficulty in getting in, for

"She wasn't in, and she wasn't out;  
She was up in the attic a-skippin' about."

The skippin' must have been caused by some toilet arrangements apparently, for after a while the beauty relents, and

"Down she come, as soft as silk,  
A rose in her bosom as white as milk."

This description was always received by the little critics with much enthusiasm. Alas! I never heard whether *she* accepted *him*, as the result of the interview.

In a small Ward off the big one were some very motherly little parties, whose cots during the afternoon became encumbered with dolls and fragments of dolls—dolls who required exceeding care, as they were suffering from all the diseases their little mothers were acquainted with. Hip disease, single or double, was very prevalent, and ingenious extension apparatuses were fixed to their wooden legs; while some had appliances for curvical spine disease, to which they were much addicted. The present of a little bit of strapping, or a teaspoonful of linseed meal, would always secure a happy afternoon among the dolls of the small Ward, while the little patient who might happen to be up and dressed, would fetch and carry from cot to cot, tapping about on her crutches, as busy as the best Ward Nurse.

On the other side of the Girls' Ward opened one for boys, and here the afternoons were even more lively. Trumpets, squeaking balls, jews' harps, and an instrument of torture on which shrieking notes are beaten out with a little hammer, were much in fashion; and when tired of these, a boy could always roll up his handkerchief—poor, ill-used Ward handkerchiefs—into a tight ball, which, fastened to a long bit of string—how is it that boys always know where to lay their hands on a bit of string?—makes an enchanting toy to throw at a neighbour's head, and pull back again before he can catch it.

One child in that Ward was to me long a subject of wonderment. A cradle having been placed in his cot, and the clothes arranged over it, the little fellow passed his days happily burrowed underneath, like Diogenes in his tub, only emerging for meals; he liked the darkness, as his eyes were weak. In the opposite corner lay patient Walter, quite still, in his long splints, making pretty mats, gentle and contented in his helplessness. He passed away to his heavenly rest with a smile—so long ago now, but I shall never forget it, for it was the first time I had seen death. Harry, who lay in the next cot, lingered till long after, with constantly increasing suffering. I had left the Ward

before he died, but they told me that the night he died he begged to be taken out and laid in the snow, that he might die the quicker; and so the baptism of suffering passed upon them both.

It is long ago, but the memories of the old Ward are on the whole very bright, and still very dear to me—the winter's memories of cosy fires, and new Christmas toys, and pretty texts and evergreens; and the summer memories of flowers, and visitors, and long afternoons under the shady trees of the picturesque old garden; and the pleasant Sunday afternoons, when the parents enjoyed coming from town, and sitting on the grass beside their little ones, and the strong men claimed the privilege of carrying the heavy stretchers and their delicate burdens up the old oak stairs, back to their Wards, at tea-time.

M. F. E. H.

### GIRL-NURSES.

BY A BRITISH MATRON.

THE following has lately appeared in our energetic contemporary, the *St. James's Gazette*, and we reprint it, partly because it is one of the signs of the general interest now taken in Nursing matters, and partly because it is a good example of how little the subject is still understood even by the leaders of public opinion. There are many points in this article which will amuse our readers, from the evident want of knowledge of the subject possessed by the writer. But we have too much respect for our contemporary to criticise this effusion severely, and merely bring it before our readers without further comment for the reasons we have stated.

"The last few years have witnessed the germination and rapid growth of a fashion for Nursing. Now, in itself there is nothing but what is laudable in a woman endeavouring to fit herself for a profession by means of which she may support herself by her own exertions. Moreover, Nursing is an admirable occupation, and one for which women seem to have some natural fitness. Yet, after all is said, the question remains, Is indiscriminate Nursing a desirable profession for young girls? I, for one, would reply emphatically, It is not. In the first place the work is excessively hard, far beyond the untrained and immature strength of most young girls. The official minimum age of twenty-five years, or even twenty-two, as publicly set forth in the prospectuses of many Hospitals, is to a certain extent a pleasing fiction. The writer is personally acquainted with girls who began their training at nineteen, and even under that age. The result of such a severe tax upon immature physiques is

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