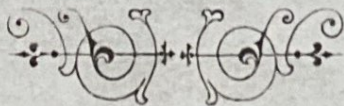


L I F E  
IN  
A H O S P I T A L,

BEING  
AN EAST END CHAPTER,

BY  
WALTER BESANT,

AUTHOR OF  
"ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN."



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# LIFE IN A HOSPITAL

BEING

AN EAST END CHAPTER.



IF you take Rocque's map of London and its suburbs for the year 1741-45—there is a reprint of it, very useful and instructive—and if you take the most important sheet of all, that containing the City, you may remark a multitude of curious and interesting facts. So interesting, indeed, is this sheet that you may study it for a great many days, and even years, and not exhaust its interest. One fact, quite new to you, will immediately strike your eye. It is that the vast great city we now call the East End did not then exist at all. There was no East End: all was open country, with an occasional village or cluster of houses. This was only a hundred and forty years ago. The Great Joyless City of two millions of people without a gentleman among them, or a rich man, or a nobleman, or an artist, or an author, or anybody at all lifted above themselves by culture and education—except the clergy—did not exist. There were already, it is true, signs of a tendency to spread eastwards. North of Houndsditch and the Whitechapel Road as far east as the church, there was a large collection of mean streets with not so much as a single church among them all, and only a single chapel. These houses terminated to the north in Swan Fields, where is now the traffic terminus of the Great Eastern Railway. After these, on the north and east, you came upon fields—the fields of Finsbury and those

amateur work ; it must be followed as a duty ; ladies must not drop in now and then, once a fortnight, once a month, when they have got no other engagements ; they must have fixed hours of work ; they must engage and pledge themselves as much as if they were regularly engaged and regularly paid as servants of the staff, and as if their livelihood was concerned in the conscientious and exact performance of their duties. It is not expected that they should go every day and all day, but on certain days and for certain hours. Money, flowers, pictures, easy chairs, toys, books—all may be given for the alleviation of the sick and suffering ; but the best thing that can be given—O ladies of tender and compassionate heart—is YOURSELVES.

WALTER BESANT.



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