



# Hospital Sketches [with Biographical Introduction]

*Louisa May Alcott*

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*Louisa May Alcott*

## **Hospital Sketches [with Biographical Introduction]** Louisa May Alcott

Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) was the daughter of famous transcendentalist, Bronson Alcott, but achieved notoriety herself as a writer of novels, letters and short stories. Growing up under the influence of such minds as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, Alcott took an early interest in writing, completing her first book in 1849. When she turned thirty, the Civil War was in full swing, and she left for Georgetown to serve as a nurse at the Union Hospital. Within six weeks Alcott contracted typhoid fever, the effects from which she would never fully recover. She spent her recovery time collecting, editing and fictionalizing the letters she had written to her family which described her experiences as a war nurse. These "Hospital Sketches", which brought Alcott instant popularity, relate the appalling conditions of the hospitals in graphic detail as well as her conversations with various injured soldiers.

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