

Surgeons" was the motto we wanted, and as it happened a favourite Visiting Surgeon came through just as we were trying to cut out a good "S"—we seemed to make such an elongated, effeminate-looking creature! He quietly took out a pencil and drew a sturdy "ST" on a card, which card I have kept to this day.

Christmas Eve found me trying to affix a small three-fold banner to a pretty little wicker table which stood in the centre of the Ward, and around which we always tried to keep fresh plants and ferns. Another of our Surgeons had taken great interest in a recipe for and subsequent attempt to wash the tall pampas grass which stood there too.

I was bending over my red, blue and white flag, when a glimpse of the outside world came to me. Some one with her little boy had left all the busy preparations that Christmas means in each household, to see how two little Hospital Nurses were getting on, and to bring them some of their good fare. Not only then, but Good Friday too, would see that good little Samaritan turn up, a friend indeed.

That evening I was too busy to finish and put up "Success to our Surgeons," and it would have remained down but for two bright girl patients, each of whom had been bad at one time, and now always seemed as if they could not do enough to help their busy young Nurses. So at the risk of being caught by the House Surgeon on his evening round, they stayed up till it was fixed over the mantelpiece, and then they popped into bed like rabbits into their holes. That Christmas morning again found me busy, as the first hymn sounded from above, in attending to an accident just in. In fact, till nearly midday the Head Nurse and I were hurrying to and fro, never resting.

But it was not always work. We had spirits and energy enough to find time for play too when off duty. Shall I now confess to the merry supper party given in one of the corridors; and tell of the little tables (most of us possessed those three-legged gipsy tables in our cubicles) ranged at intervals each side; of the combined good hampers from various homes; of the little green glasses, which each guest was allowed to carry away at the end of the festival; of the merry washing up afterwards, for all knew to-morrow meant "no time"; and how we finished up with "Auld Lang Syne" and "Sir Roger de Coverley," till nearly caught by the Night Superintendent? "Tell it not in Gath; whisper it not in Ascalon!"

Again Christmas came round; many familiar faces had gone, many new ones come. This next

spring would see us launched out afresh into the world, to make our own way, and to fight our own battles.

My real Christmas this year seemed to be on Christmas Eve, when during my two hours out I went round to St. Peter's, Eaton Square, and there heard some lovely carol singing, "Noël, Noël," ringing high. "Cradled all lowly" re-echoed in my ears for days after. A simple, quiet carol took my fancy greatly: "A single bell, pealing in the mist," comes in, and true enough the music rendered that. One saw the lonely village spire, the gathering gloom and mist, and heard the low peal. I believe the words are from Tennyson's "In Memoriam"—

"The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist."

That was a very trying Christmas.

All Nurses know what a Medical Ward can be sometimes in winter, with the fog and damp trying the poor bronchitis and phthisis men. Death had been fatally busy that week. One boy, Benjamin, a heart case, who was up and about, but not allowed to do much, with those tell-tale bluish lips of his, had asked permission to go home for the Christmas Day. And it had been arranged so. But, as the days drew near, he took to his bed. Christmas Day found him only just able to brighten up at the sight of the coloured silk handkerchief I had got for him—one for him, one for my bright-haired little Davy in the next bed, a little music-hall clog-dancer, who had been at death's door with pneumonia, but by now was already promising me a dance on the quiet with his clogs on. But Benjamin was passing away. Boxing Day, to which he had looked forward so much, found him "gone home" indeed.

As for the third time I heard "Hark, the herald angels sing" penetrating through the quiet Ward, I was standing by a quiet consumptive case, who, after lingering for weeks, had chosen that day, with "A Happy Christmas" in holly and berries upon the wall, to pass away as quietly as he had lived. An hour later, as I passed my one empty bed, I noticed some large letters—cut out at the time of the Jubilee—lying there. I knew not what they were. I saw an M, W, E, and O. All at once I discovered "Welcome!" Nothing would content me but I must have it up straight away over my one empty bed. Yes, he should be "welcome" whoever came next; he should be my "Christ-kind." After getting a handy man in bed to stitch the letters on to some material, I fastened it up, hoping, oh, so humbly, that tried and irritable as

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