

lighted. It will be beautiful, Nurse, won't it?' 'I hope so, Joey, for your sake.' 'I told him I had never seen a Christmas-tree in my *whole* life.' 'And what did the Doctor say to that, Joe?' 'He said, "Well, little Joe, after this one I am afraid you will never see another; for when little boys are so ill as you, they don't often get well again." It was nice to hear that, wasn't it, Nurse? Perhaps before one year I shall be in heaven. Won't that be nice? No more living out in the cold. No more worriting about the left-over speshall 'dishuns. I don't want to go out of this orspital again, nor out of this Ward. Couldn't I stay in this Ward always, Nurse?' 'I don't know, Joe. You see the Doctors think the other Ward better for you.' 'But, Nurse, I must stay here till after the Christmas-tree to-morrow.' 'Yes, dear.' 'And if I am asleep when it is all lighted up you will wake me, won't you, Nurse?' 'Yes, dear! Now go to sleep, little man; I am going to bed too. All the presents are done up; so good-night. You must be much better to-morrow, for we must all be happy on Christmas Day. Good-night again, little Joe.' 'Good-night, my Nurse. You will be sure and wake me when the tree is lighted up?' 'Yes, Joey.'"

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"Christmas morning dawned bright and frosty. The ground was white with the snow which had fallen during the night.

"Nurses are flitting in and out the Wards, exchanging good wishes, and I even hear the next Ward Nurses *admiring* our 'Savoie' and 'Piedmont.' A group of bright-looking Nurses, each wearing a sprig of holly, are standing in the door-way, comparing presents and cards, others are just returning from the early Communion, looking so well and happy in the bright, crisp morning sun. All seems to say, 'Peace and good-will.'

"I steal to the end of the Ward to see little Joe. I find him much worse, but he smiles a weary sort of smile, and wishes me a Merry Christmas; and fishing out from underneath his pillow the little sprig of holly with the text attached, sent him by the Flower Mission, he whispers as he presents me with his little all, 'At last it is Christmas-tree Day, Nurse.'

"I go on with my usual work, but I look long and often at my poor little favourite.

"I must pass over a little of what takes place now, but five o'clock comes at last; the children's tea is over; they have their hands and faces washed up, and are looking so bright and anxious. Little Nellie is sitting on her pillows, with her sore eyes bandaged up, singing—

" 'Tom he was a naughty boy,
As naughty as could be;
He used to whip the little girls
If they were less than he.'

"Nellie is a shy child, but since she is blindfolded she does not know there are any visitors in the Ward, and that they are smiling at her pretty song and the happy little singer, so she glides off to her next song, which happens to be, 'Once upon a time there were three Jews.'

"All is bright and pretty. The Doctor is lighting up the tree. The visitors almost all have a child to nurse. The baby from the next Ward is sitting on 'Savoie's' cot, and I see him pinch the jelly-fish-like legs; but as the owner of them does not cry, I pretend not to see what is going on. The tree looks lovely. I look round the Ward again. At the end I see the red screen is round Joe's bed; I pass behind it quietly, because the tree is all lighted up now, and there lies my little favourite asleep. I fold his wasted little hands, and kiss his closed eyelids, but do not wake him as I promised so faithfully to do, to see the Christmas tree in all its glory, for our little Joe could not be spared to us longer. He had gone to his home above. I kiss him again, and half whisper, 'Good-bye, little man!' when I see the text which was taken from the holly he had given me peeping from beneath his pillow. I read on it—

'In the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, now and for ever, Amen.'

I returned the holly to it, and lay it near the little hand so white and cold, and pass round the screen again, and out of the Ward to my own room."

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"And did you not help with the tree after all, Nurse?"

"No, dear, not that night."

And now I return to my present little patient, convalescent, and so anxious too for the morrow, and what it is to bring forth.

And I poke up the fire, and make a cheery blaze, and turn my thoughts to the ever welcome word "tea"—tea for the patient, and tea for the Nurse. So let us forget the past, and have a little talk of the very present—namely, 'specialite' tea and toast, in the firelight, and the advantages and disadvantages thereof.

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THE sweetest of all pleasures, and one that will never decay, is to cherish the heart that loves you.

THE LAWS OF LIFE.—The laws of moral and physical life are a thousand times more important to the multitudes of the world at large than they are to the few inmates who languish within the gloomy walls of a hospital or of a prison.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)