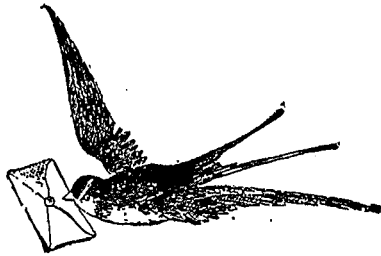


Our Foreign Letter.

A HOLIDAY IN THE LEBANON MOUNTAINS.



I spent my summer holiday in a sweet little village in the Lebanon Mountains, and oh, how I enjoyed it! Two whole months' rest!

I stayed part of the time with friends, whose summer residence is a short distance from the village. Two members of the family, father and son, are doctors, and are greatly beloved by all the native population, to whom—two days of the week during the three months of the year they reside at their mountain home—they give their services, never accepting any payment from the multitude of sick folk, who come sometimes at most inconvenient hours, to claim their care and skill. We were a big house party, and every day made delightful picnics under the pine trees, or took long walks in the cool of the day with now and then a drive down to Beyrout, and every day brought with it such a sense of rest, enjoyment, and renewed vigour to each one of us after ten months of hard work in hospital. We always tried to keep Sundays like we used to spend them in England, and although there was no real church in the little village, there was a large room arranged as nearly like one as possible, and one of the doctors read the morning service and we sang hymns, and whenever there was a clergyman of our party we had a sermon. One Sunday morning we were all starting out to walk to this very primitive church, when one of the doctors came to me and said, "Will you come and help me instead of going to church? A small boy has just arrived, a patient, with a fractured femur, so we must set to work and do our best for him." The little boy was accompanied by his mother and several other relations, but as the splint had to be made and then padded we sent them all away, only permitting the child's mother to remain with him. An orange-box provided us with wood for the splint, this had to be hewn and planed into shape, and then padded, and then the leg was set, the boy made as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and then put on a stretcher and carried very carefully to his home. The doctor and I both accompanied him to the cottage and put him to bed, telling his mother on no account to disturb the splint and to keep the little patient absolutely at rest. To all our injunctions she replied "Maloom ya hakeem, maloom, ya sittee" (Of course, doctor, or course, lady), and so we left the house, promising to call again later in the day.

Towards evening we went to have a look at the child, when to our dismay we saw him lying on the floor playing with his little sister. The splint was off, and when we asked the meaning of all this, the mother said, "Dachlak ya hakeem" (I be-

sech you, doctor), "don't be angry; soon after we arrived home a goatherd came to see us, and we told him all about the accident; he said the splint must be taken off at once or my boy would become "maflooge" (paralysed), so we took it off, and little Asa rests on the divan, and the goatherd is coming every day to rub the leg with oil, not hard you know, sir, but just a little gentle rub." All our trouble for nothing! The doctor said he would not attend the case any more, but I used to climb the hill every day to see how the leg went on. I was curious to see how this native management of the case would answer. To me it was so interesting, how this mountaineer, a goatherd, should know that massage is the right treatment—if rightly used—for fractures. Strangely enough, the boy did far better than we expected, or than some of us hoped; long before our holidays were over he was hobbling about and looking very well, but there is a shortening of about two inches of the leg. Well, we did what we could—we could do no more. That is the difficulty with cases nursed out of hospital.

And now the holidays are over and we are back at work again, and how delicious work is after such a good rest, in such delightful scenery, and the invigorating air of the mountains. All the people, both fellahs and townfolk, seem so glad we are back again, and every day numbers of patients, new and old, come for relief, or just to give us welcome home again. This morning I spied Sultany and Melia in the courtyard; they simply came to show themselves, not for medicine, for both now enjoy robust health. I forget if I told you about these two patients. It was one afternoon in the rainy season, that our late Matron, who was always "going about doing good," went down into the slums of the town and found in a one-roomed house built of tin boxes, a woman and her little two-year-old girl, lying on a piece of old matting on the earthen floor which formed their bed. In this part of the town there are a good many of these tin huts; they are made from the big tins which contain petroleum, which the natives term "gaz." In the little tin shed of which I am writing lay Sultany and her child; the woman had fallen ill from malaria, and consequently could not do any work, and both she and poor little Melia were almost dying from cold and starvation. There was no furniture whatever in the room, and under the damp matting on which the two were lying, huddled together trying to keep each other warm, the earth worms were crawling and the rain was streaming in through an aperture which served for the door. This woman had once been beautiful, but had lost the sight of one of her eyes, the lid of which was always closed, which added to her dejected appearance. She seemed to have lost all hold of life, and only wished to die. A carriage was hired to bring these two patients to the hospital, and in an hour's time both were lying between the blankets in clean, warm beds. Melia was quite equal to the situation, and was so delighted to have nice clothes and plenty of good food, and other children to play with, and she very soon became the pet of the ward. Her mother was much more difficult, and very tiresome about food of every kind, and about all the medicines tried to im-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)