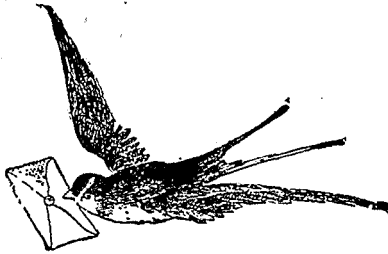


Our Foreign Letter.

HER ONLY CHANCE.



A group of grave-faced men were gathered round the bed on which lay a fair-haired girl, too recently out from home to have lost the pretty English complexion which is such an unceasing source of wonder to the dark-skinned natives, for whose benefit our little hospital exists; but already she had been gripped by malaria—gripped badly—so that we feared for her life as she lay inert, helpless, unconscious, she who not long ago had been the life and soul of our little band of nurses, with her bright, unselfish ways, and possessed of an energy only to be found in the newly-arrived, to whose blood the malarial parasite is a stranger.

We waited anxiously for the verdict, while the doctors, their examination finished, conferred apart. I especially, for Nurse — had been my special chum during our three years' training, and I felt responsible that her thoughts had turned to the tropics when inclination, destiny, and the good ship *Forward* took me there.

At last it came—"She will die—inevitably—there is not a chance, unless we can get her away to a cooler and healthier climate very speedily."

"Not a chance!" And the homeward-bound mails only put in at our port once a month, and one had left the week before! I thought of the mother at home, and set my teeth. "While there is life there is hope." Indeed, she would be a poor nurse who gave in because the patient had not a chance. Automatically I took the four hourly temperature, hoping against hope that the thermometer had something more cheerful to say. Alas, its record was persistently high; nothing seemed to touch it, though cool sponging afforded some relief. We watched in vain, however, for the welcome sign of a moist skin, heralding the perspiration which would mean at least a temporary lowering of the high temperature which was sapping the patient's vitality. In spite of drugs, in spite of all that medical science and nursing care could devise, the skin remained dry, harsh, burning, and the vacant stare of the unseeing eyes, with dilated pupils, were a grave indication of the condition of the nervous system of our patient.

With heavy hearts we settled down to another anxious night, for the nights were always still, breathless, suffocating, and the patient at her worst. But the night was not destined to be a quiet one after all. The British man in the tropics, and especially the British doctor, when faced with emergencies, is full of resource and promptitude, and when our doctor came for his last visit he said quietly. There is a man-of-war going up to — tomorrow. Perhaps I should more strictly speaking say the Captain is willing to make the journey and

take nurse up there, where she will be in time to meet the homeward mail. Can you have her on board by 5.30 to-morrow morning? It is her only chance."

I suppose my face fell, for I had heard of passengers put on board homeward-bound ships who had suffered much discomfort, died a lonely death, and been buried at sea. Death in a comfortable hospital ward was preferable to that, and yet—

"I don't think she can do without a nurse," I said, slowly. "I believe she would be bound to die. She needs so much care and attention."

"Do without a nurse!" he almost shouted. "I should think not, indeed. Of course, you are going, too. I've spoken to the Matron and arranged it. You are to go off duty now and pack your kit and then get what sleep you can; you'll want it before you are through with this. I'll see that there is a goat put on board so that you will have fresh milk, and other necessaries, too."

It was a sad little procession that went down to the harbour next morning. The doctor came off the warship to fetch us, and he, with our own, lifted the patient gently into a hammock, and the native boys from her own ward carried her down to the shore. Once on board, where the Captain—bless him—gave us his own cool deck cabin, all went well. We transhipped next day into the homeward-bound mail, and though we had many vicissitudes, and much anxiety as the good ship sped through the tranquil waters of the Indian Ocean, bluer than the sky which they reflected, and which seemed to slip away like oil from the ship's side, my patient and friend gained strength steadily, and by the time we arrived home I was able to deliver her to her mother, justified in the hope that her health would be fully restored, though I doubt if she will ever again return to the country which in a few short months had fascinated her with its charm, and laid its spell upon her in spite of all.

So anxiety gave place to joy—joy such as only the trained nurse probably knows fully.

TRAVELLER.

Review.

"STARS."

This little book, just published, which is written by Mr. Ellison Hawks, Secretary of the Leeds Astronomical Society, is worthy of the attention of nurses. Except during holidays there are few in the profession who have opportunities for observing the beauties of nature. But the stars are everywhere and always overhead, and many a district nurse in the country, and among the hills, tramping miles after dark, and alone, comes to look upon the planets and constellations as friends. "Stars" is written for young people, and in simple language such as they can understand, yet it covers as much ground as a beginner, or anyone with scant leisure, can overtake. There is a good index and forty-nine very excellent plates. The publishers are Messrs. T. C. and E. C. Jack. The price—a modest one considering the usefulness and scope of the little book—is half-a-crown.

E. A. S.

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