

## A CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM THE BIRDS

It was my first evening at the case, and the patient, an old lady nearly eighty, was telling me all about herself. Not about her aches and pains, though, not even the specialist's report, but all about her garden, her roses, her fruit trees, all pruned by her hands, and loved as if they were personal friends. Then, quite confidentially she said: "And oh, Nurse, I adore the birds. They are so tame and sometimes I am foolish enough to believe they know me. To-morrow morning when you draw up my blind you will see a wonderful arrangement on the verandah; but I won't tell you what, you must "wait and see." As I said "Good-night," I knew one thing about my patient—she was a lover of nature and found joy in the beauties of her garden. Next morning I was rather curious to draw up that particular blind, and knew that two sparkling eyes were eagerly waiting to see my face, and hear the report. There, hanging from the verandah rail, was a wooden box built like a house, and filled with crumbs and other scraps. Near by was half a cocoanut, and monkey nuts, threaded on a string. Best of all was a sweet little blue-tit having his breakfast.

"Now, Nurse, is he not a darling? Look how he works away at the nut. Please wait and see the larger tits; but they are greedy things and drive the little ones away."

And so I watched and, like the old lady, was fascinated by the antics of the birds. Certainly, as they looked in at the windows and chirped, one could not doubt that they knew and loved their kind friend.

Duty began. The doctor called, and it was not until lunch time that the birds again became the topic of conversation. My patient had finished her luncheon, and I had removed the tray and almost reached the door when a voice said: "Please, Nurse, do give me the scraps and Carrie will put them in the box." This evidently was a daily rule, for almost immediately the little maid arrived and in a few minutes the darling birds had their feast. All the blue-tit family were present.

As Christmas came, a new cocoanut was hung to the rail, and on Christmas morning could there have been a happier little lady in any sick room? In a very large envelope she found a large white card edged with red paper about half-an-inch wide, forming a frame. Little coloured scraps of little birds decorated the corners, and these were the words that followed:—

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All the little birds met for a conference on December 24th. An old bird was spokesman, and said that for years past there had always been a welcome for the feathered family at "The Grange." There, love and good words, with practical sympathy, were bestowed on all who came. He told of one who was known as Miss Morgan. After telling of her love and many kindly acts,

his face suddenly changed, and tears stood in his eyes. With a lump in his throat he said that their friend was ill! There was a sigh from all present and many were moved to tears. But suddenly one of a younger generation arose. He was a handsome young blue-tit, and he quickly demanded a hearing. As this was granted, he said in a clear voice that although their friend was ill, she could be seen smiling her "Good morning" through the window. At these words, there was a flutter of wings, and every bird present chirped a lusty "Hurrah." Then the spokesman proposed a Christmas carol should be given from the birds' full choir. This suggestion was heartily received. A second proposal was that a letter of appreciation should be sent to Miss Morgan. This was carried unanimously, and the party broke up with much rejoicing, all the songsters going off for a choir practice.

The old bird wrote the letter, and was heard to say: "Our thanks seem so little for all that our friend does for us, but if God loves all the birds He made, and knows if a sparrow falls to the ground, surely He knows and loves all who are kind to the humbler creation. Once I heard these words through a church window, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least, ye did it unto Me.' And so may God bless Miss Morgan, the birds' friend, and may their little songs cheer her on sad and weary days, till earth's songs cease and she awakes to hear the Angelic Choir singing that endless 'Hallelujah.'"

VERITAS.

## THE GREEK NURSING UNIT.

Sisters Evans and Williams, Baxter and Browne have returned from the front in Anatolia, and are again on duty in No. 2 Military Hospital, and in St. Charolombos No. 1 Military Hospital, Smyrna, very up-to-date hospitals, and where they have many patients—happily not too seriously wounded. Christmas, we have no doubt, will be celebrated as far as possible with the usual festivities dear to the heart of British Sisters.

Before leaving Eski Chehir a letter of thanks for their services to the Greek Army was given to the Sisters by the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army.

An old Turk, Mayor of Eski Chehir, and head of the Dervishes, presented each Sister with a carpet out of his mosque, which they, of course, prize greatly—that given to Sister Browne is a Persian prayer-rug 300 years old!

Warm clothing is greatly needed by the troops who will have to spend the winter at the front, which Queen Sophie is doing her best to supply. We do not hear of the very rich Greeks who are domiciled in Britain helping to supply these needs. Alas! the spirit of the Crusaders does not appear to burn with ardour in these Isles in these days. We presume Christian martyrs are too numerous to arouse a sense of sympathy, much less of shame, even in our so-called Christian churches—a very sad sign of degeneracy.

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