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AND

The Hospital World.

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Editorial.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

"It is a comely fashion to be glad,
Joy is the grace we say to God."

"A Merry Christmas." Right heartily we wish it to all our readers. Other words have had a trial—joyful, happy, peaceful, Christmases—we have been wished them all. But somehow no word touches the right note like the good old English "merry," and if for a while we leave it we come back to it with fresh pleasure.

When indeed can we be merry if not at Christmastide? The joy of the children, to whom Christmas is an ever recurring wonder and delight, the happiness of the poor, with whom it goes badly indeed if Christmas does not bring a little pleasure, a little extra comfort, into their hard lives, the general peace and good will infect us. The world seems bubbling over with happiness and merriment, and we must needs join in, stand aloof we cannot. So wherever we may be we keep the feast. Most ideally, perhaps, those of us keep it whose work is that of Night Nurse in a children's ward. Such of our number play the part of Santa

Claus to perfection, and the stockings tied to the foot of the cots by tiny excited hands are filled to overflowing with toys, sweets, and other delights of childhood. When at length the gas is turned up, and the "children return from the Palace of Peepy," their unmixed delight well repays all the trouble and forethought represented by the contents of those stockings, and the nurses have a few moments at least of pure unadulterated pleasure.

Again, if district nursing, how good it is to carry round, even to the "unthankful and the evil," tokens of Christmas goodwill. All very wrong, of course, from the point of view of the political economist, but for once we throw political economy to the winds, and allow the instincts of human kindness full play. After all, whatever may be said to the contrary, is there anything which so surely brings out the germ of good existent even in the most degraded as a kindly action?

As we listen to the Christmas bells this year, they will speak to us of many things: of the inspiration of all this happiness, of the passing of the old century, and the beginning of the new. What will it bring us? Listen to what the bells say:—

"Ring out the false, ring in the true."

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