

life, with its manifold duties and pleasures should dim our view of the Christ Child, and that, as of old, there should be "no room" for Him on His birthday. Let us keep our vision of Him undimmed, with His baby hands stretched out, full of good things to all who will take them. The best indeed that Christmas can bring us comes to us as we worship in silence and adoring wonder at the Manger Throne. We need to keep this aspect of Christmas especially before us this year when so many hearts are saddened by anxiety for those near and dear to them, who are now engaged in fighting the battles of their country. There are many again to whom anxiety is a thing of the past because the blow has fallen, and nothing now is left but bitter pain, and the knowledge that a rough grave on the African veldt holds all that remains of the gallant husband, or brother, or son, who went out so bravely and so full of life and hope, but a few weeks ago at the call of duty. For such, Christmas has surely an especial message, and, we may also be sure, that these bereaved ones will be much in the thoughts of the nation, and that its joy at this season will be tempered by soberness as it thinks of the price which has been, and is being, paid for our national honour.

To nurses Christmas is always a happy season. Their hands are full—overfull—of work, it is true; the season brings no cessation of duties, but many added ones to them. They cannot join the happy home party, but must remain at their posts, and by the time that Christmas Day is over there are few who are not thoroughly tired out. But they have the satisfaction of knowing that they have brought happiness and pleasure into many weary lives, and that the "Christmas in Hospital," anticipated with dread, will henceforward be regarded as a red-letter day by their patients, for all nurses know that at the end of Christmas Day there is always a unanimous verdict amongst hospital patients that never such a day has been spent before. Although they themselves are, by reason of their duties, debarred from sharing many of the privileges and pleasures which are the lot of others at this time, yet the fact that the season demands of them "abnegation of self, and devotion to others" is proof that their own Christmas Day is pervaded by the spirit which is the *raison d'être* of the festival. To all our readers, both professional and lay, we most heartily wish a very happy Christmas, and a full share of all the good things that the season brings.

Annotations.

ARMY COOKERY.

WE referred last week to the importance of good cooking as a factor in the recovery of the sick and wounded in the present war. It is a matter for congratulation therefore that six experienced civilian chefs, one a Scotchman and the other five Swiss, have signed contracts with the War Office, and will go out to the base hospitals to supplement the regular cooks. But after all, six experienced cooks are a mere drop in the ocean when we consider all the sick who have to be catered for. Not only officers, but private soldiers also, are entitled to good and dainty cooking when ill, there is no difference in the internal economy of sick men, whether gentle or simple, and coarse fare is equally bad for both. We hope therefore that the number of these experienced cooks will be largely augmented. It will be remembered that one of the greatest difficulties with which Miss Nightingale and her staff had to contend in the Crimea was the unsuitable food supplied for both patients and staff. Then Soyer appeared on the scenes, and to him is due much of the subsequent improvement in Army cooking.

It is noteworthy that one result of the Spanish-American War is that soldiers who are trained as Army Nurses are now required to attend a special course of training in invalid cookery, and are taught to cope with the difficulties connected with various kinds of stoves and fuels. During the Cuban war much of the cooking for the sick was necessarily undertaken by the already overworked women nurses, as the native cooking was so bad. The problem of how nourishing, appetising, and suitable food can best be ensured in our Army Hospitals is one which may well engage the attention of the authorities. Nursing Sisters, while on probation at Netley, might with advantage be required to take a certificate of proficiency in practical cookery for the sick before receiving appointments elsewhere.

With regard to the increasing feeling that cookery should form part of the curriculum of nurses we note that at the Royal Asylum, Perth, a Charge Nurse is now put over the kitchens, each Charge Nurse serving in this capacity in turn. The result of this system is that when these nurses apply for the higher posts, as Matrons, the likelihood of their success is materially increased.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)