

THE
BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No 1,081.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1908.

Vol. XL

Editorial.

THE MESSAGE OF PEACE.

"And so our hearts shall dance and sing,
And loud shall be the carolling
Around the Cradle of our King."

Alfred Gurney.

It was a happy thought which fixed upon Sunday, December 20th as "Peace Sunday"—the day on which in this, and many other countries, from pulpits in churches and chapels, sermons will be preached on the duty of adopting international arbitration between civilised nations, in the place of the primitive method of settling disputes by force of arms. For the message of Christmas is the message of peace—peace on earth and good-will toward men—and it is a reproach to us that two thousand years after the first Christmas night even those nations which profess themselves Christian still think it legitimate for men to slay one another as a means of deciding international differences. What theme then could be more fitly discussed by the accredited messengers of the Prince of Peace at Christmastide than that of international arbitration; what work more surely bring blessing to those engaged in its promotion than the advancement of the peace of the world. Blessed are the Peacemakers.

And not to nations only, but to individuals also the message of Christmas is the message of peace. Deep down, enshrined in the hearts of those who remember the true meaning of Christmas, is the peace which passeth all understanding and the joy no man taketh from them. This is the root of Christmas happiness, Christmas merriment—of that gaiety which finds expression in the customs which we associate with the season. Is not, for instance, the habit of giving gifts to our friends a continuation

of the act of the wise men from the East, who for joy offered their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh at the manger-throne at Bethlehem? And is not the peace of the season so deep and real that for sheer light-heartedness it bubbles over in merriment?—Merriment which in thousands of homes throughout the country brings happiness for a brief season to those whose lives are all the year strenuous and hard; and to the little children whose festival Christmas is pre-eminently.

And so, although some folk would have us change the good old-fashioned Christmas greeting, and wish us a happy, a peaceful, a blessed, and other manner of Christmases, and though no doubt all of these find place in our keeping of the festival, yet somehow none of these greetings ring as true as does the one which can never be dislodged from its place as first favourite, "A merry Christmas."

Christmas is first of all a sacred season—that is its *raison-d'être*; but its fun and frolic are also the true and natural expression of the joy which the season brings with it. That is one reason why in every hospital throughout the country doctors and nurses do their utmost to make Christmas Day a red-letter day in the memories of all who are under their care at the time; and succeed so well, that years afterwards the "Christmas I spent in hospital" is a day remembered by many a patient as one of the most memorable in his life. Most nurses also will agree that for sheer happiness, for an ideal place in which to spend Christmas Day, a hospital is hard to beat. It is instinct with the spirit of the festival—its seriousness, its gaiety, its self-oblation. Very heartily, therefore, we wish to all our readers—to the sick and the well, to patients and nurses—a very merry Christmas and many of them.

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