

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No. 1,237

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1911.

Vol. XLVII.

EDITORIAL.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS.

The BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING travels so far and wide that its Christmas and New Year's Greetings must be given early, if they are to reach its friends and supporters in time for these sacred and festive seasons, and indeed, even now, they will not reach our readers at the antipodes until the fair clean page of the New Year, which promises to be an important one in the annals of nursing, lies open to be inscribed.

To one and all of our readers, in their manifold spheres of work, we send the heartiest greetings for their happiness and success in their work, and the hope that this Christmas will be the happiest which they and their patients have yet spent.

If we had to select the ideal place in which to spend Christmas, we should unhesitatingly mention the wards of a hospital for choice. It matters little where that hospital is located. In the centre of the metropolis of the world, in some lonely outpost of Empire, in town or in country districts, there we find the spirit of Christmas everywhere dominant, and the heart of it all is the children's ward, for Christmas is pre-eminently the children's festival, and though its happiness and joy should be shared by the children in every house in all professedly Christian countries, too often its beauty is dimmed for them by the conditions of their surroundings, and Christmas in a hospital may be the first experience of the happiness, the gaiety, the fun and frolic of the season when it is observed with devotion, sobriety and innocence. Perhaps it is because nurses realize this, that they bend every endeavour to make the festival a red letter day for the patients under their

care, so that they may carry away with them the memory of a well-spent Christmas which shall raise their ideals for those that are to come. Therefore all, from the Sister to the new probationer, and the convalescent patients, are pressed into the service, and not the least happy time is that of preparation and anticipation.

Science has decreed that evergreen wreaths and ornamental mottoes shall be banished from our midst, for they accumulate dust and are out of place in a ward whose first purpose is the service of the sick. But even science has not suggested the dethronement of the Christmas tree, the anticipation of which fills the hearts of the children with delight, and their sleep with dreams of Santa Claus, fairies, and all the genii of the season. And it is not only in institutions that nurses carry with them the joy of the season as they go about their work, although it is there that it holds high carnival. In the streets and alleys of our great cities as they pass up and down on their beneficent errands of healing and regeneration as district and school nurses, and social service workers, the spirit of joy seems to enter the sick room with them and to abide there when they have passed on their errand of mercy to others in need of their services, bringing gleams of brightness into the darkest places. All happiness be yours, brave workers, who so largely contribute to the happiness of others.

There is one group of institutions to the thought of which our hearts turn sorrowfully and pitifully at this season, it is to the prisons which, grim and forbidding, enclose those unfortunate persons whom the law has decreed must suffer for its infringement. Let us hope that even there also some gleam of brightness may reach that sad community.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)