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EDITORIAL.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

The holiday season, to which most of us look forward as a rule, with so much pleasurable anticipation, finds few of us in a holiday mood this year. It is not possible, when every day brings its story of pain, suffering and death, in the ranks of our armies and those of our Allies, when there are few homes throughout the kingdom where the occupants are untouched by bereavement, anxiety or suspense, and when our hearts ache continually for the youth of our country, for whom life holds so many pleasant things, in peril of their lives by sea and land, and willingly making the supreme sacrifice in order that they may hand down to those that come after them the heritage of freedom which their forefathers won. We think, too, of those others subjected to the monotony and weariness of imprisonment far from home and friends, in the hands of a relentless foe, of the sick and wounded in hospitals, at home and abroad, of the brave men who never more will see the light of day, the rosy glow of dawn, the tender green of spring, the purple of the heather and the gold of the bracken in autumn—all the loveliness of which nature and art are so lavish—and we feel sore at heart and out of tune with the holiday mood.

Yet, for these very reasons, it is the duty of those who can to rest for a while so as to gather up strength for the future. As nurses we realize the duty of conserving our health, for to allow ourselves to get below par is to offer a lowered resistance to disease, and this cannot be done without injury to the community. Just now, when the demands of Navy and Army for medical practitioners are insistent, and those available for the care of the civilian population must be reduced to the lowest number com-

patible with essential requirements, it should be a matter of conscience with all of us to take reasonable care of our own health, and of that of any persons for whose welfare we may be responsible. We know that pestilence and famine follow often in the wake of war. The Prime Minister has given us assurances that with reasonable carefulness there is no prospect in this country of the latter, and the care exercised by our Medical Officers of Health is the best guarantee against the former. Yet the arrival in the Port of London this week of a ship with cases of bubonic plague on board, and reporting that others had been buried at sea, is an indication that while there is no ground for excessive apprehension, there is need for vigilance.

Nurses are learning that preventive work must go hand-in-hand with the cure of disease, and that the old proverb "Prevention is better than cure" is founded on the rock of scientific truth. We may share in such prevention when we drop a word in season which may be the determining factor in deciding that a holiday shall be taken instead of abandoned. The past year has been a strenuous and harrowing one; there are very few who have not felt the strain, and who do not need the rest and relaxation, mental as well as physical, which their annual holiday affords, to fit them to meet the coming winter. Let us for a while get as close as we may to the heart of Nature, learn her secrets and absorb her quietness, serenity, and strength. It will be time well spent.

There are many accustomed before the war to spend their holidays abroad, to whom a closer knowledge of their own country will bring many delightful surprises. There are few counties which have not their beauty spots, while the charm of our Cathedral cities, of Lakeland, and Bonnie Scotland attracts visitors from all over the world.

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