

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

No. 1,812.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1922.

Vol. LXIX

EDITORIAL.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Once again the Christmas season bids "Good Christian men rejoice," and, indeed, preparations are well in hand for celebrating it with all circumstance and honour. There is expectancy in the air. Expectancy not only on the part of the children but on that of adults, for deep graven on our hearts is the memory of those Christmases when, on sea and land, our sons and daughters braved death under various guises; when merriment was impossible, and when we kept the feast as a Holy Day indeed, but shorn of the accompanying festivities with which from our childhood it has been so happily associated.

Now, once more, in spite of depleted purses, the country intends to have a merry Christmas, and to all our readers, comprising that wide circle at home, and in every quarter of the globe, whom we are proud to call our friends, we right heartily wish all the happiness that the season can bring them.

In the happiness and security of home many families will for a brief space be reunited. When we enjoy this happy comradeship, do not let us forget to whom we owe this happiness and security—"With a great price obtained I this freedom"—and just across the channel thousands upon thousands of small white crosses, and of graves with simple headstones, testify that our present security is due to the valour of those intrepid men who loved not their lives to the death, but offered them up, a living sacrifice, an impregnable wall of flesh against a hail of fire from machine guns, in defence of home and Empire.

But there are others, of equal valour, whose fate is still more hard—the maimed, the halt,

the blind, who have returned home, broken on the wheel of fate at the threshold of life, who need all the gratitude, all the help, with which we can surround them.

And yet others—the able-bodied—those who have returned to the country where, during the years of war, they were told they would find homes fit for heroes to live in; and work congenial and plentiful.

And now—we meet these ex-Service men, disheartened, disillusioned, having the will but not the opportunity to work, eking out a pittance in our streets by selling flowers, sweets, bootlaces, matches, anything and everything by which they can earn an honest penny—and we offer them our poor pence, ashamed, yes ashamed, that men to whom we owe our security, our honour and our lives, should be abroad in our streets, patient, restrained, hoping without bitterness for the better times which are so painfully slow in coming, reduced to living under conditions of penury and tragedy.

Surely no one who has the least perception of what those years of war entailed, any comprehension of their great deliverance, or gratitude to their deliverers, will fail, when making arrangements for their own Christmas happiness, to search out one or more out-of-work ex-Service men, and see to it that the warmth, the glow, the happiness of Christmas penetrates their consciousness and makes them feel that the nation is not unmindful of their patriotism. If we cannot do this personally, one of the funds or societies which demonstrate to these men that they are "not forgotten" will gladly act as our almoners; but "charity begins at home," and the personal touch, the personal act of friendship, are incomparably better than "organised" alms.

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