

Royal British Nurses' Association.

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THE R.B.N.A. NURSES AND CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Her Royal Highness the Princess Christian sends you her best wishes for a very happy Christmas, and hopes that you will all have a very delightful day." This was the first greeting of the day at the Club at Queen's Gate and was received, with cheers, at the breakfast table; and the kind wish of the beloved President of the Royal British Nurses' Association seemed to ring through each hour of the day. "The very best Christmas I have ever had," we heard more than one nurse say. Perhaps one of the things that helped most to make it seem a real Christmas was the fact that almost every one in the Club took some little part in carrying through the arrangements for the day. Then surely no house could lend itself with better effect to Christmas decoration, of a real old English kind, than does 194, Queen's Gate. The brightest of holly berries wreathed the high panelling of the dining room and clustered round its old brown clock while, in the drawing room, great boughs of holly spread themselves from the tall Japanese vases on the pillars on each side of the fireplace and bunches of mistletoe hung from the alabaster light shades and about the beautiful old gold of the mirrors. To add to the effect Miss Swaby Smith had most thoughtfully brought some Yule logs which crackled and flickered in true Christmas style. A picnic lunch in the middle of the day was all the merrier because of its unconventionality, and throughout the afternoon there was always a happy group of callers to be found around the hall fire where, to the accompaniment of a continual rustle of opening parcels, there rang the joyousness of many a Christmas greeting mingled with much good-natured banter and the happy voices of little children. For we were greatly favoured at Queen's Gate. Miss Anita Rowan had a small niece and nephew as her guests for Christmas, real Christmas children with all the capacity of the children of thirty or forty years ago for enjoying to the full the festivities and wonders of the Christmas time, one a dainty girl with brown eyes and a pretty ribbon of blue in her dark hair and the other a little Blue Coat boy of nine, very proud of his quaint dress which he told us was

worn in the days of King Edward the Sixth. After lunch he and his sister played Father and Mother Christmas for the domestic staff of the Club and, with great care and a feeling of the vast importance of their mission, carried down a trayful of gifts followed by many nurses who wished personally to offer to the staff their good wishes and to express their thanks for the kind and efficient service they can always rely upon when they return to their home from home after each arduous case. The staff rose and drank to the prosperity and good health of the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Club.

Many members dropped in for Christmas tea and to nibble Christmas cake and chat round the fire. Then a peep at the dining-room brought congratulations for Miss Liddiatt and Miss Swaby Smith on their morning's work of decorating the dining table. It was gay with yellow tulips, and from among the masses of holly, that ran down the centre of the horseshoe table, there rose slender glasses filled with white and yellow jonquils. Sweets of all sorts were set like gems in little glass dishes among the berries, and the beautiful crackers, given by Mrs. Hayes Palmer and Miss Glover, added not a little to the general effect. But there were many who thought that the most beautiful feature in the whole scheme of decoration was the banner. Hung from the wide projecting cornice over the window at the top of the room it swayed softly overhead when a breath of air came from the open window at the opposite side of the room, while the light played on its golden scroll with the grand old motto, "Steadfast and True," which has found its way into the Association like a breath from mediæval years.

The Christmas dinner was given by Mrs. John Temple, M.R.B.N.A. First came a dainty savoury, then hot soup, and next two fat turkeys arrived upon the scene, followed by all their usual attributes on Christmas day. Later those sitting near the door saw strange flickering lights and shadows in the hall beyond, and presently the page arrived carrying high a Christmas pudding all wreathed in purple flame. There was a stupendous cheer, and the dish of mince pies bringing up the rear must have felt decidedly "in the shade." Mrs. Temple had sent up some of the finest champagne in her cellar, there were fruits

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