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EDITORIAL.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Our present issue carries with it warm, good wishes to all our readers, at home, throughout the Empire, and farther wherever it finds a welcome, whether in lonely and torrid swamps of South America, in sunny Africa, within the Arctic Circle, in far-off China, to which wonderful country the attention of the nurses of the world is now directed, in Japan where our friendships date from the days when Miss Hagiwara won all our hearts at the Congress of the International Council of Nurses in London in 1899, in Korea, America, Cuba, as well as in the countries of Europe, in all of which we have pleasant and enduring friendships.

The Christmas Season, above all others, is one that speaks of peace, goodwill, and happiness; peace, because the Message of Peace chanted by the Celestial Choir on that first Christmas Eve still resounds through the centuries:—

“Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth Peace to men of Goodwill.”

Happiness, because Christmas is pre-eminently the children's Festival, and childhood is a happy season unless it is overshadowed by the misunderstanding or unkindness of older folk. Be it ours this Christmas to bring happiness into lives which have less than their share.

At this season also we think of those who have gone before with the sign of faith, whose visible presence on earth no longer gladdens our hearts, to whom they were so near, and so dear. Is there just a tinge of sadness at the Christmas Season when we think of those who were wont to share its joys with us? Yet we do not doubt that Christmas has for them an even deeper meaning now than when they were on earth, and that in their worship and adoration they are not unmindful of those to whom they were so closely bound by ties of relationship or friendship. It gives to our observance of the Christmas Season a note of solemnity, as well as of joy, to remember that “with angels, and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven,” their worship before the Manger Throne unites with ours and draws us closer to them.

Saints departed even thus
Hold communion still with us;
Still with us beyond the veil
Praising, pleading without fail.
With them still our hearts we raise,
Share their work and join their praise.

From our heart we wish to each and all of our readers, wherever they may “Keep the Feast,” an abundant realisation of its joy.

THE HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD.

We always anticipate with pleasure the report of Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, to the President of the Board, and that on “The Health of the School Child” for the year 1925 is of extraordinary importance and interest. In addition to the usual features of the Report there is important information on the health of the young child on admission to school; on the school building in relation to health; on the prevention of rheumatism and heart disease; and on goitre, artificial light, ionisation and physical education, which should be of interest not only to Education Committees, and school medical officers and nurses, but to parents and others concerned day by day with the welfare of the school child.

Dr. Newman points out that the School Medical Service exists specifically for the purpose of carrying out the duties imposed by the Education Act, of providing for the medical inspection of children in public elementary schools, for making or otherwise securing adequate and suitable arrangements for attending to their health and physical condition; and for similar duties regarding the inspection of children in secondary and continuation schools, with power to make arrangements for attending also to their health. These duties fall naturally under three main headings, namely, (a) inspection for the discovery of defects and disease; (b) curative measures; and (c) preventive measures, and the preventive measures are perhaps, says Sir George Newman, the most vital. Ostensibly the object is to fit the child, then and there, to receive and benefit from the system of education provided by the State. But to do this it must achieve something more than the mere remedy of defects. It must teach the child the way to health, it must train the child in health, it must prepare body and mind for the child to grow into a healthy adolescent and adult. It should lay the foundation of national health and of national capacity.

The crucial test of a sound School Medical Service is not the cure, year by year, of so many children suffering from ill-health, or impairment of physique. The School Medical Service is *educational*, and that is the reason why it falls within the duty of the Local Education Authority.

The total number of nurses in the service of Education Authorities is 4,520, and it is unquestionable that their valuable and, for the most part, very inadequately remunerated work, has helped to promote these objects.

From a civic as well as a professional point of view the influence, and, therefore, the usefulness of the School Nurse, is far reaching and important.

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