

were to share in our Christmas cheer, arrived from other parts of the town and gathered with the rest round the drawing-room fires and the cake with its flickering candle-light. There was much good-natured banter as treasures were "unearthed" from one of cook's masterpieces, for she had absolutely refused to allow the Nurses' Christmas cake to be baked anywhere but in her own domain, despite the fact that this involved an extra amount of tedious picking of fruit for herself and her staff. Two red robins escaped annihilation as ornament after ornament disappeared when the cake grew "beautifully less," for these were the only two red breasts seen in Queen's Gate this December and they were spared to the last. After tea two Members entertained us with weird stories of ghostly visitations until the time came to dress for dinner and we all trooped, some forty-five or so, into the dining-room with its long horseshoe tables decorated with yellow and white chrysanthemums, (these, also, Miss Treasure's gift). Round the panelling was a garland of holly with bright red berries and trailing ivy fell about the banner, from the electric lights and from the arch with its bunch of mistletoe in the centre; for the evergreens we were indebted to the Dowager Lady Leith of Fyvie who sends a generous supply every Christmas season. The dinner progressed gaily and suddenly all the lights went out and "the R.B.N.A. Hilda" appeared carrying triumphantly the Christmas pudding, enveloped in purple flame and greeted with rounds of applause. How cook managed it we do not know but those gorgeous flames seemed as though they would never go out; they did at last and the Christmas pudding shared the fate of other good things. Wires bringing good wishes were received from H.R.H. The President, Mrs Bedford Fenwick, and Mrs John Temple. Crackers began to go off and soon we found ourselves in a fancy dress party. Then there was the usual list of toasts which we always honour on Christmas night; after the first loyal toasts of The King and H.R.H. the President, came those for colleagues and friends to whom we owe gratitude. Mrs. Temple, the Fairy Godmother, had sent, with other gifts, a generous supply of fine champagne for that very purpose. Then the fruit, which had grown in the night, was picked from the Christmas tree and distributed, and everyone adjourned to the drawing room, a few to sit about the fire, most to dance to the strains of the new gramophone. Later, songs and stories were contributed to the evening's entertainment and a general good humour prevailed, despite the fact that vengeance had been threatened upon certain enterprising ladies who (with great success, be it admitted) had managed, from one receiver to another, to engineer bogus calls for certain of their colleagues just before dinner was due to be served.

But all good things come to an end and the Christmas party began to break up when the time came to telephone for a taxi to take the ladies back to the Settlement Home. One enterprising visitor from there really did manage to convince the Secretary that the drawing-room clock was half an hour ahead of Greenwich time, but before the taxi was dismissed it was proved that time waits not even on Christmas night; more good-byes were said, more kind wishes expressed, "and so to bed."

We were delighted to have at our Christmas festival, a number of Members not in residence at the club, and also it was a great pleasure to have with us Miss Mary van der Hoop from Holland, who promised to take all our messages of good will to the Members of the Association of Nurses in Holland. One guest who came in for a goodly share of attention was Kevin Rhu, Miss Pelham Williams' beautiful

Irish setter. He apparently quite realised that the blue of the drawing-room hearth-rug was becoming to his chestnut coat, accepted the most brazen compliments with a lofty indifference and was not even disturbed, in his harmony with things in general, when a carrotty haired damsel sought to compliment herself by saying that his coat was just the colour of her hair. To prove her in the wrong her colleagues challenged her to light a cigarette on Kevin's coat!

One of the delights of this Christmas time has been our postbag from abroad. We have received from Nurses in all parts of the world most lovely messages, all reminiscent of times they spent in our Club. It has not been possible to find time to reply to many of these, but we take opportunity here to ask our friends to accept our thanks for all their kind words which have meant so much to us. Also, besides those already mentioned, there are many to whom we offer thanks for gifts for our festive board, for the tree, etc. We have thanked them by letter but wish to add a word of appreciation here also, although the limitations of space debar a list of names.

The Secretary would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Members, who were not in the Club on Boxing Day, and who contributed to the Christmas box for the Domestic Staff. The Nurses have indeed been more than generous in this matter and a notice signed by all members of the Staff and sent up for the notice board expressed gratitude and referred to the pleasure which it always gives to them to work for the Nurses. On the other hand non-resident, as well as resident, members have told us how delightful it is to them to be received at the door so courteously, and with a pleasant word of greeting, by members of the domestic staff.

ISABEL MACDONALD.
Secretary to the Corporation.



H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ARTHUR OF CONNAUGHT, R.R.C., S.R.N.
President of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)