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EDITORIAL.

GREETINGS NEAR AND FAR.

Once again the Christmas Season is close upon us, and with its advent our thoughts go out to a multitude of friends all the world over. It is one of the happinesses of journalism, and especially of the Editor of the official organ of professional nurses' organisations, that we are brought into relation both by pen and by personal contact with so many distinguished colleagues, so that the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING seems to us a very live letter, each month carrying our thoughts to them and bringing theirs to us.

Very specially is this the case at the season of peace and goodwill. North, south, east and west, to five continents, in all of which we number many friends, our thoughts penetrate to our colleagues of the British Empire, to many dear friends in the Associations of Nurses affiliated in the International Council of Nurses, and we wish them a Christmas brimful of happiness, and the joy that comes of striving to achieve the happiness of others. Have we not learnt that this is the true secret of our own?

The art of home-making is one in which the British people appear to be specially adept, and nowhere are Christmas festivities indulged in with greater ardour and success. From the highest to the humblest homes in the land the Christmas spirit permeates, our hospitals are filled with it, we do well to hold it fast while we may, for it is most precious.

What is it that makes it so? Surely the essence of Christmas is that we commemorate the birth of the Christ Child—the birth in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn. We shall do well to keep this in mind. It is right that Christmas should be a time of fun and merriment, but do not let us forget that in essence it is a sacred festival, that indeed is its *raison d'être*, and if we are to savour its sweetness we must not allow this remembrance to be crowded out, we must treasure the true inwardness of the festival and make room in our hearts, as in the manger of old, for the Babe of Bethlehem. As we go about the work which throngs and presses, we can keep in memory the purpose of the day, and who shall say how thoughts pass, and how others, who perhaps might not "keep the feast" may realise somewhat of its power and find unconsciously, inexplicable comfort and joy.

As the years go by is there perhaps a tinge of sadness as we note the vacant places once occupied by those dearly loved, yet, "how grows in Paradise our store,"

and the veil is thin. One day we too shall stand in the light.

Those of us who number children in our households or in institutions where our work lies, may count ourselves happy, for Christmas is pre-eminently the Children's festival, and when Christmas Eve comes, limp little stockings are hung at the foot of each bed, and sleepiness overcomes excitement in the hope that Father Christmas will come the sooner, and that when they wake limpness will have given place to bulkiness, and the stockings will be full to bursting with the very things upon which their desires were centred in the weeks preceding Christmas.

Do they really believe that a beneficent Father Christmas comes in the midnight hours. Who knows? We do know however, that shouts of delight hail the examination of stockings as the child population awakes, and that we too, carrying our minds back over the years, become for the moment little children once again.

And what about the children who attend in crowds in the outpatient departments of our hospitals? What an amount of pleasure can be given to them at small expenditure. Unwonted dainties for hungry little stomachs, toys that give untold pleasure even if it be ephemeral. It is well worth while to make some personal sacrifice to see the joy which overspreads the small faces.

And the mothers and babies. The babies come first, of course, for what mother is content if her babe is not? And its wants are not many after all, warm woollies, pretty frocks, and—well surely on Christmas Day, just for a treat, baby may have a good old fashioned comfortable cuddle. We know this is anathema nowadays, although doctors are not unanimous on the point.

And then the mothers. Nothing comes amiss to them. Tea, sugar, cakes, oranges, clothing, shawls, goodies, mince-pies, for are there not many mouths at home waiting to be filled, and eager little hands will be outstretched for a share of some of the pleasures of the Season. It is only just, is it not, that none should go empty-handed. So let us think what we can do, let us pour out good will, and make for the happiness of others, as that is what really matters.

North, south, east and west, we shall observe Christmas once more. The traditional Christmas of the British Isles is one in which snow and ice play their part. But the Christmas anthem rings just as true in the torrid as well as the temperate and frigid zones.

"*Venite adoremus*," "O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord."

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