

### THE DIVINE ESSENCE OF CHRISTMAS.

We do not think that any one will dispute the fact that the very happiest place to spend Christmas is inside hospital walls, and it would be invidious to make comparisons, because the inspiration of the hospital spirit is expending self (and incidentally every penny one can afford) in making others happy. "Matron" is often the mainspring of the joy machine, but Sisters and Nurses are the willing operators, and but a minority of the patients are so ill that they do not respond and enjoy intensely the days of preparation when the ward is touched with fairy fingers and turned into a magic bower. Then the gifts from friends and nurses—

most superbly situated and splendid hospitals in the world, and those of us who live in Westminster, close to our glorious tidal river, Father Thames, can lean on the wall in the Victoria Gardens and across the water admire its beauty; a garland of rose-coloured pavilions on its broad terrace fringed with trees, proudly facing the Houses of the Mother of Parliaments, the Clock Tower (home of Big Ben), and the fine Victoria Tower where the Flag flies, where legislators in their wisdom or otherwise discuss matters of the moment, which may or may not materialise for our good!

We paid our first visit to St. Thomas's Hospital half-a-century ago, in the pre-historic reign of Mrs. Wardroper—but that is another story!



THE TERRACE, ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, AND THE CLOCK TOWER.

"Just the very thing I wanted!"—and as for the special fare, what patient ever felt too bad to thoroughly enjoy and digest it? A physical fact, only to be credited to the power of mind over matter!

We never feel we have thoroughly come in touch with the divine essence of Christmas unless we have been privileged to visit hospital wards, and this year the kind Matron of Royal St. Thomas's invited us to take part in her Party in the Nightingale School for Nurses on Boxing Day, and listen to the Carols rendered throughout the wards by a group of the younger nurses belonging to St. Thomas's Nurses' Musical and Dramatic Society, involving many hours of genuine hard work.

We all know St. Thomas's Hospital to be one of the

Boxing Day, 1929, found us the guest of Miss Lloyd-Still, taking tea in the beautiful oak panelled dining-room in the Nightingale Home. Here we met Mr. Bonham-Carter (the son of the Mr. Bonham-Carter of a half-century ago, the Secretary of the Nightingale Fund), himself now occupying the same position. How marvellous the evolution in Nursing since those far-away days. Let us hope it may ever retain the vitality to which Miss Nightingale referred, when, in one of her Annual Letters to Probationers, she reminded them that "Every Nurse must grow"; unless her efforts bear fruit "it is all gilding and veneering."

The "Nightingales" of all ages gathered together in happy comradeship in their beautiful "Home" appeared to have followed the teaching of their Foundress

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