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EDITORIAL.

A CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

To innumerable friends and colleagues, at home, throughout the Empire, and abroad, THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING carries right heartily the time honoured message—"A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year," for what words can we find which will better express our good wishes at this season?

All round the world trains and ships will hasten, carrying to busy cities and to lonely outposts our messages of remembrance and good will, and, as Christmas and the New Year draw near, we know that we shall, as in former years, sense the good will conveyed to us, through the ether, from dear friends near and far. The very palpable atmosphere of friendliness and concord is one of the happiest characteristics of the festival of the Prince of Peace.

To each and all of the members of the 29 associations affiliated in the International Council of Nurses our greetings are extended, as well as to those associated together in the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain. We think of them gay and joyful during the Christmas season as, to the limit of their capacity, they are intent on bringing happiness into the lives of others. Despite the weight of suffering concentrated in our hospitals, their wards are happy places on Christmas Day, and both the nurses, who take such pains to make them so, and the patients, who benefit from their efforts, are agreed, as the day draws to a close and the last good-nights are said, that, for choice, a hospital ward is the best and cheeriest place in which to spend Christmas.

And not alone in the wards, but in the out-patient departments of our hospitals, in the homes of patients visited by district nurses, and amongst the school children throughout the country, the spirit of Christmas happiness is infused.

And because of close contact with their patients, and a glimpse of the endurance, amounting in some instances to heroism, in their daily lives, there are many nurses, we believe, whose thoughts will turn to former patients living in conditions of poverty and unemployment, in dwellings which are in no sense homes. Thank God the cloud is lifting from the menace of unemployment and the dreariness and dangers associated with slum life, but it still persists in some areas, and there could be no greater happiness and privilege than to bring some brightness at this season into the lives of men, women and little children living under such conditions.

A very special greeting is reserved for the International students at Florence Nightingale International House, most of them far from their own dear countries.

They will realise we feel sure, how happy an English Christmas can be.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE THANKSGIVING DAY.

As will be seen in our Report of the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, on November 21st, the Grand Council decided to institute the observance of May 12th, the birthday of the great Founder of Modern Nursing, as "Florence Nightingale Thanksgiving Day."

The Nurses of the world, and especially of Great Britain, have the supreme honour of claiming as their leader and lawgiver one of the greatest women the world has known, and it is fitting that they should annually give corporate thanks for her birth, and for the benefits bestowed through her upon the sick, upon trained nurses and the world at large, that we should keep fresh in our minds the memory of her genius, her supreme powers of organisation, her devotion to whatever task she set her hand until it was accomplished, her courage, inspired by her inflexible will, her sympathy with suffering, and her passion for public health and sanitation; that as each anniversary of her birth comes round we should honour it with joyful ceremony, and tell afresh the story of her life, so that generations of young nurses shall be inspired by a devotion to her person, and the desire to follow her example. How far-reaching such a devotion and aspiration may be the history of the past will show.

For what was the great factor which raised the nursing of the sick from the evil case into which it had fallen, and attracted to its ranks some of the flower of womankind?

Unquestionably the personality of Florence Nightingale, and the inspiration of her example.

That example is a living force to-day, and trained nurses, in many lands, have determined through their National Councils, in co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies, to help to found in her honour an international educational memorial which shall, in some degree, be a worthy tribute to her greatness.

By personal gifts, put aside as opportunity permits, and offered on her birthday, by working to enlist the interest of others, within the Nursing Profession, we shall help to build up an endowment which will give the Florence Nightingale International Foundation unlimited opportunities for raising and developing our profession still further.

We shall keep ever before us that gracious, forceful figure beckoning up the hill of difficulty, revealing heights as yet undreamed of to be conquered, and we shall press forward in response to her inspiration.

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