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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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EDITORIAL.

A CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

"As fits the holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still,
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will!" *Thackeray.*

Through the long years no more welcome greeting has been found to be passed from friend to friend at this season than the wish which finds expression in this JOURNAL that they may spend "A Merry Christmas" and have "A Happy New Year." Right heartily does it carry this message, with assurance of its fulfilment, to the four corners of the earth, for we know that it will be received by those who are spending their lives in teaching the laws of health, in bringing relief from pain, and mental and physical healing, to thousands of their fellow-creatures, and there are no lives more satisfying than those which are so spent.

In emergencies and disasters, moreover, wherever they occur, they are qualified by their training to be of exceptional use as when they were privileged to participate in minimising the horrors of the recent earthquake in Quetta, when heroic relief was instantaneously forthcoming from all who escaped uninjured. A number of nurses received, in this connection, commendation and recognition from their Sovereign, and the gratitude of their colleagues that they had upheld the best traditions of their profession.

The year now passing has been one of exceptional interest to the Nursing Profession in common with the subjects of King George V throughout the Empire. The Silver Jubilee of His Majesty has been celebrated with loyalty, homage and devotion by the peoples of his widely-flung Empire, and associated with His Majesty in his public triumph—as with his work in the twenty-five years of his momentous reign—was Her Majesty the Queen.

The Nursing Profession, who are second to none in their devotion to their Sovereign, took their part in the Jubilee celebrations, and received recognition in the honours bestowed by the King in this Jubilee year. Not a few nurses were included in the various Divisions of the Order of the British Empire, others received the Decoration of the Royal Red Cross, and throughout the Empire nurses who have rendered conspicuous service to King and country throughout His Majesty's reign, received, and highly prize, the King's Silver Jubilee Medal bestowed by him as a personal souvenir.

There is stored in our memories the remembrance of a wonderful year.

The interest of nurses is now, in the immediate future, centred upon matters upon which they enter with right good will, for the next few weeks the members of the nursing staffs in hospitals, from the Sisters of wards to the most junior probationers, will be concentrated in any spare time on the congenial task of preparing to make Christmas, 1935, the most notable and the happiest ever experienced by both patients and nurses, and such patients as are able supplement their work with zest. There are carols to be practised, parcels to prepare to be placed on the pillows of the patients by the night nurses in the early morning, and later in the day Father Christmas will come round to distribute gifts with which a splendid Christmas tree is laden, and will be received with shouts of welcome, especially in children's wards. What magician could have furnished him with gifts exactly suited to the needs and wishes of each one?

The wards will be gay with carefully-thought-out schemes of decoration, and there will be much good-humoured rivalry as to original designs, which are carefully guarded secrets until revealed in their full splendour. In the early morning hours of Christmas Eve parties of nurses will raid Covent Garden, and lovely holly and mistletoe, pots of flowers, and flowers fresh cut, will be brought home in triumph. The Christmas Dinner will be all that such a dinner should be for those on full diet, and it will be supplemented by delicacies for those who may not participate. Then there will be a lull, a rest for the patients, though none for the nurses, till tea-time comes, with renewed good cheer, and the happiness of visits from relatives, who share it with them. There follow carols with their Christmas message, and entertainments provided largely by the resident medical staff, who contribute much to the gaiety of such proceedings, until a halt is called, and when at last the patients are settled for the night, and the change over of day and night nurses is made, they will, if they follow precedent, declare before falling asleep, that they have spent "the best Christmas ever."

That is the traditional English Christmas in hospital, but British nurses follow, and indeed, sometimes precede the flag far afield, and wherever they may be Christmas must there be celebrated.

If, however, the true spirit of Christmas permeates the feasts, wherever held, then white and black, red and yellow, peoples of all kindreds and tribes and nations, realise that "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world," and they rejoice with exceeding great joy.

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