

Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

THE CHRISTMAS CALENDAR.

We would once again draw attention to our scheme for making ourselves responsible for doing what is possible to make sure that many of our sick and aged colleagues have a happy Christmas. This year we hope again to extend to them the same token of good will as in former years by sending to each a cheque of from £1 to £3 to secure for her comfort and, we hope, happiness on Christmas Day. We know from their letters how much this little act of friendship from their colleagues means to the nurses. So often they stress the fact that "being remembered" takes away the feeling of loneliness, and we can understand that nurses when "laid on the shelf" must feel with intensity the loneliness that can arise at Christmas time. Few can understand so well as they what the fellowship of Christmas means. Theirs, during their working life, is indeed "the joy of giving," both as individuals and in co-operation with others, and they realise to the full all the friendship and good will that gives Christmas its joy and merriment. Looking back on other Christmases it is not surprising that some of those, who have had to lay aside the profession they loved, should feel they really dread the loneliness that falls about them as the Christmas season draws nigh. And so we send them their little cheques (payable on the 23rd December) in order that, after a fashion, they may partake of our hospitality, and thus we consider that we gather in a large number by our rather peculiar method of holding a Christmas party. We just wish that the many hostesses could read the appreciation and satisfaction that is so warmly expressed by their guests—expressed indeed so beautifully sometimes as to make us feel that we are the privileged people while the writers think they are.

This year the Calendar is entitled "Twelve Good Companions" because we have chosen one author for each month. Naturally the first to speak to us through the mouth of the calendar, at the opening of the year, is William Shakespeare, that great world spirit and national poet, who writes as for universal man and, by his own peculiar gift, always for the present whenever it may be! Next comes Robbie Burns in February, speaking more than any other out of the folk spirit of his race. He brings you sound advice, a "canty" joke or two, the fragrance of aspects of religion that have nothing of pedantry in them and plenty of encouragement to help you "to laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch." A woman is given the next place after the two great national poets and we will spend the month of March with George Eliot for companion. Her aphoristic remarks have many a practical lesson to help us to keep well-balanced minds in our attitude to life and to discourage us from going about with "faces simpering or solemn" or "winking at dishonesty" to help "justify knavery." With April will come Ralph Waldo Emerson with many wise things beautifully said, and then in May we will live in the fragrance and beauty that was brought into being and bequeathed to us by the pen of a writer of an older time—George Herbert. He essays to

give us teaching in the hygiene both of mind and body. A robust Christian he was who found "all things big with jest," and he is interesting also because he concerned himself, in a measure, with medicine as well as with the cure of souls; he was one of the famous herbalists of his day besides being a clergyman and a courtier. We could not separate William Wordsworth from the month of flowers, and so he brings us our garland for June, followed in July by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. If Shakespeare wrote for universal man, Goethe may be said to write for the individual man, and whereas Shakespeare writes of the past Goethe writes for the future; he cloaks much of his thought after a fashion copied from the Middle Ages, but one much more profound than in the old mystery plays. Jane Austen will be found pleasant company in a holiday month with her quaint ways of presenting her thoughts and her ability to surround you with a quiet sort of Victorian atmosphere. The teachings of Blaise Pascal will supply plenty of material for meditation, and explanations too, that go very directly towards the discovery and banishment of misleading sentimentality and too lightly accepted conclusions. We commence the autumn in company with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, probably the greatest of our women national poets, and after her, when "November's sky is chill and drear," come brave lines from that most heroic of writers, Sir Walter Scott, the Wizard of the North. And who but Dickens could be your choice for December?

The Medici Society have prepared the covers for the calendars this year in twelve different varieties. There are, of course, several beautiful Madonnas with the Child Jesus. On one cover named "Starlight" strange little pucks play a game with cape gooseberries for their parachutes, and in another fairies are busy with sea tangle. There are flower groups, and a fine ship in full sail indicates good will. The fact that we can help others and solve to some small extent the problem of Christmas presents is not the only point in purchasing these calendars. A beautiful thought, dropped into the mind at the beginning of the day, is bound to exercise its influence through the subconscious mind and to help to maintain balance and harmony amid the incessant harassments of the modern age.

After paying the expenses of printing and postage, we hope to be able to send cheques to at least a hundred and fifty old and sick colleagues. The cost of the calendar is 1s. 6d., and with each an envelope is provided; as the postage for each calendar is 3d. they solve the problem of how one may easily and conveniently post a little Christmas gift.

We have inserted information about the calendars partly because we have not yet any of the weekly lectures or other activities to report, but also because if the nurses will be good enough to order their calendars early, we will be spared what proves an almost overpowering increase in the office work during the weeks immediately prior to Christmas.

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