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## EDITORIAL.

### THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

And when . . . My roses came to me  
My sense with their deliciousness was spelled!  
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
Whispered of peace, and truth and friendliness  
unquelled.

Keats.

Down through the centuries the Christmas Message comes once again, "Peace on earth to men of good will," and still it seems that peace is afar off, and the eyes of the world are centred on a great nation in her agony, in the throes of civil war, amid scenes of unspeakable carnage and horror.

How, then, shall peace be compassed in this distressful world? How but by cultivating the spirit of good will, and this should surely be the aim of each one of us during the Christmas season. We can each make our personal contribution to the creation of the atmosphere of good will in which the poisonous germ of hate between individuals, and between nations, finds it impossible to flourish.

The whole world longs for peace, none more so than trained nurses, who have seen, at first hand, the havoc and suffering which war brings in its train, and should it ever threaten their own dear country, then we believe that they would volunteer for service in its defence, in earth, and sky, and sea, for such duties as might be assigned to them, would be ready to do so now, if thereby the security of these Realms might be strengthened, for well they know that to make peace secure we must possess the means to protect them effectively. "When a strong man armed keepeth his house his goods are in peace." The true preservers of peace are, therefore, those who stand on guard with weapons of defence ready to hand, not those who would lightly call on their country to lay down its arms, and should it ever be attacked, which Heaven forbid, must stand by in agony, defenceless and ashamed, while their land is laid waste and women and little children are slaughtered by the most barbarous methods that a mechanical age can devise.

None know better than nurses the value of prophylactic measures, or realise the extent of the evil which may ensue if, through carelessness, the germs of disease are allowed to find entrance to the human body. As it is in relation to the protection of human beings so it is also in relation to the defence of a country. Effective means must be taken to exclude evil, lest if prevention fails, from whatever cause arising, it may too late be found that the mischief has gone too deep for cure to be attainable.

So much must be said, but to turn to a brighter aspect,

our country is at peace. In the words of His Majesty the King at the opening of Parliament, our "relations with foreign Powers continue to be friendly," and nurses of thirty-nine nations are planning to meet next July in London, where their International Council was founded in 1899, for their great International Congress, and the portents already indicate a record attendance. In the International Council of Nurses peace and good will reign, a remarkable testimony to which fact was revealed at the close of the Great War. The silken cord of comradeship which united the nurses of the associated countries remained unbroken, not one National Association had resigned, or wished to resign; all indeed were eager to meet once more and renew the friendships which had of necessity been held in suspense, and when they met again at last the atmosphere of good will and gladness was evident. The nurses of the world associated in the International Council of Nurses have played their part in promoting peace and understanding between its peoples.

Its Objects stand for self-government by nurses in their Associations, with the aim of raising ever higher the standards of education, professional ethics, and public usefulness of their members. It also stands for that full development of the human being and citizen in every nurse, which shall best enable her to bring her professional knowledge and skill to the many-sided service that modern society demands of her.

Now that Christmas is upon us, let us endeavour to turn our thoughts from the shadows which lie so heavily upon the nations and direct them to lightening, for a while, the burdens of those amongst whom our lot is cast, so that, all over the world, wherever the true meaning of Christmas is understood, its message of peace shall dominate young and old.

This issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING carries to its readers in all parts of the world sincere good wishes for their happiness at this season. In whatever country, and of whatever race, they are united by the strong bonds of community of interests, of occupation, and are inspired by two main purposes, the welfare of the sick, and the maintenance of those high standards of efficiency, of professional knowledge, and of altruism which shall best enable them to attain these ends. These purposes we know are not easy of achievement; they are only attained, indeed, by constant watchfulness and ceaseless endeavour.

To all those who realise the responsibility and the honour of holding aloft and unimpaired the banner of their profession and of enriching it by special gifts from their own generation, we wish for themselves, for those dear to them, and for the patients in their charge, a peaceful and happy Christmas.

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