

## "GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY."

An Angel voice on Judah's plain  
Announced to men a Saviour's birth;  
Each Christmas sends the sweet refrain  
Re-echoing wider o'er the earth.

Whence come the joys of Christmas-tide?  
A Child from Heaven has given us them.  
Above all thoughts let this abide.  
The Christ is born in Bethlehem.

## CHRISTMAS DAY IN A LONDON HOSPITAL.

"CHRISTMAS comes, the time of gladness!" Would that it were so! Would that to all the Christian world, Christmas should come as a time of gladness, a time to which all should look forward with pleasant hopes, should thankfully enjoy while present, and look back upon with kindly remembrance when past? Yet, we all know that it is not so in reality, and that although the Christmas publications may exult in their joyous imaginings, and the pages be covered with scenes that might have been borrowed from the court of Comus, Il Penseroso, rather than L'Allegro, rules the season, for those at least who have passed through the days of thoughtless childhood. Year by year, the family meetings dwindled, place after place is void, and when we separate, we sadly ask ourselves, how many will be left to meet again next year?

There are yet two modes of passing Christmas day, which are used as bye words to express utter misery, namely, Christmas in the prison and in the hospital. Of the former life I have no practical experience, and am not, therefore, qualified to write. But having passed six successive Christmas-tides in a London hospital, I have had many opportunities of noting the behaviour of the patients under such untoward circumstances.

Within the walls of such a building are gathered together a motley assemblage of human beings, differing from each other as completely as if they had been purposely selected from different quarters of the earth. Even within the comparatively small limits of a single ward, will be found such a mixed assembly as perhaps can be seen in no other spot on earth. In the same room may be—and I only relate what I have seen—an aged and venerable country clergyman, unused to the modern Babylon and its ways, who has been struck down by an omnibus while attempting to cross one of the great thoroughfares, and who cannot be moved for many a day yet, without imminent risk of losing his life.

The next bed may contain a costermonger, who has also met with a street accident, but has only himself to blame for it, inasmuch as a man who is too much intoxicated to walk straight on the open pavement, can hardly be expected to guide a laden barrow through the complicated mazes of a crowded thoroughfare.

In the next bed lies a carpenter, whose axe has slipped and nearly cut his left hand in two. He is a quiet old man, and ingenious withal, and while the surgeons are dressing his wound, he is mightily inquisitive about the anatomy of the injured part. He asks for some machine which will render his hand serviceable for work, and finding that no one has contrived anything that will suit his purpose, composes himself to reflection, and invents one for himself; a simple, but effective combination of buff leather and watch-spring. The matter was simple enough to him. He was the foreman, and didn't mean to lose his place. But unless the foreman's work was done, the place would be lost, and the work was undoable without the perfect use of both hands. Therefore, he must have the use of both hands, and he had it. I have seen him making a delicate wooden frame for a fancy cabinet, and working at it with perfect ease, the watch-spring slips supplying the place of the several tendons with astonishing accuracy. I like to see a man who will conquer circumstances instead of yielding to them.

Next to our ingenious carpenter lies, or rather sits, a lad who looks exactly as if he had been peppered all over the face, who has no eyebrows, very scarlet eyes, a very bald head, and two linen bundles in the place of arms. This is a young gentleman, who wanted to see a good explosion of gunpowder, and who gratified that inclination by lighting a sheet of newspaper, and pouring the contents of his father's powder flask upon it. He has heartily ashamed of himself, as well he may be, and shows an evident dislike to being questioned. Poor lad, he will have the option of retaining a peppered face for his life time, or of having the grains of unburnt powder separately picked from under his skin. Gunpowder accidents predominate about Christmas and midsummer; I pre-

sume because the boys are at home for their holidays, and enjoy enlarged opportunities for mischief.

Next comes a cot, containing a drum, a horse, a regiment of artillery, a ball, a slate, a Noah's ark, a whip, and a long piece of string with a stick of fire-wood tied to one end of it. Peeping over the edge of the cot is seen the ruddy face of a fine little boy, who has contrived, in some mysterious manner, to climb over the area railings of his house, and fall on the stones below. He has only broken his legs, and children are made of such plastic materials, that they soon get over any such accident, only rebelling at the enforced quietude of the first week or two. He is a general favourite, and many a visitor who casts a casual glance at his cot, gratifies him with a toy, or enriches him with a coin. He has a tin money-box for the last mentioned offerings, and is charmed with the rattle of the coins inside; not because of their value, but because of their noise. He likes all his tops very well, but gives the preference to the string and stick, delighting to fling the stick away, and then drag it back by the string. Thereby he shows himself a genuine Englishman in miniature. His toys must do something more than be looked at. His soldiers will soon be reduced to chaotic fragments, his Noah's Ark pulled to pieces, and the animals deprived of all their limbs. But the string and stick will remain his delight, he will drag the horse about, and run after the bell, and be supremely happy with them.

How differently are all the discordant elements affected by the coming of Christmas day! Some of the poorer kind are delighted with the prospect of good cheer, and in many cases, are found to put in practice all sorts of expedients to retard their recovery, until after Christmas day has passed.

Some of them are equal to any emergency, and can produce a malignant sore, prevent a bone from uniting, quicken or retard their pulse at will, and play such fantastic tricks that they cannot be detected but by an experienced surgeon. An old soldier of indifferent character is sure to be well acquainted with all these ruses, having contrived on the strength of his stimulated ailments, to spend many a week in the military hospital, when he ought to have been at his duty. When he gets into an ordinary hospital, he is certain to impart instruction to those who wish to learn the art of deception, and is such a pest to the ward that he is quietly discharged as soon as his delinquencies are discovered.

On going my rounds, and wishing these poor fellows a happier Christmas next year, I have often been told that they could not be better off, and that they were only too glad to enjoy warmth, clothing, and sufficient food in such a season. Of course, those who belong to a better class of society cannot but grieve that they must be absent from their friends; but even in the extreme case, where a wealthy and refined gentleman is forced to partake of hospital accommodation, the general conditions are not nearly of so sad a character as is popularly imagined. In point of fact, I have seen as many merry faces within the walls of a ward as in the dining-rooms of the rich and thoughtless, who never knew a day's illness.

In order to render the situation as endurable as possible to the one, and as happy as possible to the other, the ordinary and necessarily strict rules are relaxed for this one day, whenever the attendants judge that they can do so with safety. Visitors are admitted freely, and allowed to remain longer than at other times, and always avail themselves largely of this permission; so that the ward becomes quite animated during their stay, and the hum of lively voices fills the air. In some wards, where the patients are all improving, they are allowed to sing—of course under the proviso that the songs are to be committed to censorship before sung. They generally, however, restrict themselves to psalm and hymn tunes—those being most in favour which have a great many flourishes, and where one line is repeated several times in order to make the stanza fit the melody. Last Christmas there was one peculiarly sweet, fresh young voice, proceeding from a little girl in a cot. No one had the least idea that she could sing; but when any psalm tune was started she took the lead, and proved to be perfectly conversant with them all.

Towards noon a growing excitement becomes manifest; and as the minutes pass on the cause is dimly perceptible in a strange and yet familiar odour, wherein beef and raisins strive for the mastery.

In fact the Christmas plum-pudding is about to appear.

The Christmas-tide spent within the walls of a hospital may teach lessons to all who have suffered in common with their fellow creatures. The rough and occasionally profane costermonger finds for the first time that it is quite possible to exist without vice, and to speak without the interpolation of evil language. He is brought into close contact with those of higher and more refined nature than his own, and cannot but learn lessons of good breeding and consideration for others from the conduct that is observed towards himself.

In many cases, he finds the time hang heavily on his hands, takes up some of the well illustrated works which are largely supplied to the wards, and being anxious to understand the illustrations, learns to read, and so advances to the first step towards a higher state of existence than has heretofore been his lot.

One really cannot blame the poor ignorant fellows for the animalized lives which they lead. They know no better. The horrible language which they use, and which really makes one shudder to hear, conveys no particular meaning to them, except that of force and volubility; for they have no knowledge of the true meaning of the words they use. And though they spend their hard earnings in their coarse dissipation, it is simply because they do not know what to do. They must have recreation of some kind, and as, from their ignorance, they have no resources within themselves, and have no real home to which they can go, their only amusements are those which are supplied by the wretched beings who gain their debased living by administering to the gratification of the lowest phases of human nature. For my own part I always liked the costermongers, provided that their stay in the hospital was long enough to have its effects on their previous habits.

Those, again, of a higher class, who have been struck down by a sudden accident, and forced for a while to associate familiarly with those from whom they would have shrunk in health, and whom they barely consider to be fellow creatures with themselves, will also learn their lesson from a Christmas day in the ward of a London hospital. They will discover that among the poor labouring classes may be found as much true politeness, as much self-denial and as much sterling worth of character as among the higher orders to which they themselves belong; and it may be that they find themselves learning many a lesson from those very persons whom they had formerly considered as utterly beneath their notice. It is no small benefit to be able to look beneath the surface, and, if they have learned nothing more from the hospital, they may still find that their residence within its walls has been one of the disguised blessings of which life is so full. And as to the other members of the same ward, too numerous to be individually mentioned, they too perhaps may take to heart one useful lesson, and learn by personal experience that health and strength will not last for ever, and that it behoves them to work while they are yet able, and not to waste the priceless years and energies of youth that will never again return.—Churchman's Family Magazine.

## "THROUGH THE DAY THY LOVE HAS SPARED US."

Pacatum eterni lubet et dare membra quieti.

Quotquot erunt horas nobis amor Iste diurnas  
Adfruit, et fessos jam recubare jubet:  
Idem adis tacitae vigilantia tempora noctis,  
Neu sit ab hoste Tuis irrequieta quies!  
Tu dux, Tu comes es: quid Te custode timendumst?  
Nempe fide, Jesu, fidere dulce Tuae est.  
Hic aliena licet, licet advena terra vocetur,  
Hic licet innumerus saepiat hostis itur,  
Tu tamen eripias cunctos nos nostraque curis,  
Brachia sopitos nos tamen Iste premit.  
Et quum vanuerit vivis lux tristis, in alto  
Da requie Tacum tempus in omne frui.

The worst enemy which Truth has been compelled to meet in the past, has been its own magnified and distorted, or else its belittled caricature. The exaggeration or diminution of God's requirements in the matter of belief and of duty, are the roots out of which the entire crop of heresy and schism have grown. No doctrinal error ever attained to great prominence in any age of the Church, which did not have some element of orthodoxy behind it. The duty of men is not to strike a compromise between opposing extremes, but to keep within the lines which bound the Church's recognized and authorized Catholicity.

We draw our readers attention to the advertisement of Messrs. Jolliffe & Co., 467 to 471 Queen St. West, Furniture Manufacturers and Importers. In the show rooms of the firm are displayed a very large stock of tastefully designed and well made furniture, spring beds and all necessary articles for completely furnishing. We recommend our friends to call upon them.