

Christmas 1968

We have been watching a building grow and develop by the hospital this year. This building is seven storeys high, and will have the very best and latest in equipment. It is costing somewhere around a million pounds, and is to have a ceremonial opening, early in December, by Princess Margaret. "What has this to do with us?" you might say. The answer is "Very much . . . next year." For this is the new Lincoln Maternity Home, and when it is fully functioning all the babies from here will be born there.

We can see that there will be advantages; all that a well equipped hospital can give will be available to every mother. All the latest in safeguards for both mother and baby will be there. For this we can be truly thankful. But we shall be sorry not to be able to share to the same extent in the great moment of birth, though we shall be in close touch and share in spirit; and within forty-eight hours mother and baby will return.

There is always something to tell you in the way of change here. Sometimes it is small and minor, sometimes much bigger, as this change will be. Here are some of the other changes this year.

Canon Blake has become the Vicar of a parish near Bourne and has had to leave us. His guitar and songs remain both in our memories and in the record he made: "Pops with a Purpose," which is played from time to time. Mr. Read, the Vicar of this parish has taken his place as our Chaplain and as he does not play the guitar (as far as we know) his visits take a different form, and are as much appreciated in their way as Canon Blake's were in his way.

Those of you who remember Sister Lees, as a member of staff or as a visitor at coffee time on a Saturday, will be pleased to know that she is happily married and living in Dorset. It was a very cold day in February when they made their promises to each other, but their love and the warmth and friendliness of the company who witnessed it more than offset the icy wind outside.

Nurse Davies was ill in the spring, but this proved to be the beginning of joy, for she has now presented her husband with a son, whom we have not yet seen as he is very new! Nurse Anthony and Nurse Whittle have both joined the staff.

We have tried to make a better impression on visitors and new arrivals at our front door. The doors themselves remain the same, but we have painted the outer entrance — porch — call it what you will, and tried to keep some flowers there to give a friendly welcome. By the end of the year the cloakroom by the front door will be decorated

too. Upstairs some bedrooms have been touched up, and the bleak corridors on the staff landing, and Matron's bedroom, have been given a new look. And downstairs we think we are almost masters of the cockroaches! With the aid of the Rentokil people only an occasional cockroach ever ventures out at night. And the green sitting room has been given a green carpet. How much warmer and cosier it seems now!

Warm and cosy? One could hardly use these words to describe the stable at Bethlehem. We are told it was a cave, maybe it was bleak and chill. A little warmth would come from the cattle sharing it that night. No doubt Joseph spread the straw more thickly, and perhaps the innkeeper's wife brought some warm water from the cooking fire. It was little enough help even if willingly given. Yet Almighty God was content to use the services that were available to any other parents, at that time of the census, for his son's birth. He claimed no special privileges, he shared the human lot of his day, and he shares our lot too whenever we let him. Let us join with the angels in singing:

"Glory to God in the Highest
Peace on earth to men of goodwill."

And may you all have a blessed and joyful Christmas.

