

passed, on which kings and queens came to their crowning and many a patriot, and but a few traitors (as the perspective of history reveals them) sailed to their last earthly dwelling place beyond the Traitors' Gate. Doubtless rough sailors in centuries long past, as the ships lowered their topsails, when passing St. Katherine's, have half-consciously breathed a prayer for the repose of the souls of two little children whose frail barks had sufficed to carry them but for a short journey indeed on the river of life. To the mariners on the Thames and to many others it must have seemed good that there—near the Tower of London, in which is represented so much of the storms, out of which our present age has grown, so much of political jealousies and human shortcomings and tragedies, in a part of the capital of the Empire, too, where memories of the past seem to jostle at every corner with the present—it must have seemed good that there should stand a place of God where pity dwelt, whose towers, even through the mists on the river, could still be seen pointing to the skies. But the "civilisation" of the nineteenth century, and the "half-wise," who are the most dangerous people of all, for they cannot see or feel beyond their five senses, those had no thought for such a point of view. A voice, stronger even than public opinion—that of economic aggrandisement—was raised, and it drowned the whispering traditions that clung about St. Katherine's. Faith with the past was broken; no longer would kneeling brethren and sisters raise pure and perpetual oblation for the souls of the little children or continue the impulse which the Queen had sought to send down the ages to bring comfort and healing to the poor and the sick who dwell in the East End of London. A dock would conveniently replace the old church and its ancient "hospital." A company bought the land on which the church and hospital stood, and St. Katherine's was razed to the ground, its site with its memories and the dust of those, who had prayed for the children and cared for the sick poor for seven hundred years, was sent by the wreckers down under the dark waters of the River. Through a darkened vision the age had lost sight of the inspiration and enthusiasm which it is one of the functions of history to bring from out of the past. St. Katherine's was to them but an old smoke-covered building, nothing more than that, and so a place, perhaps only second to Westminster in its wealth of tradition, was lost with as little thought as a child gives to the jewel he throws into the river because, being as yet only half wise, he mistakes it for a common pebble. Only in imagination now can we rebuild St. Katherine's and see a Queen, embroiled in all the turmoil of civil war, when, for a moment in her story, the veil of Isis is lifted and we glimpse the grief of a mother for her dead children, the compassion of a Queen for the poor of her realm. And, because of this glimpse behind the fracas of her time, we place Matilda among the Royal Nurses. Old Man River has gathered to himself the precincts of St. Katherine's and the graves of those who for centuries there served the poor and the sick; but because we can perceive in the foundation of this Hospital the seed for many a deed of charity, in East London throughout these centuries, often, as we wander near the river, two small quaintly dressed children pass by and, of a sudden, in the lapping of the water and the vibration of light on his surface, Old Man River takes for his song the words of a modern poet:

"They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn:
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We shall remember them."
LAURENCE BINYON.

And, remembering St. Katherine's, perhaps nurses who realise the true function of history, will feel that, if man sometimes forgets his debts to the past, the Spirit of the

River—which is always there, however the water may roll away under the bridges—the Spirit of the River has its memories and has gathered to itself a page of English Nursing History. At the going down of the sun and in the morning the grave of St. Katherine's is adorned with a glory as "perpetual" as the sun in the heavens, a glory of living colour that inspired the most gifted and perhaps the most imaginative of all British artists. The centenary of St. Katherine's is not so very far off and "in pure and perpetual" gratitude for a gift that helped, in its own way, to develop and inspire the evolution of nursing, the nurses of London, in these days when tangible memorials are popular, may yet try to bring healing, in some small measure, for the vandalism of the past and raise some sort of memorial near St. Katherine's Dock to mark where one of the earliest nursing foundations, one so rich in tradition, slipped out from our sight.

Matilda died at Hedingham Castle. She left three children: Eustace, who passed away soon after his mother; Mary, who became Abbess of Romsey; and William, who was confirmed in the Earldom of Boulogne when the Plantagenet ascended to the throne. Stephen and Matilda were buried in their great Abbey of Faversham. Their grave was desecrated and their beautiful abbey destroyed at the Reformation; a careful antiquary has preserved all that now remains of their tomb—the epitaph of Queen Matilda:—"In the year 1155, not to her own but to our great loss, the happy Matilda the wife of King Stephen died enobled by her virtues as by her title. She was a true worshipper of God and a real patroness of the poor. She died submissive to God that she might afterwards enjoy His presence. If ever woman deserved to be carried in the hands of angels to heaven it was this holy Queen."

It does not lie within the compass of this particular article to trace the development of St. Katherine's subsequent to the death of Matilda: that we hope to do in a later issue. We have but tried to lift from out of the past for your contemplation the gift of a Queen to the evolution of nursing and, in a very small way, to help to preserve a little of its "pure and perpetual" inspiration.

ISABEL MACDONALD.

"THE OLD MEDICINE."

A graphic description of "the old medicine" is given in a recent issue of the "British Medical Journal." It is a report of a lecture delivered by Sir Andrew Macphail at Montreal, who, referring to the final days of Charles II, said: "With a cry he fell. Dr. King, who, unfortunately (sic) happened to be present, bled him with a pocket-knife.

"Fourteen physicians were quickly in attendance. They bled him more thoroughly; they scarified and cupped him; they shaved and blistered his head; they gave him an emetic, a clyster, and two pills.

"During the next eight days they 'threw in' fifty-seven separate drugs, and towards the end a cordial containing forty more. This availing nothing, they tried Goa stone, which was a calculus obtained from a species of Indian goat; and as a final remedy the distillate of human skull.

"In the case report it is recorded that the emetic and the purge worked so mightily well it was a wonder the patient died.

"One physician did protest that they would kill the king, and out of this arose the suspicion that he had been irregularly poisoned. But he did die, 'as peaceable as a lamb,' and his last words were 'Do not let poor Nellie starve.'"

"Conquest pursues, where courage leads the way."—Sir S. Garth.

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