

they seldom go out together. I help them with their needlework and jigsaw puzzles; thanks be, they cannot do crosswords. When Patience goes away for holidays, I run the house and do the flowers.

Occasionally we go to London, do some shopping and go to a *matinée*, they both love the theatre, but it must be a spectacular piece, like "Glamorous Night." When we get back I write out the story so that they will understand what they have seen.

They love London, and are quite happy walking about the crowded streets. It must be uncanny to stand in a big station, feel the vibration of the moving trains, to see them glide silently to a standstill, or rush silently through, to watch crowds of people, see their mouths open with laughter or talking and yet for all the sound they can hear they might be surrounded by an army of ghosts.

We had a great thunderstorm this morning. One remarked: "What heavy rain! I saw lightning, did it thunder?" It did, it shook the house.

What a lot they miss. The laughter and voices of happy children, the song of birds, the tone of sympathy or love in a friend's voice, music and the sound of the road drill. They love the procession of coaches and cars going to or returning from the coast, especially when filled with holiday makers who attire themselves in brilliantly coloured paper hats, but they don't hear the racket of the coaches climbing our steep hill.

When we do have callers or meet people we know I act as interpreter. When they misunderstand each other or Patience I again come to the rescue, and often have to explain away some unkind remark which it would have been so much better if they had not understood. It is a case of Peace at any price. Why do they not write to each other? Because neither can read the other's writing.

They also treat me as a walking encyclopedia, very flattering, but awkward at times.

The questions I am asked are varied. Patience asked me "what and why is a short circuit." I was tempted to ask which, but refrained as I do not like talking about operations.

The quite deaf one was reading a book the other day with many quotations from the Bible.

"This author says 'naughty figs' are mentioned in the Bible. They are not, are they?"

"Yes, in Jeremiah," "Which chapter?" I never was any good at figures, so get out of that difficulty by finding it for her. A little later on—

"This man does say some strange things. He says it is sound Scripture to say 'We wish you good luck in the name of the Lord.' That is not in the Bible, is it?"

"No, but it is in the prayer book version of the Psalms which is an older translation than the one in the Bible."

"Which Psalm? and which is the correct translation?" Bless the woman, how should I know? but I find the Psalm for her.

The other thinks I ought to know all about the Royal Family. Why I should, I do not know, but she expects me to know why the Prince of Wales does not marry? "Because he prefers to remain single" does not satisfy her, and again she asks "Why?"

"Are the Princess Royal and her husband very devoted to each other?" and so on, *ad lib.*

My friends ask if I am not bored stiff? True, it is not an exciting life, but I do go to bed every night, although I cannot always sleep. I do get plenty of fresh air, often walking five hours a day in lovely country. I can have books, and time for needlework, and above all I know I make life happier for these two who have missed so much, so I am a lucky Elderly Nurse.

ELDERLY NURSE.

## HISTORIC ROYAL NURSES.

BY ISABEL MACDONALD, S.R.N.

### PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT (1310—1357).

"Ich wrude muche."

"Tall and upright was she, wise, gay, humble, pious, liberal and courteous, decked and adorned in her time with all noble virtues, beloved of God and of mankind . . . So long as she lived the kingdom of England had favour, prosperity, honour and every sort of good fortune."

Thus in one short paragraph does Froissart epitomise what might be described as the biography of Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III of England. Our justification for placing her among the Historic Royal Nurses rests on her gift of a Charter to the ancient Royal Hospital of St. Katherine's by the Tower, and also upon her general reputation for kindness to the sick and distressed. It is fascinating in passing to study her personality in contrast with the last queen of whom we wrote—Eleanor of Castile. The latter seems as though she stood at the close of an epoch while Philippa of Hainault may, in some respects, be regarded as appearing at the dawn of our own. Eleanor represents to us a last glimpse of a time when feeling and often very deep religious sentiment dominated strongly the lives of Queens and ladies of the nobility. Philippa seems to introduce, or at least to personify or foretell, the coming of the centuries in which women would take a more active and practical interest in learning, in commerce and in the development of industry. There is less of the artistic in the make up of Queen Philippa than we find in the character of some of her predecessors, less of the visionary than the woman of action.

She was gifted with imagination, although this might assume a more practical aspect than had hitherto characterised that of many of her predecessors.

We have given above the judgment of one of the most famous writers of her age on the Queen, and it might not be inappropriate here to quote what is probably the first entry regarding her in the chronicles of England. It is taken from the Official Register of Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, who, as far back as 1319, appears to have been sent to Hainault to report on the daughters of Count William, with a view to the betrothal of one of them to Prince Edward of England. The entry is superscribed:—"The Inspection and Description of the Daughter of the Count of Hainault who was called Philippa, and who was Queen of England wedded to Edward III." Then follows a minute description of this Princess of a Flemish race. It runs as follows:—"The lady whom we saw has not uncomely hair, betwixt blue-black and brown. Her head is clean shaped, her forehead high and broad and standing somewhat forward. Her eyes are blackish-brown and deep. Her nose is fairly smooth and even, save broad at the tip and also flattened, yet it is no snub nose. Her nostrils are also broad, her mouth fairly wide. Her lips rather full especially the lower one. Her teeth which have fallen and grown again are white enough, the rest not so white. The lower teeth project a little beyond the upper, but this is little seen. Her eyes and chin are comely enough. Her neck, shoulders and all her body and lower limbs are reasonably well shaped; and all her limbs well set and unmaimed, and nothing amiss so far as a man can see. Moreover, she is brown of skin all over, and like her father, and in all things pleasant enough as it seems to us. The damsel will be the age of nine years as St. John's Day next to come, as her mother saith. She is neither too tall nor too short for her age, of fair carriage and well taught in all that becometh her rank and highly esteemed." Such is the report of an eminent churchman on the future Queen of England who became the darling of her people. And a Queen she was

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