

case may be—is an accessory to the action. Error is born when reasoning sleeps and so what seems the easy and convenient course is chosen without reference to its rectitude or otherwise. This brings us back to the remark quoted earlier in this article. If the Association had not put up a fight, involving labour, energy, courage and tenacity of purpose, but had been content to do nothing or to make but a feeble protest against what its policy holds to be wrong, then it must, of necessity, in the future, stand to be judged as an accessory to a procedure of which it disapproves. It is the will of those who, at the present time, have been entrusted with its destinies, that it shall not so be judged, that it shall not permit itself to be an accessory to the deed of setting the nursing profession on the incline downwards as regards its efficiency and its standards which should be fostered and promoted; this they cannot be by the debasement of the minimum standard set up by the State, for those who are to be responsible for the care of the sick. And, whatever may be the result of the contentions of the present, we shall not regret the time and effort given to protect our professional and economic standards even although we may reflect that the same time and effort, used in other directions, might have brought results of more material value than the preservation of a principle. A principle conceived and arrived at in full freedom is the most precious possession that any corporate body can hold.

When History is Vacant.

A writer once said erroneously that the country is happy whose history is vacant and the same idea has often been put into the words "happy is the nation that is making no history." This is true neither of a nation, a community nor an individual. Happiness and ease teach us next to nothing. Character, vision and intelligence are all developed through struggle, often through sorrow. It is the impacts of the difficulties that arise to be faced which draw forth capacity, open the vision and develop the will. So that, whether we win or lose, neither the Association nor those members who have stood so strongly by their policy are, in the long run, the weaker for the struggle of these months which have just passed.

Thanks and Good Wishes.

We cannot close our retrospect without thanking our members for the many encouraging letters which we have received. The correspondence between them and their headquarters has been heavy at times and not in one letter has it been suggested that we should choose what might appear the course that would be easy and the popular one in certain quarters. Members have joined this Association in full freedom and it would be their wish that their Association, this corporate body, should act in freedom, irrespective of chatter about unity, "control" and the like which, in this instance, are of the stuff that dreams are made of. What after all is freedom but the strength and the will to choose between right and wrong, to hold fast to that which is good and not to accept "delayed good," which was the interpretation of the word evil as given by one of the greatest philosophers and most sublime thinkers of the ages?

And so after the burden and heat of the past months of controversy we thank the members for their loyal and often very generous financial support and wish them a joyful and a happy holiday.

A MODERN FAIRY TALE.

Some time ago we reported that a doctor had sent us a gift of a hundred pounds to form an endowment for part of our Christmas Hospitality grants, which are sent each year to a number of nurses who are in straitened circumstances and no longer able to continue their professional

work; his gift was to form a memorial to his wife. We said that we would add fifty pounds to this memorial, as she was a nurse and a Member of the Association, a very gracious lady and one always interested in matters relating to her profession. A lady too of illustrious ancestry, possessed of a charm of manner and a fine culture that well justified a remark of her husband—"She was a great lady."

When it came to the matter of collecting the fifty pounds we had promised, in addition to all the other responsibilities for benevolence that seem to have fallen to us, the scheme did not seem so easy as at first it had appeared. But another remark of the kind donor suggested to us a solution to the problem. "I courted her in the fairy country," he wrote, "in the days when the ghillies could still see the white lady walk in Glenfinnan." So came the answer to our perplexities—we would send the fairies to find the money. The scheme was not so impracticable as it might have appeared for, even in these materialistic days, we reflected, there must be some who have not completely lost all belief in the fairies or who are at least possessed of a little curiosity regarding them. Perhaps even a few there might be among the unbelievers who would not think it good to refuse the fairies, who would like to be on the safe side, despite their unbelief, and thus "prevent the dint of the ill attempts of the still folk." Anyhow we essayed to write a book, discreet and courteous to fairies, mindful of Shakespeare's dictum—"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Apart from this view there are many points of evidence to show that the problem of the fairy faith does not belong to the world of phantasy merely but which indicate an old dim clairvoyance in ancient races before, perhaps, it was displaced by the growth of the intellect and pushed into the depths of the subconscious mind.

Be that as it may, the main point is that the fairies and the nurses justified our confidence. One fine morning we had an unusually large collection of letters and, when half way through it, realised that it had brought what was required to complete the sum of fifty pounds. But that was not the only pleasant surprise of the morning's post. The last letter in the pile contained a cheque for two hundred and fifty pounds from the kind donor! In thanking him we mentioned this coincidence, saying that we hoped, but would not promise, to make our fifty pounds into a hundred. He was very gratified and wrote that he intended to make his gift up to a thousand pounds. And so, in nine months, we raised our hundred pounds and, through the generosity of the donor of the main sum, the memorial now stands at eleven hundred pounds. The fairies have paid for their own printing as self-respecting fairies would.

It is indeed satisfactory that the interest on this amount will be available to meet the large and scattered hospitality to which we feel pledged; it would seem impossible now to disappoint our Christmas guests after having provided their Christmas fare for so many years. But the banquet grows each year and last year we had barely enough for the two hundred and twenty cheques sent out so that the interest on the Memorial will be a wonderful help.

Recently a Member, who likes to form opinions of her own on every point that comes to her notice, said: "I have formed the theory that the facts are not, as Yeats says, that the Scotch have scolded the fairies out of existence nor that they fled before the coming of the machine age. My idea is that, in the course of time, we have taken such elementary beings into our own make-up." Well, we are not prepared to deny this or indeed any other argument on a subject so abstruse as the fairy faith; there is this to be said for her contention that the nurses have certainly shown the qualities of the good fairies in buying

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