

nurse gives her report. By now, on every day except Sunday, the outpatients begin to arrive—a constant stream of young and old. Some have walked thirty or forty miles with their babies on their backs and possessions on their heads. They sit on the grass until the clerk is ready to give out their cards. Many of the patients are suffering from the effects of native medicine, from which hundreds of babies die. Many are covered with the sores of leprosy or yaws. Large numbers have ulcers which have gone on for months and which they have tried to cure by applying dirt and leaves.—From NURSE BURTON, C.M.S. Nurse, Hospital of Our Saviour, Adoekiti (Lagos).

The appointment of a Central Training Council in Child Welfare (recommended by the Curtis Committee) has been announced from the Home Office. Amongst the duties allocated to this Council are: to organise courses and select candidates for training for work with children who have been deprived of a normal home life.

A grand beginning, and what wonderful opportunities lie ahead for women with clear vision, sympathetic guidance and a love for children.

Two types of training courses are being arranged with certain universities and local education authorities: (1) for boarding-out officers, who will supervise the care of children placed in foster homes; and (2) for house mothers in children's homes.

We view with anxiety the fact that the training for women as boarding-out officers can commence at the age of 21 years, and with horror that girls of 18 years can commence training as house mothers.

What possible experience in the moulding of a child's character can a girl at the age of 18 years have had?

The average girl of that age has not long left school, and is just beginning to plant her two feet into a world that is full of pitfalls and difficulties, and unless she, herself, is watched over and guided by loving friends, falls a victim to circumstances she has not the social power to control.

Train women to fill these most important posts by all means; but we pray that the age of entry may be postponed until a woman has acquired knowledge of the world, and is thus in a position to guide and nurture our citizens of to-morrow.

It was with a sense of great thankfulness we read in *The Times* that the National Corporation for the Care of Old People, which was recently sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation with the co-operation of the Lord Mayor of London's National Air Raid Distress Fund, is to receive its first gift of premises for a home for old people. Lady Nuffield has purchased the North Oxford Nursing Home and is presenting it to the National Corporation as a home for lonely, infirm or ailing old people.

In the past, old people requiring care and attention have often been unable to get it except in the wards of a public assistance institution, and are often forced to remain in the chronic wards of hospitals. The new purpose which the premises of the North Oxford Nursing Home are to serve will contribute not only to the welfare of old people, but also to the eventual relief of some of the hospital beds at present in permanent occupation by the aged.

## UNE FABLE CONVENUE.

### THE CATAGOMBS OF HISTORY.

A remark in the last issue of *THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* drew me into a train of thought, persistent, fascinating and without end.

Of late years, we have talked and written much on Nursing History, and we have collected "antiques" relating to it, which have come to be regarded as almost sacred, and quite rightly so.

What is history that it must take such a hold upon the imagination beyond the lessons that it has to teach? The truth is that it has actually become a kind of living entity in itself; we give it being, half unconsciously, ourselves and we can talk of the "spirit of history" without being misunderstood.

It is a pleasing thing to place oneself in the thought of Wagner when he used the words "When time becomes space," as though he could look back across the years and see events, and the impulses and influences that brought them, as on one great landscape of the years.

But to understand this, we should step outside the confines of nursing history only, and remember that, until about the fourteenth century, learning and culture as, for instance, religion, art, healing, and even to a small extent what we might call science, flowed through the centuries in one stream.

Then came the materialistic age to which the two Bacons gave no small impulse, particularly Lord Bacon of Verulam, who, by the way, lost his life as the result of an experiment in hygiene, when he made the first effort to introduce cold storage.

In the early middle ages, science, industry and even thought began a divorcement from what we might, for want of a better term, call the spiritual stream; medicine and nursing made the transition somewhat slowly, and the last steps of nursing in this direction were disastrous for the patients; the first were taken at the dissolution of the monasteries. That, however, is by the way.

Then at last came Florence Nightingale and others with their message, and the aspect of nursing altered. The spiritual stream rose as from an underground river, and in time created and inspired the materialistic and scientific one, which was as it should be; but, at times, we are apt to forget that, just as in other forms of history, nursing has its spiritual or unseen history, and its stream of materialistic history as well. The last is what Augustine Birrell, writing on Carlyle, referred to as "the great dust-heap called history" but Carlyle could find under and within it that which rejoiced him, and wrote of history as "the first product of man's spiritual nature."

We can search by way of legend and thought for the influences that have worked their way through history—influences and impulses, such as those of St. Ubaldesca, St. Odile and St. Catherine of Siena.

We can look for such influences and seek to unite two streams that the Spirit of Nursing, with her child the Art of Nursing, may work in one harmony with the Science of Nursing. Many there are who find interest in tracing the influence of those who bore the first messages for our profession, who are interested in history apart from the definitely materialistic.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)