

In my Wagnerian landscape—or, to use simpler language, in memory—I can still picture a seeker of this sort in the book-lined, darkened library of St. John's, Clerkenwell, when he plodded, in his spare moments, through an ancient tome in medieval Italian, to trace the stories of Ubaldesca and others who had influenced his Order in its early days.

Such are the influences that we seek to revive in nursing history; but, while about it, let us have a care in our recordings of modern history. We can go back to Ancient Rome to receive a sound injunction spoken by the great orator Cicero. "Who does not know," he says, "that it is the first law of history that it shall not dare to state anything that is false and that, consequently, it shall not shrink from stating anything that is true." To be inattentive to this, it has been said, is to commit a murder in things spiritual. So let us have a care that we write not *une fable convenue*, that we write not with words alone, but with the Word which means the Truth. Let us see in the doing of it that we remember the existence of the two streams, the spiritual, the unseen history and the materialistic history, both important.

I hope I have made my train of thought understandable, and that, in my own pleasure, I have not led my readers to boredom. In case this may be so, and at the risk of appearing egotistical, I will relate a little story to relieve my monotony. In a small way, it may serve to convey my meaning and, incidentally, to illustrate that, of all things, people most hate to lose an illusion.

I had, some months before the incident, given a lecture at the British College of Nurses on my "discovery"—Elizabeth Alkin. Weeks later, some International Nurses were being entertained with a display of "Nightingaleiana" treasures, and a great admirer of Miss Nightingale gave a sort of descriptive lecture on them. At its close, one of her listeners put the question: "What about Elizabeth Alkin, whom Miss Macdonald called the Florence Nightingale of the Commonwealth? Can you tell us something of her?" The reply came, with stern finality, "Oh, that Miss Macdonald, she is simply disturbing history."

I thought of all the sidelights that I had found in the Public Record Offices, thought of the so-called

"camp followers" in the catacombs of the history of the Cromwellian period, and thought, too, of the loving kindness and care that they gave to men wounded in war, and often in their last agonies. Ladies of easy virtue many may have been, but they are there under the "dust" of materialistic history. We can still get glimpses of them here and there in the Wagnerian landscape, if we take the trouble to scan it well.

I. M.

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES, LTD.

A Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., was held at 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, on August 7th, 1947.

The President, Miss Helena McLoughlin, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., was in the Chair.

Prayers having been read by the Hon. Secretary, the Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Correspondence.

Application for advice was received from a French lady concerning Nursing training in this country; in replying, the Council gave the necessary information and help.

Enquiries were received from a Matron as to whether the British College of Nurses, Ltd., "is recognised by the Government as a representative body?"

The Council, in reply, agreed that this College is a professional organisation of nurses, subject to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales (their Statutory Body), and the Ministry of Health, the legal bodies recognised and appointed by Parliament. In this sense it is a *bona fide* representative body of nurses.

Should a *representative body* be interpreted as meaning to act as a trade

union, the British College of Nurses, Ltd., strongly dissociates itself from any such policy, and is of opinion that this is the only means by which professional freedom and liberty of conscience of the Nursing Profession can be maintained.

Thanks were received from members for financial help.

Educational Grant.

The Council awarded an Educational Grant of £36 to a member towards her expenses to qualify for the Sister Tutor Certificate of the University of London.

Nominations to the Council.

This year the retiring Councillors are Miss Janet Kerr, R.G.N., Miss Elizabeth Martin, R.R.C., Fellows, and Miss B. G. Sorlie, S.R.N., Member.

The President reported that nominations had been



MISS M. B. MACKELLAR S.R.N. F.B.C.N.,
Matron of the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital
(Moorfields) again welcomed to the Council of
the British College of Nurses, Ltd.

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