

NEW ZEALAND NURSE

MY STORY, by Mary Lambie, C.B.E.; N. M. Peryer Ltd., 30/-.

(Reviewed by Margaret Garland)

IT is unusual to find an autobiography written by a woman who is not in the least interested in writing about herself, but who is passionately interested in the work to which her life has been devoted. Miss Lambie tells us that this story has been written at the insistence of the nurses of this country, and that she hopes that by writing it she has returned to their profession something of that which it has given to her, and that she hopes she has contributed to the nursing history of New Zealand. Un-

doubtedly she has. She calls her book *My Story*, which, I suppose, is reasonable, because the story of nursing in New Zealand and in the wider field of international nursing has been Miss Lambie's story, too.

She has been a personality in the nursing world ever since she began training at Christchurch hospital in 1910. After six years as a nurse in one district in the South Island, at a moment when she had reached a stage she thinks many nurses do reach, of mental staleness, she was chosen for special training for the position of Public Health Nursing Instructor. She began the training in 1924, and from this dates the beginning of a career that has taken Miss Lambie all over the world, bringing her honours and distinction. It has

also provided her with so many interests that she is able to say at the end of her book, "I realise that as age increases many of my present activities will slow down, but I have a rich library of memories to look back upon, among the most valued of which are the hosts of true friends I have made in many parts of the world, and the value of these friendships."

So much for the personal story, but Miss Lambie's book is far more than that. It is about the nursing profession, about the history of nursing in New Zealand, and the gradual building up of a wide International Nursing Organisation. And it is written by an authority on the subject, who has herself played an important part in the story. My only complaint is that it is rather too perfunctory. We are given a bare outline and a few minute details, but the heart of the matter is perforce left out of a book of less than 200 pages. Nevertheless, it is a book that will be of special interest to nurses and of general interest because it presents a picture of their profession as an established international organisation, efficient, co-ordinated and dedicated to the service of humanity—and run almost entirely by unmarried women.

This seems to be the real subject of the book, and the fact that Miss Lambie has worked in this organisation with distinction, bringing honour to herself and to her country, is incidental. Perhaps we do not sufficiently realise quite all that this profession—surely the most self-effacing in the world—embraces, and it is a pity that Miss Lambie's small book gives the reader little more than a hint of it; but this hint is in itself quite staggering, and all the more effective for being presented so modestly.

ENGLISHMAN AT GETTYSBURG

THE FREMANTLE DIARY: An Eye-witness Account of the American Civil War; André Deutsch, through Oswald-Sealy (N.Z.), 21/-.

THE best review of this book is the simple statement that it is the diary of an English Guards officer who, having secured three months' leave in 1863, sailed for Mexico, crossed Texas by mule, buggy, coach and foot, attached himself to a Confederate army he found in Mississippi, and spent the last two days of his leave sitting up a tree watching the Battle of Gettysburg. The dullest man, if he had eyes and ears, would have found that an exciting experience; and Colonel Fremantle was not dull. He was young (for a colonel), simple (in that raw world), and being a perfect English gentleman was also a continuing English joke. The soldiers laughed at his shooting suit, at his Texan hat, his travelling trunks, and his



MARY LAMBIE, whose autobiography is reviewed on this page. She is also the subject of a "Portrait from Life" from the YA and YZ stations in the National Women's Session on October 24

collapsible Turkish lantern. But he had an observant eye, good temper, and a gift for saying clearly what he saw.

He was also a trained soldier, able to appreciate tactical situations, and because the Confederates were desperately anxious to stand well with Britain, he had access to generals when he wanted more information than came to him through his eyes. Before Gettysburg, for example, he had discussions with Longstreet, with whom he was quartered; during the first day's fighting he had progress reports from Hill; and when he was watching from his tree, Lee was sitting on a stump below. With all these advantages he did not arrive at a sound estimate of the final issue of the war, which he could not see the Confederates were losing. The last entry in the diary, a postscript added on the way home across the Atlantic, closes on this note:

The more I think of all I have seen in the Confederate States of the devotion of the whole population, the more I feel inclined to say with General Polk, "How can you subdue such a nation as this?" Even supposing that their extermination were a feasible plan, as some Northerners have suggested, I never can believe that in the nineteenth century the civilised world will be condemned to witness the destruction of such a gallant race.

But, of course, no one will read Fremantle today for his military or political opinions. The value of his diary—greater now than when he wrote it, since the world he saw in 1863 will never be seen again—lies in its vivid personal

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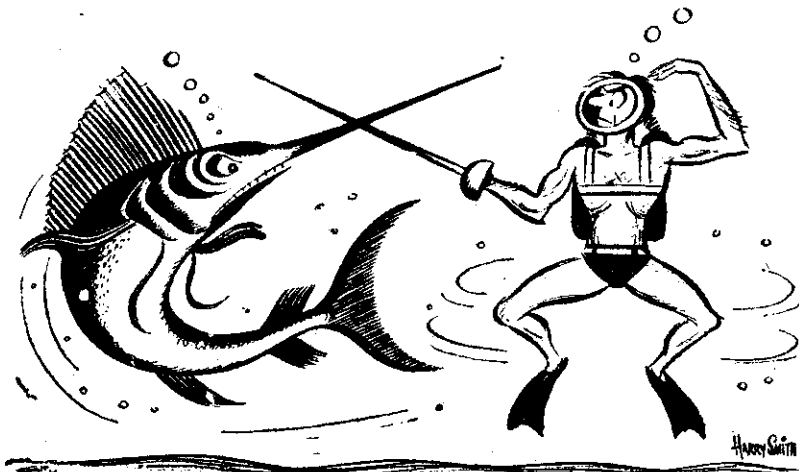


SILENT WITNESSES

IN DAYS GONE BY, the manufacture of nitro-glycerine was controlled by men seated on one-legged stools. It was reckoned that, if the strain made them sleepy, they would fall over and wake up. Modern control methods in chemical works present a different picture. The acetone plant at I.C.I.'s Billingham works, for example, contains nearly a hundred controls, yet it is looked after by only two men—constantly on the watch to ensure that everything is working smoothly. In the "brain" of the plant, details of levels, flows, temperatures and pressures are received by the dials and controlling instruments that line the walls from floor to ceiling. In the centre are two great desks, and here sit the operators, who from time to time press switches and enter readings in a book. It is a far cry from the men on the one-legged stools to these gleaming panels of silent witnesses.



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