

FLORENCE THE GREAT.

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IN the midst of her strenuous life, Florence Nightingale found time and opportunity to take a deep interest in India. So long ago as 1858 she steadily used her influence for the appointment of a Royal Commission similar to that which had done such valuable work for the Army at home. After eight months persevering work she was successful. The result of this effort may be summed up in a few words. In 1859 the annual death rate of the British soldier in India was 69 per thousand. At the present time, the mortality is less than 6 per thousand. This reduction is largely due to the carrying out of the recommendations of that Royal Commission. So far from now dropping the matter Miss Nightingale's sympathies became enlarged and extended and embraced the whole peoples of India. In 1869, on his return from India, Sir John Lawrence bore testimony to the fact that Miss Nightingale "initiated the reform, which initiated public opinion, which made things possible, and now there is not a station in India where there is not something doing." For many years Miss Nightingale remained as an inspiring and driving power in the cause of sanitary improvements in India. She has been spoken of as the great health missionary for India. As usual she carried on her work by means of all whom she could contrive to influence from Viceroys, Commanders-in-Chief and Governors downwards. For instance Lord Roberts came to her before taking up the supreme command in India. Miss Nightingale had taken endless pains to have ready for him a very complete synopsis of measures which might be taken to improve the health and welfare of the troops. We all know how extraordinarily fruitful Lord Roberts' command was in promoting such reforms. It will be remembered too that it was at this time that the employment of female nurses was sanctioned in Military Hospitals in India. Again, Miss Nightingale was in almost weekly correspondence with Lady Dufferin. In founding "the National Association for supplying Medical Aid to the women of India," Lady Dufferin consulted her at every stage.

Florence Nightingale laid enormous stress on the crying need for skilled maternity nursing in India. At the present time this is still one of the most urgent reforms which is required. The mortality is still appalling. In most Indian towns and villages the bulk of this work is done by absolutely untrained and ignorant native women, who carry from case to case the germs of puerperal fever and whose path can too often be traced by the disease and death which follow their dirty and rough ministrations.

By the time Lord Dufferin was appointed to the Viceroyalty, Miss Nightingale's position and authority as an expert on Indian sanitary matters was established. "Give me your instructions" said Lord Dufferin, "and I will obey them. I will study them on my way out. Send me what you think. Supply the powder and I will fire the shot."

During all this period, Miss Nightingale was steadily pushing forward the training of nurses in England. The Nightingale Training School for Nurses was opened at St. Thomas' Hospital on June 24th 1860.

In the matron, Mrs. Wardroper, Miss Nightingale found a friend and worker after her own heart. The following are some extracts from Miss Nightingale's description of her. And they are of special interest because, as Sir Edward Cook points out, there is something, in this character sketch, of Miss Nightingale's own portrait. Her power of organization or administration, her courage, and discrimination of character were alike remarkable. She was straight forward, true, upright. She was decided. Her judgment of character came by intuition, at a flash, not the result of much weighing or consideration, yet she rarely made a mistake, and she would take the greatest pains in her written delineations of character required for record, writing them again and again in order to be perfectly just, not smart or clever, but they were in excellent language. She was free from self consciousness; nothing artificial about her. She did nothing and abstained from nothing because she was being looked at. Her whole heart and mind, her whole life and strength were in the work she had undertaken. Her force of character was extraordinary. Her word was law. For her, thoughts, words and acts were all the same. She moved in one piece. She talked a great deal, but she never wasted herself in talking. She did what she said. Some people substitute words for acts: she never. She knew what she wanted and she did it. . . She had great taste and spent her own money for the hospital. She was a thorough gentlewoman, nothing mean or low about her; magnanimous and generous, rather than courteous. And all this was done quietly. She had a hard life, but never proclaimed it. What she did was done silently.

One of the outstanding features of Miss Nightingale's life is the enormous correspondence which she carried on, not only with her own Superintending Nurses of various important hospitals, not only with nurses on war service, such for instance as Miss Williams, to whom, on the Gordon Relief Expedition of 1884, she wrote more than sixty five letters, but with the rank and file both of those actually engaged in nursing and with hundreds of applicants, who thought of becoming nurses and applied to her, and whose letters she generally answered.

For many years there was a great lack of suitable applicants for the higher posts. Miss Nightingale in those days was constantly writing to friends all over the country, begging them to enlist promising recruits.

In addition to this she had numberless interviews with probationers and nurses, especially from her own Training School. Some idea of the close control which she exercised over this institution may be gathered from the notes which she kept, recording the answers which she received from such visitors to her questions as to the state of the wards, the kind and extent of the instruction which they received, and the influence exerted by the several sisters. Often too, after a nurse who had come to see her, had taken leave, she jotted down a terse character sketch for future reference. Some of these delineations are rather pungent. "Miss A. Tittupy, flippant, pretensiony,

veil down, ambitious, clever, not much feeling, talky under-bred, no religion, may be persevering from ambition to excel, but takes the thing up as an adventure. Nurse E. A. most capable little woman, no education, but one can't find it in one's heart to regret it, she seems as good as can be. Miss X more cleverness than judgment, more activity than order, more hard sense than feeling, never any high view of her calling, always thinking more of appearances than the truth, more flippant than witty, more petulance than vigour."

On the other hand there were many for whom she had nothing but encouragement. She immensely enjoyed letters from nurses whether at home or abroad, giving intimate details of their work or careful reports of cases. "I am on night duty now," wrote one of her pupils from the Citadel Hospital in Cairo and I don't dislike it at all: in fact I enjoy trotting about this weird old place all by myself in the solemnity of the night and now and then hearing a low voice saying "Sister, would you mind doing so and so?" "Sister, can you give me something to ease my face?" etc., and then feeding the hungry enteric patients at stated times who open their mouths in turn like so many little birds." "The picture drawn in this letter and the zest which it showed, pleased Miss Nightingale greatly, and she passed it on to old pupils at home. They were thrilled. "Lucky Sybil" they said; she is doing work like the Chief's at Scutari, another Lady with the Lamp amid the glimmering gloom."

A specimen may also be given of the cheering and inspiring letters which Miss Nightingale was constantly sending to her strenuous pupils. To Miss Williams, at Suez.—Would that I could help you to nurse the typhoids. I am sure you are doing great good among the orderlies, even though you do not know it. The very fact that they see you think neglect a crime does good. How well I know their fatal neglects with typhoid cases! But thirty years ago women nurses were just as bad. See the difference now. There is a Miss Williams! Cheer up: fight the good fight of faith! I need not say this to my dear for she is fighting it. God bless her. When I am gone she will see the fruit of her labours. Three cheers for her! A Dieu. To God I commend you. Would I were His servant as you are. I wonder whether you have had my letters, I have written by every mail.

One point in connection with nursing, on which Miss Nightingale laid great stress, was that it is a vocation "You cannot select the good from the inferior by any test or system of examination. But most of all and first of all must their moral qualifications be made to stand, pre-eminent in estimation." For this reason she felt that the British Nurses' Association had a very weak side and that current supervision in the *training school* and the test and examinations to which the nurses were there submitted were a far greater guarantee of fitness than *external* examinations.

There is no doubt that to Florence Nightingale the 'Nurses Vocation' was sacred and she was most unwilling to see any strong spirit of professionalism creeping in.

Underlying all Miss Nightingale's work there was an undoubted deep religious feeling. So long ago as 1837 in her home at Embley she records

a definite date February 7th when she believed that she had been in a special sense called to God's service.

Her religious development is extremely interesting. For her early life was hardly placed in a very favourable environment. Her father was a Unitarian. Her mother and sister conformed to the Church of England. They were wealthy and in the midst of all the claims which Society makes upon those who are rich and clever. In those days religious life was at a low ebb. And the Church of England was hide-bound in formalism and exerted very little spiritual influence.

It is hardly surprising that in her earlier years there is evidence of strong revolt against current religious life and theological conceptions. This found many outlets; the most marked was when she wrote a book entitled 'Suggestions for Thought.' This she submitted to John Stuart Mill and to Mr. Jowett for their opinion as to publication. Mr. Mill was in favour of her doing so. Mr. Jowett sent detailed criticisms and strongly urged revision. The book, like the modern New Theology, was a rather crude compromise between rationalism and Christianity and it was full of scathing criticism of the religious and social life of her day.

As time went on, Miss Nightingale's religious views matured. Although a great admirer of John Stuart Mill she realized his limitations. "He was not a happy man" she wrote. "He had queer religious notions: did not believe in a God or a future life. But he was the most truly *liberal* man I ever knew."

There is no doubt that Mr. Jowett, who for many years was perhaps Miss Nightingale's greatest friend and counsellor, had a great influence in modifying her religious outlook. It must however be remembered that whatever Florence Nightingale's intellectual attitude may have been and it changed greatly, her life was lived very near to God. Writing to Mr. Jowett we find, for instance, the following remarks: "My idea of a friend is one who will and can join you in work, the sole purpose of which is to serve God. Two in one and one in God. It almost exactly answers Jesus Christ's words. And so extraordinarily blessed have I been that I have had three such friends. I can truly say that during the five years that I worked with Sidney Herbert, every day, and nearly all day, from the moment he came into the room no other idea came in, but that of doing the work with the best of our powers in the service of God." In another letter written in 1889, also to Mr. Jowett she says "For myself the mystical or spiritual religion as laid down by St. John's Gospel, however imperfectly I have lived up to it, was and is enough".

Underlying all her life's work there was always the aim of Service as the object of the Christian Life... "I do entirely and constantly believe" she said once, in speaking of the motives in nursing, "that the religious motive is essential for the highest kind of nurse. There are such disappointments, such sickenings of the heart, that they can only be borne by the feeling that one is called to the work by God, that it is a part of His work, that one is a fellow worker with God."

Gentle and courteous in manner, Miss Nightingale was strong in action. Like most great souls she was truly humble, and at all times she showed a sublime indifference to matters of her own personal interest. There was nothing she dreaded more than popular acclamation. She sought no worldly distinctions or honours. Many were conferred upon her. Her chief pleasure in them was that they either marked a stage of progress, in work achieved, or that they, by a certain element of added prestige, helped to give weight to her strenuous and unceasing efforts to advance the causes of Sanitation and Nursing.

Such was Florence Nightingale. Her life and work is most fully and ably narrated in Sir Edward Cook's biography, to which I am indebted for the facts which I have set forth, and from which I have made many quotations.

THE ENGLISH HOSPITAL FOR FRENCH AND BELGIAN SOLDIERS AT THE CHATEAU TOURNAVILLE NEAR CHERBOURG.

BY DR. HELEN HANSON.

I do not know if a few words concerning the hospital at the Chateau Tournaville near Cherbourg for French and Belgian Soldiers may prove of interest to your readers.

It is one of six units at the present time officered by medical women, and was organized by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart. The first and forerunner of its kind, which was out in the Balkan war, was also organized by her, as well as a hospital in Antwerp, whose existence, like that of others in the city, came to an untimely end during the bombardment.

The Medical Director is Dr. Florence Stoney who is also radiographer to the Unit. The whole corps, whose official name is the "Anglo-French Hospital, No. 2," was sent out by the Anglo-French Committee, and is directly under the auspices of the British Red Cross and the St. John's Ambulance Association. The Red Cross Society has provided a Motor Ambulance and two chauffeurs, and all the members of the Unit, medical and others, possess the numbered War Office Red Cross brassards.

The Hospital works of course in connection with the French Red Cross Societies, and its staff at first consisted of the Administrator Nero Stobart, six medical women, 12 nurses, orderlies and cooks, a treasurer and 7 chauffeurs, of whom two were women. Miss Aldrich Blake, Surgeon to the New Hospital for women, and other visitors for short periods, gave us the benefit of their assistance. The locale of the hospital is an ancient Chateau, part of it dating from the 12th century, and where, curiously enough 2 years ago an "entente cordiale" luncheon had been given to the Mayor and Council of Southampton. It is a fine building standing in beautiful grounds, which are utilized to the full by our convalescent patients. There are bright and airy wards on three floors with chauffage and electric lighting, and altogether it has been transformed into a very satisfactory and home like hospital.