

"Our Pioneers."

MISS MARY STANLEY,
A CRIMEAN NURSE.

MACAULAY, in a well-known passage, speaks of the ridiculous spectacle of the British public, which wakes up every seven years and concentrates its scathing wrath upon one man, whom it makes its scape-goat. It is equally true, and no less astonishing, that the public, in its hero-worship, loves to focus its admiration upon one person, and one alone.

While Miss Florence Nightingale's name will be remembered as long as that of, say, the Maid of Saragossa, or Joan of Arc, the Nurses who accompanied her to the Crimea are already forgotten; the names of two or three remain, perhaps, but they are little more than names.

It does not detract from "the commanding genius" of Miss Nightingale to endeavour to give her fellow Crimean Nurses their due and individual meed of praise. We have good reason to know that certain Nurses who occupied leading positions in several of the Crimean Hospitals, felt very keenly the lack of recognition of their services.

That Miss Mary Stanley felt this, we know from the words of her dearly-loved brother, Arthur Penrhyn, Dean of Westminster:—"The feeling," he said, "that her public labours were for the most part unacknowledged and almost unknown—a circumstance due to various causes—cast something of a shadow over her life."

It is with the object of redeeming from utter oblivion the life of a woman well worthy of her country's gratitude that the following facts have been collected.

Mary Stanley was born in 1813. She loved her home passionately, and was the one in whom the brothers confided; Arthur always had a great deal to tell "dear Mary," even after he had been promoted to a public school. When the father became Bishop of Norwich, her hands and head were full of good works and projects; and she had ample opportunities for developing her native power of organisation. But besides philanthropy, she was deeply interested in culture in all directions. She was brought into close contact with some of the highest intellects of the day, for the kindly bishop loved to draw around him the good and the cultivated.

Here in the Norwich home it was that Mary became closely acquainted with the guest of the family, Jenny Lind, for whom the Bishop had a very fatherly affection. It would not, perhaps, be out of place here to add that it was his influence, added to that of his family, which first induced the "Swedish Nightingale" to give up the operatic stage.

After the father's death Mary was wrapped up in her mother and brother. She thus merged herself in others till in 1854 she, with other Englishwomen, was stirred to the depths by the news of the privations and sufferings of the Crimean soldiers, and volunteered as a Nurse at once.

In October Miss Nightingale took over the first party of thirty-four Nurses; in a few weeks Miss Mary Stanley followed with fifty Nurses, and she found it no easy task to cross Europe and the Mediterranean in mid-winter. In the no less difficult task of organising the Nurses for effective service, she was much helped by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Ambassador at Constantinople, who had always a high opinion of her capabilities.

For the first few weeks she superintended nursing operations in Therapia Military Hospital, and was then transferred to Kulali, winning on all hands golden opinions from patients and physicians. Kulali is situated on the Asia Minor side of the Bosphorus, yet she declared the echoes of the cannon could be heard. Among the many charming, graceful acts of hers during her work, it is pleasing to record that on Christmas Day she gave her patients each a patriotic treat in the shape of the Queen's letter neatly written out. One man, on receiving his, exclaimed, "God bless the Queen! If I had my way she'd reign a thousand years!"

Among the presents she received at the conclusion of the war, was a brooch from the Sultan.

The purlieu of Westminster—now, fast disappearing—knew well the step and presence of Miss Stanley. She established a Needlework Society, bought a house in York Street, contracted with the Government for the supply of army clothing, and so found work for many a soldier's widow or even wife. During the Franco-German War she rendered great assistance in collecting stores to enable the Red Cross Society to do its work effectively. Similar aid she had given during the great Lancashire cotton famine. It was she, also, who helped to establish the Flower Mission.

This is not the place to refer to her secession to Romanism, nor is there space to refer to her admirable little book published some time before the Crimean War, on "Sisterhoods and Hospitals," but her sweet character summed up by Kinglake must have a word. He said, "The spirit of her large and resolute benevolence never seemed, as is sometimes the case, to chill her affections or weaken the ties of friendship." She did noble work, and work that was distinctly patriotic; but she was prepared to take the secondary seat given her, for her mother used to say, "Remember, Mary, your lot in life is to sow that others may reap."

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