

## Sidney Herbert.\*

A PIONEER OF NURSING REFORM.

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MISS NIGHTINGALE and MISS MARY STANLEY.

Continued reports were received by Mr. Herbert as to the success and usefulness of the work of Miss Nightingale and her staff, and Lord Stanmore proceeds to relate that "greatly relieved and satisfied that Miss Nightingale had established her position and proved that the employment of females in military hospitals was both practicable and useful, he authorised the departure of a second party of nurses, of whom Miss M. Stanley undertook to take charge on the voyage out, it being her intention to return to England herself immediately after handing them over to Miss Nightingale.

"The agreement with Miss Nightingale that no nurse was to enter the hospital except on her recommendation was aimed at the exclusion of troublesome outsiders, and was not regarded by Mr. Herbert as prohibiting the War Office itself from raising the numbers of the nursing staff.

"All accounts showed that the number of patients in the hospitals was increasing with frightful rapidity, and if forty nurses were required for 1,500 sick, eighty did not seem too many for twice that number.

"The intention to enlarge the nursing staff was intimated to Dr. Cumming by Mr. Herbert, who wrote: 'We send out another batch of nurses (46) from Marseilles on the 6th. This will complete Miss Nightingale's staff to the full strength, I suppose, which she can manage. . . . You will, I think, have seen enough of her now to know that she is thoroughly equal to her task.'

After less than a month's stay at Scutari, Miss Nightingale was able to report, says Lord Stanmore, that wards for 800 wounded had been repaired, which would otherwise have been left uninhabitable, that a kitchen for extra diet was in full action, that a great deal more cleaning of wards took place, 2,000 shirts had been given out, a lying-in-hospital had been begun, and widows and soldiers' wives attended to, and a great amount of daily dressings and attention to compound fractures were undertaken by the most competent of the nurses. "But a tone of dissatisfaction and irritation showed itself conspicuously in what she wrote. She denounced

Lady Stratford as useless and obstructive, declared the whole of her own staff of nurses to be incapable and useless, 'except at the most eighteen' (a number which she in her next sentence reduced to five), to whom alone the results already obtained were to be attributed."

### THE RECEPTION OF THE NURSES.

No misgivings as to the welcome the second party of nurses despatched to Scutari would receive crossed Mr. Herbert's mind. How could they indeed, when he knew that the number of sick was constantly increasing, that the hospital at Scutari was full, that other hospitals must be organised as quickly as possible, that there were 10,000 sick between Sevastopol and the Bosphorus, and that the number was rapidly augmenting, that "all the authorities concurred as to the entire failure of the system of hospital orderlies," and that Miss Nightingale's little band numbered but 40 all told.

"Great, therefore," we read, "was his dismay when the mail, arriving on December 24th revealed to him that the step which he had taken, as he supposed in accordance with Miss Nightingale's wishes, only incurred her most vigorous denunciation. She wrote to Mr. Herbert that he had sacrificed the cause so near her heart, that he had sacrificed her, and had sacrificed his own written word to a popular cry, that conditions were imposed on her which rendered the object for which she was employed unattainable, that the quartering of the new arrivals was a physical impossibility, their employment a moral impossibility, and that 'of course these unoccupied women would go to the devil.'

"Miss Stanley and her companions did not 'go to the devil.' On the contrary they did angels' service both at Kulali and in the Crimea, of which more hereafter. Meanwhile Miss Nightingale sent home her resignation and announced that she only remained at Scutari until superseded."

The fact that she was conducting the initial stages of a great experiment is the explanation, Lord Stanmore considers, "of her great reluctance to employ a larger number of nurses at Constantinople than she could herself personally supervise, and her strenuous objection, which it is now hard to credit, to the employment of *any* female nurses whatever in the Crimea itself."

"Mr. Herbert was both surprised and disappointed by the vehemence of Miss Nightingale's protest. Many men would have taken offence at its terms; most men would have urged in their own defence the reasons which had prompted and justified their action. The course pursued by Mr. Herbert showed in a

\*Sidney Herbert, Lord Herbert of Lea: A Memoir by Lord Stanmore. (John Murray, Albemarle Street, W. 24s.)

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