

the nervous tension, due to the strain on the overtaxed brain, engendered irritability which they explain and excuse. It is with reluctance that one perceives what one would rather not see, and would prefer to veil; but, in justice to Mr. Herbert, this side of Miss Nightingale's character cannot be wholly ignored or forgotten. Her determination to regard Miss Stanley, not as a colleague or assistant, but as a rival, worked mischief, and caused Mr. Herbert much anxiety and pain. Strangely forgetting that she was herself the strongest proof that a lady might be an efficient nurse, and a capable administrator, Miss Nightingale protested with the utmost vehemence against the employment of any lady but herself in the hospitals. Her equals they were not, and did not profess to be, but to class such women as Miss Emily Anderson and Miss Shaw Stewart with the idlers who 'did nothing except run about after the doctors with note books in their hands' was not only unjust but absurd.

"The highly coloured pictures of Miss Nightingale are not fully borne out by the testimony of others. Miss Stanley's letters, the tone and temper of which form a very refreshing contrast to those of Miss Nightingale, tell a different and probably a truer story. She fully recognises the humanity and efficiency of many of the medical men, the willing help of many in authority. It is antecedently improbable that Miss Nightingale and the Bracebridges were the only Abdiels in the East, and Mr. Bracebridge himself writes very differently from his principal.

"According to Miss Nightingale, Lord Raglan, Lord William Paulet, and Sir Andrew Smith were all incapable old women, and Lord Stratford an incapable and heartless old man, whom she had once 'forced' into the hospital for three-quarters of an hour, but who had seen nothing, and knew nothing of it. Lady Stratford was denounced as a busy-body and a hindrance, for whose visits she could see no reason except that she might say one thing while her husband did another."

On quitting the Government, Mr. Herbert addressed a long letter to Miss Nightingale in which he discusses nursing matters in detail. He explains that the "unwelcome batch of nurses" were meant to be under her authority, that her authority was binding over the Roman Catholic sisters as over the others, they were not taken "*qua* Roman Catholics but *qua* nurses," that Mrs. Herbert is sending six other nurses. Even in those days testimonials seem to have been but broken reeds for he writes: "They are all well recommended, but from all she has seen of paid

nurses, she has no confidence in any of them as to drinking, though nothing can exceed the testimonials these have got." He also tells her that "the Smyrna civil hospital staff have taken out 40 nurses, half paid nurses, and half ladies and unpaid, and that Dr. Meyer will, after trial, pick out the lady whom he thinks most fitted to act as head at Kulali, to succeed Miss Stanley." The medical staff as civilians were independent of the Army Medical Board, and the nurses of Miss Nightingale. He then advises Miss Nightingale to give up purveying. "The business of a purveyor is to purvey, and he is responsible that everything requisite for a hospital is there. I believe from all I hear he (the purveyor) and his people lean upon you, and, trusting that you will supply deficiencies, and so save the credit of the hospital and their own, they simply neglect their duty."

He then refers to the desire of Lord Panmure, then Secretary of State for War, to "separate the different hospitals so far as the nursing is concerned, now that there are so many, and each so distant from the original establishments at Scutari, which were the only ones in existence when the first arrangements were made. He thinks this multiplication of hospitals at some miles' distance makes any real supervision from Scutari impossible, and gives you, therefore, a responsibility without corresponding powers. But he feared to make any change, lest you should think it implied a want of confidence in you, or a want of appreciation of the great services you have rendered, and are rendering. Your last letter but one enabled me to say that you had contemplated the possibility of such an arrangement."

He then speaks of the three present and prospective accepted medical systems—(1) the Army medical system as at Scutari, (2) an entirely civil medical staff as at Smyrna, and (3) an Army Inspector General at the head, with civilians in all ranks under him—"an experiment which I understand Dr. A. Smith is anxious to try." He continues:

"We shall in the same way have three systems of nurses: Yours at Scutari; the Smyrna division, consisting of ladies and paid nurses in equal proportions, without sisters (R.C.), and the Kulali system of mixed religions, conducted otherwise very much on the same plan as the Smyrna. The civil doctors look to their nurses to do the principal work of the wards, so far as nursing is concerned, as in a London hospital, but they expect to require a larger staff. I take Miss Stanley's system to be the same. It requires delegation of duties to others, which seems to me right, because nothing can be done on any scale without it."

After Mr. Herbert went out of office, which he did early in 1855, he still kept up

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)