

his correspondence with Miss Nightingale. The author states that "To the end she was as unsparing of censure and complaint of all around her as at the outset."

"Amongst all the men here," she asks, "is there one really anxious for the good of these hospitals, one who is not an insincere animal at the bottom, who is not thinking of going in with the winning side, whichever that is? I do believe that of all those who have been concerned in the fate of these miserable sick, you and I and Bracebridge are the only ones who really cared for them."

Lord Stanmore says: "It is needless to point out the exaggeration of such language, which is an uncharitable libel on many earnest and devoted men, who laid down their lives for their patients, though they may not have been large minded enough to recognise the advantages of the "new method," and an equally unjust reflection on many noble women, animated by as pure a spirit of self-sacrifice as Miss Nightingale herself, though not possessing her powers of organisation."

#### GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

On February 21st, 1856, Miss Nightingale "formulated her grievances against the Government, and asked Sidney Herbert to support them publicly by a motion in the House of Commons for the production of the correspondence." His reply was diplomatic and judicious. There had evidently been some difference between Miss Nightingale and two of the medical staff, Dr. Hall and Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Herbert tells her that:

"Colonel Lefroy appears to have succeeded in effecting at the War Department very much what you wish, what Dr. Hall's proceeding rendered necessary if you are to maintain any order or discipline among your nurses. A despatch is gone out to General Codrington defining your position as Chief of the Nurses for the hospitals in the East."

He then tells Miss Nightingale that he is decidedly against moving in Parliament for the production of papers.

"In the first place, your object as to the definition and promulgation of your position and authority is attained; secondly, it will always be time to produce papers in your vindication when you are attacked, and so long as there is no public attack upon you you stand better than you would if publicly attacked, and triumphantly defended. . . . The papers, the publication of which you suggest would prove, first, that there is great doubt as to the value of the nurses in the eyes of the Chief Medical Officer of the Army, which, however unfounded your answer may show it to be, would have weight with many people. Then his testimony as to the superiority of the nuns, however unfounded, would to all time be claimed as conclusive by the Roman Catholics; a controversy would be engendered . . . and

the public distracted, indolent, and weary would settle that it was a pack of women quarrelling among themselves, that it is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other, and that everyone is to blame all round. . . . Lastly, though your answer to Mr. Fitzgerald appears to me to be complete, as I believe it does also to the War Office, I should be sorry to see it published. . . . You have been overdone with your long, anxious, harassing work. You see jealousies and meanesses all round you. You hear of one-sided, unfair, and unjust reports made of your proceedings, and of those under you. But you overrate their importance, you attribute too much motive to them, and you write upon them with an irritation and a vehemence which detracts very much from the weight which would otherwise attach to what you say. . . . My moral is, you must write more calmly, and not yourself accuse or attribute motives to those whose misstatements you may disprove, and whose misconduct you may expose without either, and do it far more effectively, too. . . . I do not think you did yourself justice in the tone of your answer to Mr. Fitzgerald."

Lord Stanmore says that "Miss Nightingale's later letters to Mr. Herbert abundantly prove this important fact:—"That free as she is with her censure, she has none for the home authorities, except, indeed, for sending out the second detachment of nurses, a step she denounced with a vigour which shows that she was not withheld by considerations of policy or friendship from censuring the arrangements of the Government when ground for censure in her opinion existed."

#### IN CONCLUSION.

In concluding his most interesting survey of this period Lord Stanmore says:—

"The credit of a keen perception of the evils existing and the means of remedying them must be assigned to Florence Nightingale. The credit of recognising the practical value of her ideas, and of enabling her to give practical effect to them belongs to Sidney Herbert."

The supreme interest of Lord Stanmore's incidental allusions to Miss Nightingale, in his Memoir of Sidney Herbert, lies in the fact that, from her own letters, her character and temperament are revealed without reservation.

The very human weaknesses which, with many rare virtues, constitute the forceful character of Florence Nightingale have hitherto been suppressed by her biographers.

For the first time, we are allowed to know that she has imperfections—and reverence her none the less.

Her work for the sick in the Crimea is imperishable. It shed lustre on her country, and has rendered her name immortal. M.B.

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