

reading. Thus at a Dinner at the Reform Club in 1900, the nursing arrangements for the sick and wounded in South African military hospitals were pronounced perfect, and even then the letters of Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P., describing the condition of the men who were "dying like flies" at Bloemfontein were speeding on their way home, to the *Times* to stir the nation to its depths.

So we learn that the hospital arrangements for our soldiers in the Crimea were considered by those who had knowledge of the privations of the Peninsular campaign under the Duke of Wellington relatively perfect, and Scutari and Kulali "paradises of luxury," compared with the military hospitals in Spain at that time.

Charges made in the *Times* as to shortcomings were hotly denied, and Dr. Menzies, head of the hospital at Scutari, wrote to denounce statements made in that paper as "false in every particular." "There never was such a tissue of falsehoods fabricated."

The Cabinet took a wise course, inasmuch as though it in the main disbelieved the *Times'* statements, it determined to send out a Commission to inquire into their accuracy and to provide remedies for all defects discovered.

In the meantime Mr. Herbert, whose attention from the commencement of the war had been "earnestly directed towards the amelioration of the condition of the soldier when in hospital," determined to send out female nurses. In these days the suggestion seems a natural one enough, but even within quite recent years the employment of women nurses in military hospitals to any extent in war time has not been regarded with great cordiality by the Army Medical authorities; 50 years ago the proposal must have been almost a revolutionary one, and could only have been advanced by a man of originality and liberality of mind. But "Sidney Herbert asked himself why the system generally followed in civil life should not be extended to the Army also, and it appeared to him that no adequate objection could be urged in reply. . . . In all relating to this matter he was, so far as official circles were concerned, the originating and moving spirit, but it would be highly unjust not to recognise the readiness with which the Duke of Newcastle (his official chief) perceived the value of Herbert's suggestions, or the heartiness and absence of jealousy with which he adopted them as his own, and used the whole power of his office to anticipate objections and to overbear them when raised. It was a great and untried experiment. It proved a most successful one, but it cannot be wondered that both the Duke and Mr. Herbert should have thought

it necessary to begin cautiously and not without misgiving."

Mr. Herbert, however, knew that the success of his cherished scheme depended on the wisdom with which the Superintendent of the Nurses was selected and herein lay Miss Nightingale's opportunity—an opportunity which she grasped and utilised with signal success.

MISS NIGHTINGALE'S OPPORTUNITY.

The great opportunity of a lifetime which thus came to Miss Nightingale, was one for which she had unconsciously been preparing, so that, in addition to wealth, social position and unusual powers of organisation, she had the professional knowledge which qualified her to accept the invitation of the Secretary at War to go out to the Crimea with a contingent of nurses, over whom she was to have full control, and to superintend the nursing arrangements at Scutari. Without the first-named endowments, Miss Nightingale's work in the Crimea would probably never have been heard of, for the possession, or at least the use of brains, by persons not possessing such qualifications was at that time apt to be regarded as somewhat of an insult to the class above them. At the present day, though things are better than they were, the possession of brains by those classed as the "lower orders" is still looked upon with some distrust.

Lord Stanmore, as well as doing ample justice to Miss Nightingale's genius, reveals another side of her character which has hitherto been unsuspected by the world at large.

To us this delineation of her character is the most human document we have read for some time. The commanding qualities which enabled Miss Nightingale to successfully surmount tremendous difficulties, are usually associated with strong feeling, and intolerance of opposition. Miss Nightingale has hitherto been presented to the public as a dear sweet saint—a description which cannot be applied to her after the publication of her letters from the Crimea.

In our next issue we shall continue the review of this book and deal with the intensely interesting phase of Miss Nightingale's temperament as presented by Lord Stanmore.

(To be continued.)

St. John's House, which for many years has had its headquarters in Norfolk Street, Strand, has now moved to 12, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, where we have no doubt it will continue to flourish and to maintain the reputation for good work which it has had for the last fifty years. All good wishes to the nursing staff in their new home:

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