A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.*

A Story of the life of Florence Nightingale by a relative who knew her well, from her middle-age onwards, is very welcome, and the short Sketch by Mrs. Rosalind Nash, the elder daughter of the cousin (W. Shore Smith, afterwards Shore Nightingale), whom she regarded almost as a brother, is most charmingly written, and should have a wide circulation amongst all who are interested in the personality and work of one of the greatest women of this or any other century. Especially should those nurses, who have not had the opportunity of reading the Life, by Sir Edward Cook, the only complete one, based on Miss Nightingale's papers and other material, and now out of print, but accessible in libraries, obtain and study this booklet which contains, in a small compass, an extraordinary amount of information: for, though Florence Nightingale's work covered far more ground than nursing, the Nursing Profession is for ever in her debt, not only for her work for the British Army in the Crimea, with which her name is most popularly associated; but because she first placed the nursing of the sick on a scientific basis, and by establishing a Training School for Nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital and sending its pupils, when trained, to organise Nursing Schools in connection with other hospitals, had a world-wide influence on the better training of nurses, and, therefore, a profound influence on the care of the sick and the hygienic conditions under which they were nursed.

Mrs. Nash writes that she agreed in the main with Sir Edward Cook's views, "such difference as there was being, I think, that I knew her, and was therefore more sensible of the very strong impression of goodness and greatness she made on her contemporaries. I knew her very sweet voice, her unaffectedly kind and pleasant manner, her occasional very compelling seriousness, and witnessed and experienced her immense helpfulness and kindness. I think anyone who knew her would gladly allow to her, and even enjoy, as part of a strong and lovable nature, the occasionally forcible utterances of her pen, at which (as his readers will observe) Sir Edward Cook, who had never seen her, was sometimes slightly shocked. . . . I myself had been pleased when he wrote that he thought there must have been 'something at once formidable and fascinating' about her. It was a relief after the older version, according to which she was nothing more than a gentle and devoted nurse; her character was, as Sir Edward says in his Introductory Note, stronger, more spacious, and more lovable; and her family were not afraid of the truth for which he had stipulated."

The booklet deals with "The Crimean War," when, as she subsequently wrote, many duties clearly devolved on the Superintendent of Nurses which should never devolve on her again; but her great achievement was not a series of brilliant irregularities, but the regular organisation of hospital management.

The history of her visits to the Crimea, and her journeys between the hospitals there, on horseback, on foot, or in a luggage cart, is full of interest; it includes the story of how a hostile official refused rations for herself and the nurses she had been instructed to bring; how she was shut out by his orders from one of the hospitals, and, sending for a chair, sat outside in falling snow until the keys were "found"; and how her superintending position was at last fully confirmed in General Orders.

When the war was over, "she came back resolved that nothing like the needless waste of life in the Crimean and Turkish hospitals should happen again if she could prevent it, and that both in peace and war the health and well-being of the soldiers should be cared for if she were permitted to be the means of doing it.

"A Royal Commission on the Health of the Army was set up . . . There was delay and opposition from people in office, who regarded any proposal of change as reflection on their own record; but once the warrant was issued (May, 1857) the work was done with unusual speed, urged on by Florence Nightingale, who thought constantly of soldiers dying while reforms lingered, and who that same year wrote at high pressure on the none too willing request of Lord Panmure, the Secretary for War, a very full Report of her own on Army Health and Hospital Administration during the war. She was unfailing in energy and all her energy was needed.

"Questions of soldiers' health in India could not be kept within the doors of barracks. Bad War, Bad Drainage, Filthy Bazaars, Native Towns, were headings in Miss Nightingale's 'Observations,' and it was not long before she was deep in plans for the sanitary administration of India . . . Her imaginative care for India was as intense as her feeling for the common soldier. . . .

"Her most complete and effective Indian work was for the soldiers in their barracks in military stations and the surroundings of these. In 1873 she was able to record 10 years' progress. The death rate had been brought down from 69 per 1,000 to 18, and to the common objection of expense it could be answered that £285,000 had been saved on recruits in a single year."

"Her character has been the subject of some strange misrepresentations. One has only to call to mind the story of her work, welcomed and prized by men in office who were under no obligation to do so; that alone shows that she cannot have been otherwise than, at the least, a pleasant coadjutor. Many expressions of warm friendship and admiration could be quoted, but they are unnecessary. The facts speak for themselves."

"In the last years her powers gradually failed, and her end was peaceful. She left instructions for a very quiet funeral, so burial in Westminster Abbey was declined; and her grave is in the little country churchyard near her Hampshire home."

The Nursing Profession owes much gratitude to Mrs. Rosalind Nash for this booklet, which, of a literary quality which makes reading it an unusual pleasure, enables Nurses who have not easy access to Sir Edward Cook's authoritative Memoir to obtain an excellent and sympathetic survey of Miss Nightingale's life. The very moderate price of sixpence brings it within the reach of all, and should assure for it a wide circulation. Very cordially we commend this Sketch to our readers.

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BLOOD TRANSFUSION.

THE HEALTH OF THE DONOR.

Early in the history of blood transfusion, interest was focused on the recipient of blood, whereas the health of the donor was considered only from the point of view of the patient. The donor, it was argued, must not be suffering from syphilis, tuberculosis, malaria or any other disease which might be transmitted in the process of transfusion. The donor must also be in good health in other respects in order than the blood he parted with might be perfectly normal.

Little heed was, however, at first paid to any ill-effects the donors themselves might suffer as a consequence of their donations. Over-worked medical students and nurses were sometimes asked to act as donors, although they might have little enough blood for themselves. No one worried about the possibility of late ill-effects of too generous

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