FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

by D. LAMMOND

Great Lives

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CHAPTER I

1820–1849

Birth and education – William Edward Nightingale – the first patient – a morbid child – religious perplexities – two years on the Continent – "Clarkey" – Richard Monckton Milnes – Salisbury Hospital – position of nurses – the Bracebridges – Italy – Sidney Herbert – social work in London.

THE admiration of the world was given in unstinted measure to Florence Nightingale, but it was given for services which she herself accounted small while recognition of her greater work was denied. The ignorance of the public in her own time of the tremendous tasks she undertook after her name had become a household word was, however, due as much to her own secrecy as to the nature of those tasks. Few women have striven so persistently to escape popular fame, and, having become famous despite themselves, despised the plaudits of the crowd so whole-heartedly. Yet without the reputation which she had won at the beginning of her public career in the Crimea, the work of her later years could never have been accomplished.

Florence Nightingale was born to wealth and good social position. Her mother, Frances, was the daughter of William Smith, who represented Norwich in Parliament for forty years, and became a well-known figure through his association with

Wilberforce in the anti-slavery movement and his support of every liberal cause. The father of Florence Nightingale was not born to riches, but he succeeded to the very valuable estate of his great uncle, Peter Nightingale, and in 1815 he changed his name from William Edward Shore to William Edward Nightingale. With an ample fortune, he was able to indulge his cultured tastes and travel extensively on the Continent.

Italy was the birthplace of the Nightingales' only children – two daughters. The elder was born in 1819 at Naples ; she was called Frances, after her mother, and also given the name of Parthenope, the classic name of Naples – a name which was soon shortened to Parthe and sometimes to Pop. The second child was born on May 12th, 1820, in the Villa Colombaia at Florence, and the Nightingales again named their daughter after the city of her birth. To some extent, therefore, Florence Nightingale owed both her names to chance.

With wealth at her command, Mrs. Nightingale intended to live in fine style. Lea Hurst, near Derby, was built as a family residence, but it proved to be too cold in winter, and Embley Park, near Romsey, was acquired as a second estate in 1825. The family spent at least a few weeks in London every season, and divided the rest of their time between Lea Hurst and Embley Park. Florence and her sister were educated at home by a governess under the general superintendence of their father. William Edward

Nightingale was a scholar, and, unlike most men of the early nineteenth century, he firmly believed in a liberal education for girls. He started his daughters on a course which included Greek and Latin, French and Italian, history and mathematics ; they also found time for music and drawing lessons, as well as for deportment and dancing, and sewing and fancy work of various kinds.

Florence was a reflective child, and at an early age she became the chosen companion of her father. With his encouragement she read widely, and she learned from him about such subjects as the great Reform Bill, the abolition of slavery, the conditions of poor-law relief, the disabilities of the Catholics, Lord Shaftesbury's agitation for factory legislation, the revolutionary movement in Italy, the rise of Louis Philippe, etc. Mr. Nightingale was an ineffective man in many ways, with strong views which he did little to advance. In 1829 he was appointed High Sheriff of Hampshire, an office which he filled competently enough, and six years later he stood as a Parliamentary candidate, in the Whig interest, for Andover. Electors in those days, however, expected to be paid for their votes, and since his Unitarian principles did not permit him to indulge in bribery, he never achieved his ambition of taking his seat in the House of Commons.

Life for Florence consisted of more than study and discussion of social and political movements with her father. Mrs. Nightingale loved

company, and the house was rarely without visitors, often from among Mrs. Nightingale's nine brothers and sisters, frequently from among the most distinguished figures in politics and society. But while Mrs. Nightingale was fond of the social round, she did not neglect her responsibilities as the squire's wife. She played Lady Bountiful to the villagers, and Florence and Parthenope were taught that it was their bounden duty to help the poor. Florence at least entered with enthusiasm into the work of visiting the sick and distributing luxuries to tempt the invalids.

In later years, when the full blaze of publicity was upon her, people remembered, or said they remembered, how she had been "better than any doctor" and had performed marvellous cures; but it would be strange indeed if such stories had not been repeated of the greatest figure in modern nursing. Florence is alleged to have made her dolls into patients; she put them to bed and nursed them into convalescence – only, however, to condemn them to another illness as soon as they were well again. Parthenope, less careful, seemed to be always breaking the limbs of her playthings, and Florence acted the part of doctor and nurse to her sister's dolls. The first live patient is reported to have been a dog.[1] Riding at Embley one day in company with the parson,

[1] Florence Nightingale had no deep feeling for nature, but she had a keen love of animals, and considered that they were excellent companions for the sick. She writes: "An invalid, giving an account of his nursing by a nurse and a dog, infinitely preferred that of the dog. 'Above all,' he said, 'it did not talk.'"

Florence found an old shepherd, who bemoaned the fact that he would have to destroy his dog, Cap, as its leg had been broken. Florence and the parson made an examination, put the injured leg in splints, and saved Cap for the shepherd. Incidents of the kind, it need hardly be explained, multiplied at the height of Florence Nightingale's fame, but that her vocation in life was shown thus early is not to be taken too seriously.

Florence was more earnest than most children, and had a strain of morbidity. Fear of being conspicuous in company is common enough among the young (though it is only in these days of psycho-analysis that everyone is so ready with an explanation of the cause), but Florence had the complaint in an acute degree. She was afraid that she would not act properly before others and that people would think her "queer," and her greatest wish was to pass unnoticed by the visitors who came to the house. She liked to spend long hours by herself, and her secretiveness and love of seclusion caused her mother some anxiety. Mrs. Nightingale found her elder daughter easy to understand. Parthenope took lessons seriously, but not too seriously; excelled in drawing and other ladylike accomplishments; entered into all the activities of Lea Hurst or Embley Park; and did not question the fortunate state to which she had been called. She would, her mother felt assured, make a sensible marriage in due course and be an excellent helpmate to her husband.

Florence, on the other hand, was dissatisfied and

discontented. She had religious stirrings – not in themselves uncommon, but to an extent which Mrs. Nightingale considered hardly decent. She engaged in endless self-examination, and the life which Parthenope found so complete seemed to Florence to be a boring existence. She had a clear and analytical mind, and she wanted to use it. She felt that human beings had responsibilities which were appreciated neither by her mother nor her sister. Sometimes she had dreams of achieving social success, but she knew that the round which satisfied other girls of her class would not give her permanent happiness, even if such dreams were not actually sinful. She had the ambition to accomplish some useful work in the world, and in those days practically the only career for a young lady of position lay in marriage. And marriage, Florence decided, would never be enough for her.

Her father was her confidant up to a point only. Mr. Nightingale agreed in theory that women should take a full share in the work of the world, but he never got beyond theory, and Florence realised that he was a weak guide when it came to practice. What she could do in the world she was as yet uncertain, but she knew that in some way she must serve humanity. Her early aspirations to devote herself to the service of mankind had a religious origin, and she always remained a deeply religious woman, finding a constant strength in prayer. She rejected her father's strict Unitarianism and, like her mother, was a

member of the Church of England. But she never subscribed wholly to institutional religion of any kind. She remained within the communion of the Church of England, but only, she explained, because she had been "born in it." She was a mystic, and believed that she entered into union with the Deity and received His direct commands. She records that on February 7th, 1837, God called her to His service. That command, given before she had reached the age of seventeen, was to make her a pioneer in women's emancipation and revolutionise the nursing system, but not until she was over thirty did she embark upon her career.

In the autumn of 1837 the Nightingales set out for an extended tour of the Continent. Parthenope had been ill, Mr. Nightingale was suffering from mortification at his rejection by the corrupt electors of Andover, Florence's moodiness was becoming ever more marked, and Mrs. Nightingale thought that a change would benefit all of them. Two years were passed in France, Italy, and Switzerland, and they were full and interesting years. Wherever the Nightingales went, they fell in with good company, both English and foreign. They entertained generously, and were received into the best society of every city that they visited. For a time Florence forgot her earnest yearnings to be useful, while Parthenope was confirmed in her belief that it was the most perfect of worlds and that only a fool would want to change it. Both girls had

good looks, though neither had the beauty of their mother. Florence was tall and graceful, with grey and thoughtful eyes, beautiful brown hair, and a highly intelligent face. She had a charming smile, which lighted up a face pleasant at all times, and if she had little real humour in her composition she was a witty conversationalist. Even at that age her knowledge of affairs seems to have impressed many people whom she met. The jolly Parthenope and the well-informed Florence created something of a sensation in the drawing-rooms of Rouen, Nice, Rome, Genoa, and elsewhere.

In the summer of 1838, the Nightingales entered Switzerland and settled for a time in Geneva. That town was then, as it is now, the home of exiles from several lands. The Italian revolutionaries who had been banished from their country were of particular interest to Florence, and she had the opportunity to meet several of the best known. The historian Sismondi, though not himself an Italian, was her guide through the maze of Italian politics and impressed her more than anyone. After Geneva, Paris; and here the Nightingales entered into a round of entertainment once more. They had introductions to the Clarkes, and Mary Clarke was one of the most outstanding women in the French capital. Mary – who afterwards became the wife of the orientalist, Julius Mohl – interested herself in Parthenope and Florence, and a friendship was formed which lasted to the end of "Clarkey's"

life. To Florence this new friend was an inspiring figure, for Mary Clarke had not been content to accept the life of most of her class. The intellectuals of Paris flocked to her *salon*, and she met them on equal terms. That women should be satisfied to be appendages to their husbands was in her view an absurdity, and her example encouraged Florence to hope that she, though in a very different way, would break away from the trammels of tradition.

The Nightingales returned to England in April 1839. The social round which had been sometimes exciting, often highly amusing, and only very rarely dull in foreign countries seemed intolerable to Florence in London, and much as she loved Lea Hurst and Embley Park the constant stream of visitors irritated her. Mrs. Nightingale saw with annoyance that her daughter had not been cured of fantastic notions, and Parthenope made tearful protests that Florence was ungrateful to cause so much unhappiness to their loving parents. Study was Florence's refuge. She was meeting important people in politics: Lord Palmerston was a near neighbour in the country; Lord Shaftesbury occasionally visited Palmerston, and Florence learned at first hand of the fight to regulate conditions of labour in the factories. She was well informed of the moves in the political field – she was a staunch Whig – and heard much of the difficulties between the Tories and the young Queen Victoria, who had ascended the throne in 1837.

The world around her was changing rapidly. Sir Rowland Hill had pushed through Penny Postage in the teeth of the opposition of the officials of the General Post Office ; the age of steam had come ; the electric telegraph had made its appearance and was to revolutionise social life. The Church and the universities were about to be purged. The fight for justice for the Dissenters was being vigorously waged ; the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws was at its height, and the success of the movement in 1846 was to open the era of Free Trade. The Industrial Revolution had produced the most terrible sufferings among the workers, and the "hungry 'forties" were to be followed by a period of far-reaching social reforms.

Florence was a prey to deep dejection on her return from the Continent. So much was happening, and yet she had no part in anything. Sometimes she felt that she had imagined her call to service, and then she would try to follow Parthenope's example and satisfy herself with the pleasures of polite society. She was, however, quickly surfeited with so aimless an existence, and blamed herself for having doubted that she had a clear command to serve. Mrs. Nightingale became more and more impatient that Florence should marry – marriage, Mrs. Nightingale told herself, would settle all these doubts. But Florence reached the age of twenty-five in 1845, and showed not the faintest inclination to marry. It was not that opportunities were wanting. One

of her cousins had fallen in love with her, but, apart from the fact that she did not feel any deep affection for him, Florence held strong views on marriage between cousins. She had a deep respect for Richard Monckton Milnes (later Lord Houghton) which her mother hoped would blossom into love. Milnes, then on the threshold of his amazing career, was introduced to Florence through the Palmerstons in 1845, and was a frequent visitor to the Nightingale home during the next three years. But Florence was destined never to marry.[1] She may not have been incapable of a great passion, but she never experienced one. A close friendship and a strong affection developed between her and the witty and learned Milnes, but she considered that marriage with him would preclude her from adopting a career, and her feeling for her distinguished suitor did not justify such a sacrifice.

The first step in the career for which Florence had denied herself a great marriage had not yet been taken, but by 1844 she was convinced that her future lay in nursing. When any of her relatives fell ill, Florence begged to be allowed to take charge of the sick-room, and in a circle which included nine uncles and aunts, most of them with children, her services were frequently called upon. Mrs. Nightingale had no objection to nursing so long as it was kept within the family, and Florence, in attending to the ailing, found a

[1] When she became famous after the Crimean War, she received many offers of marriage from unknown persons. "I could" she

deeper satisfaction than she had ever before experienced. Nursing, she decided, must be her profession, but she did not mean to drift into it without training. She studied everything that she could find on the subject; pestered her friends for information, made opportunities to meet hospital doctors who might be able to help her. "Qualify yourselves as a man does for his work," she wrote, in after years, in advising on careers for women. "Don't think you can undertake it otherwise. Submit yourselves to the rules of business as men do, by which alone you can make God's business suceed; for He has never said that He will give His success and His blessing to sketchy and unfinished work."

It was practical training that she needed, but Florence knew that her mother would bitterly oppose any scheme by which it could be obtained. For professional nursing was looked upon as fit work only for the "lower orders" and wholly unsuitable for a lady. Nurses were usually illiterate creatures, and their conduct was a scandal and a disgrace. Attention had often been drawn to the gross inefficiency among the nursing staffs, but nothing had been done to raise the standard of nursing either by training or attracting a better class of recruits. Their drunkenness was a byword, and immoral relations between nurses and doctors and nurses and patients in the hospitals were so common as to be accepted as normal. Thousands of patients died in the public hospitals every year as the

result of the employment of these degraded, ignorant, and untaught women.

Florence realised that she must fight for the right to adopt nursing as her profession, but she shrank from flouting the authority of her family and the traditions of her class. When Dr. Howe and his wife, Julia Ward Howe, visited Embley Park in 1844, Florence asked him whether it would be "a dreadful thing" if she should take up nursing. "My dear Miss Florence," Dr. Howe replied, "it would be unusual, and in England whatever is unusual is thought to be unsuitable; but I say to you, go forward if you have a vocation for that way of life. Act up to that inspiration, and you will find that there is never anything unbecoming nor unladylike in doing your duty for the good of others."[1]

Such an opinion was encouraging, and Florence determined to act upon it. The first difficulty was to find a place where she could get training. She thought of the Roman Catholic Church, which provided facilities for women to study nursing, but she could not accept the Catholic faith. She reproached the Church of England bitterly for not offering similar facilities; that Church, she wrote, gave neither work nor training to women, and she felt that it was a failure that ought to be repaired. Perhaps, she thought, it was her duty to fill the gap. If she could herself prepare for the nursing profession, she might establish a Protestant Sisterhood for educated

[1] *Reminiscences*, by Julia Ward Howe.

women who, without taking vows, would devote themselves to the care of the sick. She was acquainted with Dr. Fowler, physician to the Salisbury Hospital, and she planned to enter under him as a probationer for a few months; but the protests of the family were even more bitter than Florence had anticipated. Mr. Nightingale said little – what he did say was in condemnation; Mrs. Nightingale and Parthenope were shocked at such an idea. A lady to enter into such a den of wickedness! Besides, nurses had to perform duties for the sick which would be impossible to a lady, though, indeed, a lady might perform such duties for a close relative. And then the diseases with which nurses must make acquaintance – horrible diseases which a lady never even named, far less dealt with. Florence herself fully realised the degraded condition of the hospitals. In after years she described them as a school for "immorality and impropriety – inevitable where women of bad characters are admitted as nurses, to become worse by their contact with male patients and young surgeons." She was prepared to venture into such an atmosphere, but Mrs. Nightingale peremptorily forbade the step, and the Salisbury Hospital plan had to be abandoned.

But from now onwards it was not a matter of choosing a career. Florence had made an irrevocable decision that she would adopt nursing as a career, and the question was how to induce her family to consent to the proposal. One of her

mother's criticisms had been that Florence would be thrown among ungodly people. Florence hoped to overcome that objection by another plan. In 1842 she had met de Bunsen (afterwards Baron Bunsen), the Prussian Ambassador in London, and had been an occasional visitor at his house in Carlton Terrace. He had a long experience in philanthropic work, and mentioned to her an experiment which had been started by Pastor Fliedner at Kaiserwerth, near Düsseldorf. The Kaiserwerth institution was recognised by the State in 1846, and in the following year Florence obtained reports on the scheme through de Bunsen. She was overjoyed at what she read, for Kaiserwerth seemed to point a way to overcome her mother's opposition.

Theodor Fliedner had been appointed Lutheran pastor of Kaiserwerth in 1822, at a salary of less than thirty pounds a year. The terrible poverty in the village as a result of the closing down of the mill, which had provided work for a large part of the population, decided him to seek assistance abroad, and he went first to Holland and then to England to obtain relief for his flock. In London he met Elizabeth Fry, who was then conducting her noble work in Newgate prison, and Fliedner became her enthusiastic disciple. On returning to Kaiserwerth he started, in 1833, the first home in Germany for discharged female prisoners, in a little hut in his garden. The experiment succeeded, and Fliedner then established a school to teach the children of women who applied for

admission to the home. The next step was a hospital, and from it developed a scheme for the training of nurses for work throughout Germany. Since nursing was taken up only by the poor, he made his plans accordingly, and the pupils were taught to read and write and trained in household as well as nursing duties. The deaconesses, as they were called, served a probationary period of five years without salary, and could be accepted only if they were unmarried and under the age of twenty-five. They were expected to devote themselves to nursing as a career, but were not required to take any vows. Resignation could take place at any time at will, and was compulsory on marriage. Pupils came slowly at first, but the movement afterwards grew highly popular, and branches sprang up in many parts of Germany and in a number of other countries.

"There are my brothers and sisters all at work," wrote Florence, when she read of the Kaiserwerth training institution. "There my heart is, and there I trust one day will be my body." But Mrs. Nightingale was not yet won over. It might be true that Kaiserwerth was a Christian community, but, apart from being in a foreign country, it was meant for illiterate people and would not do at all for a daughter of hers. No one ever heard of a young English lady of birth entering such an institution, and Florence would never go with her permission. Parthenope also felt that the idea was insulting, while Mr. Nightingale, although he did not feel strongly about it

– was, indeed, faintly approving – was hardly the man to support his daughter against his wife. The family agreed that the best course was to pack Florence off on a trip abroad in the hope that she would forget such mad notions.

The opportunity was offered by the Bracebridges, near neighbours of the Nightingales. Bracebridge was a man of wide intellectual interests for whom Florence had a sincere respect, while Selina Bracebridge was one of her closest friends. Florence agreed to accompany the Bracebridges to Italy, and in the autumn of 1847 the party set out. In Rome they found an interesting English colony which received them with open arms, and Florence met several people who were to be associated with her work in later years. There was Dr. Manning (the future Cardinal) ; Mary Stanley, who was to prove a thorn in Florence's side at the time of the Crimean War ; and, most important of all, Sidney Herbert, who had sat in Parliament for the last fifteen years and had held office under Peel. Both he and his wife, the beautiful Elisabeth à Court, whom he had married in the previous year, were attracted by the earnest and clever Florence Nightingale, and Sidney Herbert, more than any other man, shaped the course of her career.

Florence enjoyed the company of these new friends, and discovered that, unlike her family, they encouraged her dreams of serving humanity. She returned, at the beginning of the summer of 1848, more enthusiastic than ever to adopt social

work. It was a dire disappointment to her mother that a winter in Italy had not made Florence see reason, but Mrs. Nightingale still would not accept it as inevitable that her daughter should do anything so unconventional as take practical training in nursing. The strength of the protests threw Florence into a state of deep despondency. Surely if God had meant her to adopt nursing, she would have found a way of entering upon it before now. Perhaps, she thought, she was unworthy to undertake so noble a duty, and God had therefore withheld from her the means by which her family's opposition could be overcome. But the Bracebridges restored Florence's faith in herself to some extent, and the Sidney Herberts, whom Florence saw frequently, since they had a residence at Wilton House, near the Nightingale's estate at Embley, completed the cure. In the autumn of 1848 Florence pressed Mr. Nightingale to permit her to inspect London hospitals and assist in the organisation of the ragged schools. Mr. Nightingale left it to his wife to decide. She did not like either activity, but she gave a grudging consent. After all, other ladies helped with the children in schools, and, as for hospitals, closer acquaintance with them might prove salutary to Florence by showing what terrible sinks of iniquity they were.

The study of hospital work merely heightened Florence's interest in nursing work, and confirmed her resolve to get practical training as soon as possible. She was now twenty-eight, but

Mrs. Nightingale clung fondly to the illusion that her daughter would grow out of so abnormal an ambition. Although the Italian trip had not worked the miracle for which she had hoped, Mrs. Nightingale still pinned her faith to foreign travel. When, therefore, the Bracebridges, who valued Florence's company, invited her to accompany them to the East for a few months, in the autumn of 1849, Mrs. Nightingale urged acceptance of the offer. Florence saw her chance at last. She would go to Italy, Egypt, and Greece with the Bracebridges ; but she insisted that on the way back she should visit the home of her ambitions – Fliedner's institution at Kaiserwerth on the Rhine.

CHAPTER II

1849–1854

Egypt – publication of Florence's letters – Lord Palmerston and the Don Pacifico crisis – Athens – Pastor Fliedner – a book on the work of Kaiserwerth – a second visit – the Maison de la Providence – a series of mishaps – the Home for Sick Gentlewomen – Florence's first success – the outbreak of the Crimean War.

EGYPT cast its spell over Florence. She sent home long descriptions of her impressions of the country, in the history of which she was deeply read. Her letters seemed wonderful to her family, and, without consulting Florence and much to her annoyance, arrangements were made for their publication. After Egypt, the Bracebridges and Florence went to Athens. England at this time was deeply interested in Greece. Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, was adopting high-handed tactics towards foreign States, and had been in collision with Greece over the treatment of Don Pacifico, a Jew born in Gibraltar and resident in Athens. His property in the Greek capital had been destroyed in a riot, and he claimed compensation to the tune of thirty thousand pounds. Palmerston also took up the cudgels on behalf of Finlay, the historian, who complained that part of his land had been filched from him by the Greek Government.

Since the replies to Palmerston's protests on both points were unsatisfactory, the British fleet was ordered to Piræus, where it promptly seized all the Greek shipping. Ultimately the dispute was settled by arbitration – Don Pacifico had put in a grossly enhanced claim, and his actual loss was assessed at about a thousand pounds. But Palmerston felt that his action had been justified. He had affirmed the principle that a British subject, wherever he might be, could depend upon " the watchful eye and the strong arm of England."

Florence had followed the progress of events in the Don Pacifico crisis with the keenest interest, but the social work in Athens seemed to her even more important than political manœuvres. Two American missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Hill, had established a school and hospital in the Greek capital, and Florence looked upon these social workers as saints and saviours – Mrs. Hill, she wrote, was " the ideal of women." But the success of the Americans only made her own failure all the harder to bear, and she suffered much in those months in the East. Again she was beset with religious doubts ; she felt uncertain whether she had done right in dismissing Richard Monckton Milnes and wondered if, even yet, she ought not to become his wife ; she worried about the pain that her conduct caused her family ; but, above all, she was overwhelmed with remorse that she had accomplished nothing. Since the age of seventeen she had been conscious of a call ; now

she was thirty, and had hardly made the first step in her work of serving humanity.

When she came to Kaiserwerth, at the end of July 1850, however, she found a measure of peace. Pastor Fliedner and his wife, both of whom lived for their scheme, saw that the interest of an influential Englishwoman might prove advantageous to Kaiserwerth, and they welcomed her warmly, and encouraged her to make every investigation into the work of the institution. Florence was not content with superficial knowledge ; she questioned and cross-questioned until all the details of the organisation were clear to her, and such was her enthusiasm that she decided there and then to write a pamphlet on the institution. She had always insisted – not so obvious then as now – that cleanliness was the first requirement of a hospital, but never before had she found one which met with her approval in this direction. In London she had seen some hospitals which were filthy, a few which were less objectionable, one or two in which the standard had been fairly high, but none had been as clean as Kaiserwerth. In contrast to the nurses in the hospitals at home, the deaconesses at Kaiserwerth loved their work, and were qualified by training to undertake it efficiently. They gloried in the opportunity to do useful work, and felt that they were serving God in tending the sick. Full of admiration for Kaiserwerth, Florence joined the Bracebridges at Düsseldorf at the end of a fortnight. She wanted to finish her pamphlet on the

institution, and the Bracebridges agreed to postpone their return till the work had been completed. The pamphlet was published anonymously in 1851, under the title of *The Institution of Kaiserwerth on the Rhine.*

Florence reached England in August 1850, and went to Lea Hurst. She came back with the idea of obtaining permission to take a course of training under Pastor Fliedner and then establish an English Kaiserwerth; but no sooner had she returned to her family than dejection overcame her again. How impossible it was, she thought, ever to make her mother and Parthe realise that there was nothing shameful, nothing unladylike, in such a plan. They had been shocked when she revived that old scheme, so often debated between them. Mrs. Nightingale wondered what she had done to deserve a daughter who refused to follow the normal path and disappointed hope after hope, and prayed that by some means Florence might be induced to marry Richard Monckton Milnes. Florence met him soon after her return, but, although at this time hopeless of achieving her ambition, she still felt unable to be the wife of a man to whom social success was the breath of life. Mrs. Nightingale, foiled in that direction, had another project. It was the essence of her creed that a woman should marry; but, as Florence saw differently, her mother urged a "respectable" alternative. A literary career was looked upon as suitable for women – the Nightingales were intimate with Harriet

Martineau, who was building up a considerable reputation with her books and essays. Why should not Florence follow that example? It was obvious that she possessed talent – her letters proved that; and Mrs. Nightingale pressed her daughter to take up authorship seriously.

During the preceding years, Florence had often considered a literary career. She had a gift for clear expression, had a better education than most women, was travelled, and had influential friends who would help her in literature. In later days she showed herself to possess a virile style, a trenchant wit, an excellent sense of construction, and a deep knowledge of human nature; and she became a very successful author. But she rejected literature as a career with the comment, "I had much rather live than write." Her work, she said, was elsewhere, and in literature she could find no lasting satisfaction. She admitted that the fruits of success were sweet, so sweet indeed that she feared that if she took to literary courses she might be tempted to content herself with writing instead of acting. Florence Nightingale rightly judged that, considerable as her literary talent was, her strength lay in organisation. In after years she protested at the amount of matter which was written. "It used to be said," she remarked, "that people gave their *blood* for their country. Now they give their *ink*."

The Nightingales went to London in the spring of 1851. The Great Exhibition had been

opened in Hyde Park on May 1st of that year, after the most bitter opposition, not the less restrained because the unpopular Prince Consort was the guiding spirit of the scheme. Once the wonderful glass palace was raised, however, the nation hailed the exhibition not merely as, in the words of Prince Albert, a project to give "a living picture of the point of industrial development at which the whole world has arrived," but as the beginning of an era of peace. Surely when the nations could meet in such amity, men said, wars would be no more. These hopes were to be sadly disappointed. The year 1851, far from inaugurating a long period of peace, was followed by a series of wars.

Notabilities from all countries had flocked to London, and the capital was *en fête*. Mrs. Nightingale and Parthenope attended the brilliant functions with the keenest enjoyment, but to Florence, now that she had experienced a new life in Kaiserwerth, the social round was even more boring and useless than before. In the previous year she had written, "I am 30, the age at which Christ began His mission," and she reproached herself for having denied her Master's command to serve humanity. She withdrew from high society as much as she could, and preferred to meet social workers, distinguished and obscure, visit orphan homes, hospitals, and schools, passionately collecting information which might be of value when the day came in which she could break away from the bondage of her family.

That day was not far off. Parthenope, who had always been delicate, was ordered to take the cure at Karlsbad in the summer, and it was arranged that at the same time Florence should go to Kaiserwerth. Mrs. Nightingale was by no means resigned to a nursing career for her younger daughter, but there had been so many arguments, and Florence had been so persistent, that she had come to see that peace was impossible until the course under Pastor Fliedner had been taken. A better opportunity could hardly be expected. If Florence were to go to Kaiserwerth while her family remained in England, people would naturally ask where she had gone, and Mrs. Nightingale shuddered at the thought of having to meet such enquiries. If, on the other hand, Mrs. Nightingale and Parthe were in Germany at the same time as Florence was at Kaiserwerth, no one would be suspicious of the horrible truth. So at least Mrs. Nightingale reasoned, but it did not turn out quite like that. Questions reached her about her younger daughter, and she was in a quandary how much to disclose.

The knowledge of her mother's disapproval was the only thing that seriously interfered with Florence's pleasure at Kaiserwerth. This second visit of three months did not wholly confirm her first impression of the institution; she found several grave defects, both in the organisation and in the actual training, but criticism was far from her thoughts then. Her strongest feeling was a

deep sense of thankfulness to God that the way had been opened to her to receive the instruction offered by Kaiserwerth. Exceptional treatment she would not countenance. The nurses at Kaiserwerth, some of whom were quite illiterate, and all of whom were from poor homes, felt abashed in the presence of a lady of birth, but in sharing their life and taking her full share in the work, she won their confidence and became a highly popular figure in the community. For Pastor Fliedner she maintained a deep respect throughout her life, though she always resented the suggestion that all her knowledge had come from Kaiserwerth. Fliedner, for his part, was proud to have been associated with so great a figure in the world.

Mrs. Nightingale did not experience so much embarrassment as she had anticipated as a result of Florence's stay at the institution. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Herbert, with whom Florence had formed a close friendship since her meeting with them in Rome in 1847, visited Kaiserwerth while Florence was there. They highly approved of her conduct, and others whom Mrs. Nightingale had expected to throw up their hands in horror proved on the contrary to be favourably impressed with Florence's earnestness and initiative. But Mrs. Nightingale was taking no risks, and she told as few people as possible of her daughter's escapade. And certainly she had no intention of letting the training at Kaiserwerth affect her attitude towards Florence's ambition to adopt

nursing as a career. Florence, however, had tasted freedom, and was never again to be so restricted as in the past. On her return she insisted that she should continue her investigations into nursing work and see what was being done in the Dublin hospitals.

That was agreed to, but when she proposed to study the work of the Sisters of Charity in Paris she met with a blank refusal from her mother. Kaiserwerth, though bad enough, was at least a Protestant institution, but for the daughter of a Unitarian to be associated with a Roman Catholic community would be nothing short of a dire scandal. Mrs. Nightingale pointed out that Florence's value in the marriage market would be adversely affected, but, as Florence had put thoughts of marriage behind her, that argument made not the slightest impression. There was, however, one argument which did affect Florence deeply. Mrs. Nightingale implied that Florence was ruining Parthenope's chances of marriage also. Parthenope was now thirty-three, and she seemed desperately anxious to marry.

There was a deep affection between the two sisters, but nevertheless they grated on each other. Parthenope was often ill from nervous complaints, and Florence would have liked to nurse the invalid. But her presence in the sick-room irritated Parthenope, and Florence had to be forbidden to come near her sister at certain times. For Parthenope had got it firmly into her head that Florence was the cause of her troubles.

Men, rich, influential, distinguished, sought Florence's company, but not only did she fail to make opportunities for Parthenope to marry, but, in Parthenope's opinion, her intellectual attitude scared men away from marriage. Besides, thought Parthenope, potential suitors might well hesitate to marry into a family in which a daughter such as Florence threatened to bring disgrace by her unconventional conduct. Parthenope was in many ways illogical and selfish, but to Florence it was none the less painful that she should be looked upon as her sister's enemy.

So when Florence wanted to go to Paris, she was begged to consider her sister, and Parthenope's tears were added to Mrs. Nightingale's arguments. Florence wearily capitulated, and announced that she would cancel her arrangements. But matters could not be left in this position. She had already surrendered much for the sake of her family, and as the months passed she decided that she could sacrifice herself no longer, especially as she had come to see that her mother and sister would not be content by anything less than a complete renunciation of the career upon which she had set her heart. At the beginning of the following year, therefore, Florence made her stand. She announced that it was essential for her to study in the Roman Catholic institution in Paris, and that nothing could dissuade her this time. Mrs. Nightingale and Parthenope beat against her resolution in vain.

Florence started out for Paris in February 1853. Manning, whom she had met in Rome at the same time as the Sidney Herberts, and who had now been received into the Roman Catholic Church, had arranged that she should enter the Maison de la Providence under the care of the Sisters of Charity. Before going there, however, Florence spent some time in studying the organisation of the Paris hospitals, visiting "Clarkey" and other friends, and renewing her acquaintance with music and art in the French capital. On the day specified for her entry into the Maison de la Providence, she was called back to England. Her grandmother was ill, and Florence must take charge of the nursing. She answered that summons, but in May, after the death of her grandmother, she returned to Paris. So far as the Maison de la Providence was concerned, however, Florence was unfortunate. When everything had been arranged in 1852, she had been forced to abandon her plan by the opposition of her mother and sister; then, when about to enter the institution in the following year, she had been recalled to nurse her grandmother; now she actually entered the Maison – but only to fall a victim to measles!

But the battle for freedom had been won. Kaiserwerth had been an important step, Paris even more important, and on her return to England she made it quite clear to her family that, from now on, she could allow no interference with her career. She had fought for the

right to follow her mission before she had reached the age of twenty, and now, at the age of thirty-three, she had at last broken the chains that had bound her. Nursing was her work in the world, and nursing she would do. A vacancy existed for a superintendent of "The Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness," and Florence announced that she intended to accept the position. The Sidney Herberts supported her; Mr. Nightingale, weary with the constant wrangling and at last convinced that Florence would never be happy unless she had her way, gave his consent and promised an allowance of £500 a year; and Mrs. Nightingale and Parthenope had to accept the decision, though only after a stern fight. Mrs. Nightingale took such consolation as she could from the fact that her daughter would not need to attend upon men. That Florence should desert her family to take up nursing was certainly dreadful, but her patients would be women, and gentlewomen at that.

Florence entered upon her duties in August 1853. The Home had been in Chandos Street, but new and better premises were obtained at 1 Upper Harley Street before she took office. There were two committees charged with the conduct of the Home – a committee of men to look after the medical arrangements and finance, and one of women to see to the conduct of the institution otherwise; the duties of the latter were not very onerous, and appeared to consist largely of giving advice on religion and morals. Florence

realised that her principal difficulty would be to control the committees. One of the first brushes took place over the question of religion. The Home had been established for the use of poor governesses who needed medical attention, and Florence was told that this, of course, obviously meant that Protestants only were to be received and that on no account could Roman Catholics be admitted. Florence retorted that the religion of her patients was a matter of indifference to her, and that she would accept Roman Catholics, and even Mahometans, equally with other applicants. On this point she won, helped by Mrs. Sidney Herbert, who had hastened to have herself elected to the committee in order to smooth Florence's path. But the ladies' committee insisted upon one safeguard. While Roman Catholics might be admitted, Roman Catholic priests were to be permitted to visit patients only under surveillance; and Florence was instructed that she must meet such priests at the door and make certain that they never in any circumstances spoke to a Protestant inmate! England had been passing through a period of anti-Catholic legislation, and the ladies' committee meant to do their part towards combating the menace of Catholicism.

Some of the ladies were at first inclined to look upon Florence with suspicion. She was serving without salary – was indeed paying the wages of the matron out of the allowance of £500 a year which she received from her father; and

unpaid service was almost expected to be inefficient service. Florence quickly showed the extent of her knowledge, and proved her ability to run the establishment better than it had been run before. Moreover, she possessed a *flair* for raising funds. In nursing she had received practically no training except for her three months at Kaiserwerth, but she had inspected many hospitals and for years she had read everything she could find on medical science and sanitation. She herself undertook nursing, but nursing was not her principal duty as the superintendent. It was to organise the Home, and in her few months at Upper Harley Street she indicated the genius for organisation that was soon to be tested on a wider field at a critical time.

With the two committees she was an excellent tactician. She had definite ideas on the innovations that should be made, but she learned that the ladies looked askance at any new suggestions, while the men were inclined to resent proposals put forward by the superintendent as being a usurpation of their authority. Florence therefore practised the art of gently guiding discussions along the lines she had mapped out, and letting the men believe that the initiative had come from themselves. Sometimes she was reduced to the expedient of encouraging the ladies to approve a plan in the belief that the men had put it forward, and then producing that approval to the men's committee as a reason why the suggestion should be adopted. With the patients she was as successful

as with the committees, but she confessed that her tact was sorely tried when faced with the problem of patients who enjoyed the rest and peace of the Home so much that, although quite recovered, they resolutely refused to be discharged.

Florence thoroughly enjoyed the work, and at the start of 1854, after five months in office, she wrote that she began the new year with "more true feeling of a happy New Year than ever I had in my life." She was not, however, entirely satisfied. To nurse invalid gentlewomen was a tremendous advance on living at home in idleness, but she wanted to nurse the poor in a great hospital, and, especially, to train other women to devote themselves to nursing. Some of the doctors at the Harley Street Home agreed with her view, and felt that her abilities were wasted in so small an establishment. A suggestion was made that she should be appointed superintendent of nurses at one of the large London hospitals, and a hint of the proposal reached her mother. Mrs. Nightingale was overcome with fears when she learned that her daughter might have to attend the poor, and she hastily made a suggestion of her own. Why should not Florence establish an institution for children and be its principal? Mrs. Nightingale would have preferred Florence to return home, but as that was apparently out of the question, she urged that she should devote her services to children rather than enter into the vortex of a general hospital.

But Florence Nightingale's next step after the Harley Street establishment was neither to a children's home nor to one of the London general hospitals. Her career was shaped by the Crimean War.

Apart from a few small and unimportant affrays, England had been at peace since the battle of Waterloo, and now, forty years afterwards, war seemed attractive to many people. All the theories that the Great Exhibition of 1851 must mean the end of war between the nations were brushed aside. Men who had roundly declared that it was antiquated and unjust to settle disputes on the battlefield now cried out that England was defied and that England must fight. The causes of the Crimean War make a tangled problem. Russia had long had designs upon Turkey, which in the middle of the nineteenth century was in a weak state. The Tsar Nicholas contemptuously dubbed Turkey "the sick man of Europe," and frequently affirmed that the Turkish Empire was bound to crash. As early as 1844 he suggested that it would be convenient for England and Russia to agree on the partition of Turkey before the inevitable collapse took place; and the English Cabinet did not at that time make their attitude clear. It may in fact be argued that the Government permitted Nicholas to believe that England was not unfavourable to the Russian proposals, and that the British Ambassador to Russia later confirmed that belief.

Turkey, however, did not collapse, though its power often seemed to be about to be broken. The Tsar Nicholas became impatient, and in 1833 he brought matters to a head. The treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji of 1774 between Russia and Turkey clearly recognised the right of Russia to make representations to Constantinople in regard to Christians within the Turkish dominions, but the Tsar's interpretation went much further. He claimed, in effect, that so far as members of the Greek Orthodox Church were concerned, Turkey was in the position of a protectorate of Russia, which proudly claimed the leadership of the Greek Church.

England was alarmed at the thought of Russian aggression in India; if the Tsar obtained influence in Turkey, he would have an entrance for his fleet through the Bosphorus into the Mediterranean. But apart from India, England had an objection to any growth in Russian power, whether at the expense of Turkey or any other nation. It was the policy of the English Government to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and Russia, in the opinion of many Englishmen, was already too strong. Austria and Prussia were also opposed to Russia's pretensions, but they had far less direct interest in the matter.

France had a quarrel of her own with Russia. Jerusalem was in the possession of the Turks, and both Russia and France claimed that the places holy to Christians must be in Christian custody. The Tsar demanded that he should be their

custodian as the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, while France insisted on controlling the holy places on behalf of Latin Christendom. But although Russia and France had snarled over this question on several occasions, probably neither would have fought about it. When, however, Russia made her demand for a protectorate over the Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and threatened the Turks, France was loud in her protests.

Louis Napoleon was on the throne. After the flight of Louis Philippe in 1848, a republic had been set up in France, with Louis Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, as president. At the end of 1851, he carried through his famous *coup d'état*, and ruled as the dictator of France. Dictators who do not feel wholly safe on their thrones have a tendency towards war, and Louis Napoleon was glad of a chance to turn the attention of his people to a foreign field of battle, especially one in which he felt very confident of victory if he fought side by side with England.

To England, however, France was the ancient enemy who must be watched at all costs, and there was keen distaste for any alliance with the French. Louis Napoleon was cordially detested in England ; the brutal measures he had taken against his political opponents, the massacres in Paris for which he was responsible, had been severely condemned, and Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary of the time, had been dismissed from the Cabinet for acknowledging the murderer,

even though Palmerston claimed that he had not recognised Louis Napoleon officially. Queen Victoria had been shocked that her Foreign Secretary should have ventured in conversation, even though private, to approve so bloody-handed a monster, and Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister, had removed Palmerston from office.

So far from looking upon France as a possible ally, England believed that France would launch an invasion against us, and so strongly was the belief held that the volunteer movement was formed to repel the hosts of the French, should Louis Napoleon attempt to achieve the ambition of his uncle, Bonaparte, and cross the channel. To find England fighting side by side with France in 1854, after preparing to meet a French invasion only a year earlier, was a strange turn of affairs. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, British Ambassador at Constantinople, was largely responsible for that alliance. But for him, there might have been no Crimean War with England, France, and Turkey (and later Sardinia) ranged against Russia.

When Turkey refused to admit Russia's claims, the Tsar Nicholas invaded Turkish territory, but, after much discussion with the other powers, Russia agreed to make new proposals, and England, France, Prussia, and Austria declared that Turkey might properly accept the revised claims. Lord Stratford, however, exercised a powerful influence in Constantinople and he

hated the Tsar. The two had come into collision on several occasions, and the aversion was mutual. The British Government had proposed to appoint Stratford to the St. Petersburg Embassy, but the Tsar had refused to accept him, and another choice had therefore to be made. It was a blow from which Stratford did not readily recover, and which he never forgot.

He was deeply distrustful of the Tsar, and the new conditions proposed by Russia appeared to Lord Stratford as inequitable and dangerous as the previous ones. And to a certain extent he was right, for Russia could still have claimed a special position in the Ottoman Empire which might have imperilled British and French interests. Stratford therefore encouraged the Sultan of Turkey to reject Russia's revised proposals, and war was then unavoidable. England and France had been prepared to agree that Russia had a particular interest in Turkey, but neither was ready to stand aside while Russia attacked Turkey.

The English Cabinet of 1854 was a peace-loving one. Lord John Russell, assailed by his dismissed Foreign Minister, Palmerston, had fallen from power in 1852, and been succeeded by Lord Derby, with Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the following year Lord Derby was defeated and a Coalition Government formed with Lord Aberdeen as Prime Minister. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord John Russell

Foreign Secretary, and Lord Palmerston was pushed into the Home Office. Aberdeen was definitely against war; Gladstone had strong opinions, which were shared by many Englishmen, about the ill-treatment of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and he had no friendly feelings towards the Turks; the only Minister who was enthusiastic for war against Russia was Lord Palmerston. He resigned from the Home Office, as a protest against the policy of the Government in not taking drastic action against Russia, but returned to office – this time as Foreign Secretary – when England declared war.

England had been slow to commit herself definitely. But at the end of 1853 news came that Russia had destroyed the Turkish fleet at Sinope, and in England it was believed – erroneously – that Russia had launched her attack while a state of peace still prevailed with Turkey, and had thus taken an unfair advantage. Even yet Lord Aberdeen hoped that war could be avoided, and that a combined warning by France, Prussia, and Austria would stop the Russian movement. Prussia and Austria, however, refused to take part in a protest, and only France joined England in informing Russia that Turkey would be protected by force of arms against aggression. The Tsar recalled his ambassadors from England and France, and diplomatic relations were severed on February 21st, 1854.

A few weeks earlier, the British and French fleets had steamed into the Black Sea as a

precautionary measure, and, now that all hope of peace had gone, England and France began to collect soldiers for service in the East. But while it was easy for England to overlook the atrocities committed on the Christians within the Ottoman Empire and to make the Turks out to be innocent sufferers at the hands of cruel and brutal Russians, it was not so easy to accept France as an ally. Even the deep-rooted antagonism to France was, however, overcome, though only for a time, and few imagined that the Russians would be able to withstand the allies for more than a few weeks. It was said, indeed, that "the Russian bear" would be crushed in a single engagement.

England was to learn much from the Crimean War, and not least from Florence Nightingale.

CHAPTER III

1854

The state of the army – confusion in administration – the Alma – Russell's despatches to *The Times* – Florence offers her services to the Government – " the Nightingales " – reception in France – arrival at Scutari – Balaclava and Inkerman – the condition of the British hospitals – opposition of the doctors.

THE organisation which had defeated the French at Waterloo was expected to be able to annihilate the Russians in the East. In England itself, there was practically no standing army, for Parliament had always been afraid that if any considerable force were stationed at home it might be used by the sovereign against the people. Most of the troops – and the total military establishment was not large – were stationed in Malta, India, and other places abroad. Eight offices shared in the administration of this little army. The Horse Guards, *inter alia*, was in charge of recruitment, and was the most important of the departments, but no Cabinet Minister was accountable for its actions. In theory it was independent of Parliament during peace, and in practice was actually to a large extent free of governmental supervision. It looked to the ruler in person, not to the ruler's appointed Ministers, for instructions, and any attempt at interference by the politicians was

resented. In time of war, the direction of the Horse Guards was handed over to the Government; but the transfer of authority was little more than formal. Although the Commander-in-Chief at the Horse Guards (in 1854, Lord Hardinge) admitted that the final responsibility for the conduct of the campaign rested upon the Cabinet, there was a strong disinclination to take orders from Government departments.

No central authority existed to control the various sections which were concerned in one way or another in the work of the army – the commissary department, the ordnance office, the medical board, the victualling and transport offices, etc. There was a Minister at War, but his duties were principally to keep an eye upon expenditure, and he had little or no authority in the actual organisation. The Minister of the Colonies was also the Minister at War, and on him rested the direction of affairs. But in peace his staff for army matters was small, and he had few technical advisers, so that in war he was dependent upon the various professional departments for guidance. A few months after the outbreak of the Crimean War, the Government decided that a Minister should devote his whole time to war affairs, and the Duke of Newcastle, who had held the double post, was relieved of his duties as Colonial Secretary. An effective War Office, however, could not be brought into being merely by making the Ministry of War a full-time post, and the Duke of Newcastle found that the

vested interests of the various departments, and the lack of a trained administrative and technical personnel, defeated his attempts at unified control.

So quickly was the war expected to end that the first British force, recruited principally from British garrisons abroad, was landed without their kits. Lord Raglan, a veteran of Waterloo, where he had lost an arm, was in command, while the French forces were under Marshal St. Arnaud. The beginning of the war certainly seemed to confirm the general view that the campaign would be a short one. The British and French armies, after assembling at Varna on the Black Sea, sailed to Kalamita Bay, on the south-west of the Crimea and about thirty miles from Sebastopol. They disembarked, without difficulty, on September 14th, 1854, and six days later fought their first engagement against the Russians. The River Alma barred the way to Sebastopol. Prince Mentschikoff, the leader of the Russians, had entrenched himself on the hills on the farther side of the river, and had a considerable force of artillery at his disposal. Despite the strong resistance that his men put up, however, the Alma was crossed and the Russians dislodged. Lord Raglan wanted to pursue the stricken enemy at once, but St. Arnaud would not agree, and the British Commander-in-Chief did not press his point. While he was in command, the opinion of the French was usually accepted. The French were well aware of the suspicion with which they

were regarded by their allies, and it is said that Lord Raglan's policy was to obviate any cause of complaint by agreeing with the French view, even when he considered it wholly mistaken.

The failure to press on to Sebastopol was a gross blunder which affected the course of the whole war. Had the allies quickly launched an attack by land and sea on that port, Sebastopol would almost certainly have fallen. But weeks were frittered away, and not until October 17th – nearly a month after the battle of the Alma – was a determined attack made upon Sebastopol by the British, French, and Turks. By then the Russians had made their preparations for a siege. They had sunk a number of their ships to block the approach to the harbour, and the allied navies could not approach near enough to make effective use of their guns. On the land side, the attack, although vigorously pressed, also proved unsuccessful.

The battle of the Alma had been hailed in England as a great victory, and the Government congratulated itself on the success of its measures against Russian aggression ; but fierce criticism was soon aroused by the reports from the Crimea, especially those from William Howard Russell, the special correspondent of *The Times*. Telegraph communication between the Crimea and England was not established until some months later, and Russell's despatches took between ten and fourteen days to reach London. " When I was looking at the wounded men going off to-day I could not

see an English ambulance," he wrote, after describing the fighting at the Alma. "Our men were sent to the sea, three miles distant, on jolting arabas or tedious litters. The French – I am tired of the antithesis – had well-appointed covered hospital vans, to hold ten or twelve men, drawn by fine mules, and their wounded were sent in much greater comfort than our poor fellows, so far as I saw."

In later despatches he recurred again and again to the lack of care for the wounded and the failure of the medical organisation. Other reports confirmed his indictment that doctors were overworked, medical supplies quite inadequate, the commonest necessities of hospitals lacking. Russell's despatches – they are collected in *The War*, published in 1855 – had a virility and outspokenness which was something new in articles from the scene of hostilities. The Crimean War was the first in which "Our Special Correspondent" assumed an important position, and it may be said that never since have war correspondents had such liberty of expression. The Russians gained valuable information from the published reports of correspondents, who sometimes disclosed plans which should have been carefully guarded. One Russian general frankly admitted that the success of his countermining had been due to the news that he had picked up from a London newspaper of the mining operations of the allies.

If the correspondents were often indiscreet,

however, their despatches from the Crimea awakened the public conscience, as nothing else could have done, to the terrible state of the British wounded. In the middle of October, *The Times*, after pointing out that the French wounded were attended by French nuns at base hospitals, sounded a call for action : " Are there no devoted women amongst us, able and willing to go forth to minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East in the hospitals of Scutari ? Are none of the daughters of England at this extreme hour of need ready for such a work of mercy. . . . Must we fall so far below the French in self-sacrifice and devotedness, in a work which Christ so signally blesses as done under Himself? 'I was sick and ye visited me.' "

Mention has already been made of the Minister at War, who was charged with a general supervision of expenditure, but not expected to take any other active part in the direction of the campaign. When these articles appeared in *The Times*, in October 1854, the Hon. Sidney Herbert was Minister at War. Although the matter was not within his jurisdiction, he determined that women nurses must be sent to the British base hospitals established at Scutari, and he had no difficulty in deciding in his own mind the right organiser for such an expedition. He had known Florence Nightingale for years, and had learned to respect her knowledge and admire her abilities. Her success in the Home for Governesses in Harley Street – a success of which

he heard much from his wife, who was a member of the ladies' committee – had confirmed his belief in her qualifications, and he resolved to invite Florence to give her services.

On October 14th, only two days after the publication of the appeal quoted above, Herbert wrote to Florence: "The deficiency of female nurses is undoubted. None but male nurses have ever been admitted in military hospitals. It would be impossible to carry about a large staff of female nurses with an army in the field. But at Scutari, having now a fixed hospital, no military reason exists against their introduction, and I am confident they might be introduced with great benefit, for hospital orderlies must be very rough hands, and most of them, in such an occasion as this, very inexperienced ones. . . . There is but one person in England that I know who would be capable of organising and superintending such a scheme, and I have been several times on the point of asking you hypothetically if, supposing the attempt were made, you would undertake to direct it. . . . My question simply is, Would you listen to the request to go out and supervise the whole thing? . . . I must not conceal from you that upon your decision will depend the ultimate success or failure of the plan. Your own personal qualities, your knowledge, and your power of administration, and among other things, your rank and position in society, give you advantages in such a work which no other person possesses. . . . I know you will come to a right

and wise decision. God grant it may be one in accordance with my hopes."

But Florence had not waited for Sidney Herbert's invitation. She, too, had thought much of the disgraceful conditions in the British hospitals in the East, and on the same day she had offered her services in a letter to Mrs. Herbert. Sidney Herbert realised that her family might raise objections, but Florence seems to have felt that this decision was entirely a matter for herself. Punctilious in performing her obligations, however, she pointed out that she could not go without the permission of the management committee of the Governesses' Home. No difficulty was experienced in terminating that engagement, and two days after her offer had been made she met Sidney Herbert to discuss the details of the scheme. He had said that her old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bracebridge, with whom she had visited Italy and Egypt, would probably agree to accompany her, and both of them eagerly consented to do so. On October 19th, an official letter was sent to Florence, appointing her superintendent of nurses in the English hospitals in Turkey, with full control over female personnel, subject only to the approval of the Chief Medical Officer (Dr., later Sir John, Hall). "I rely on your discretion and vigilance," the official letter proceeded, "carefully to guard against any attempt being made among those under your authority, selected as they are with a view to fitness and without any reference to religious

creed, to make use of their position in the Hospitals to tamper with or disturb the religious opinions of the patients of any denomination whatever, and at once to check any such tendency and to take, if necessary, severe measures to prevent its repetition."

When the news was published of the Government's decision to send female nurses, there was a demand for information about the leader of the party. Florence Nightingale was known in society, and to some extent in the hospital world; but the public at large knew nothing of her. The *Examiner* satisfied the appetite of its readers with the following description, which was reprinted in *The Times* and in other newspapers in various parts of the world: She "is a young lady of singular endowments, both natural and acquired. In a knowledge of ancient languages and of the higher branches of mathematics, in general art, science and literature, her attainments are extraordinary. There is scarcely a modern language which she does not understand, and she speaks French, German, and Italian as fluently as her native English. She has visited and studied all the various nations of Europe, and has ascended the Nile to her remotest cataract. Young (about the age of our Queen), graceful, feminine, rich, popular, she holds a singularly gentle and persuasive influence over all with whom she comes in contact."

The tidings that such a paragon was to take command of the nursing contingent caused much

satisfaction, but critics were not lacking. Female nurses, the Duke of Newcastle said later in evidence before a committee of enquiry, "had been tried on former occasions. The class of women employed as nurses had been very much addicted to drinking, and they were found even more callous to the sufferings of soldiers in hospitals than men would have been." It was claimed that women would never be able to stand the Turkish climate; they would be out of place in a military hospital, since they could not be disciplined like soldiers and such discipline was essential; instead of nursing others, they themselves would require nursing. And, asked others, if nurses were to be sent, why choose unmarried women? Surely the right women for the work were those who had borne and reared children!

It had been thought desirable to limit the number of nurses to forty, but even that small number proved too ambitious. Florence and Mrs. Bracebridge opened an office in Sidney Herbert's town house to interview applicants, and, while volunteers were not wanting, their quality was low. Women who had nursed in hospitals for many years presented themselves, and expected to be accepted because of their experience, although they had received no real training and were drunkards and of degraded life. Educated women, fired by the idea of serving the soldiers who fought England's battles, were incensed when told that, as they had never done any nursing in their lives and there was no time

it was impossible to accept their services. Florence had made up her mind that only those who were nurses and bore a respectable character could be permitted to accompany her, and the combination was hard to find.

Most of those who were enrolled by Florence came from institutions. She had applied to the Roman Catholic Church for assistance, and ten suitable Roman Catholic sisters were selected. But here a difficulty arose. Were the sisters to be under the control of a Roman Catholic superior, or to accept orders from the Protestant Florence Nightingale? Florence insisted that she must have sole authority, and she won her point with the Roman Catholics. Some Protestant bodies were more obstinate; one flatly refused to contribute nurses to the scheme unless these nurses were under the charge of one of their own organisation, and, as Florence would not give way on this point and required that she alone should have control, no compromise was possible. St. John's House, a Protestant institution, sent six nurses; eight Anglican sisters and fourteen other nurses, largely from hospitals, brought the number, including the Roman Catholics, up to thirty-eight. In the few days that were available for recruiting, no further suitable candidates could be found.

Within a week of the date of making her offer to Sidney Herbert, Florence had made all her arrangements, and on October 21st, 1854, she set out with Mr. and Mrs. Bracebridge and the

party of thirty-eight nurses. The applause of some sections of the people, the complaints of others, alike left Florence unmoved. The great majority of the people approved her conduct, and from all parts of the country money was sent to her to be expended for the comfort of the soldiers in the East – the contributions amounted in all to about £7,000. The name of Florence Nightingale became known in a week throughout the length and breadth of the land. As might have been expected, her nurses were dubbed "Nightingales," and the description stuck.

The departure from London was quietly made, but a great reception awaited the nurses on their arrival at Boulogne on the first stage of their journey. France also looked upon the volunteers as heroines, and in French fashion prepared a lively welcome. Women fought to be allowed to carry the luggage of the British nurses, and, throughout the course of their journey in France, they were greeted with enthusiasm. Porters regarded it as an honour to serve the heroines; hotel-keepers insisted that the nurses should accept free hospitality; and, most surprising of all, the railway companies would not permit any payment to be made for the journey.

During a short stay at Paris, Florence had made purchases of articles likely to be useful in the East, and she laid in a further store at Marseilles before the party sailed from that port on the *Vectis* on October 27th. The voyage was a sorrowful one. The ship encountered severe gales in the

Mediterranean, and some of the nurses, suffering from the dreadful pains of sea-sickness, began to regret their resolution. But the *Vectis*, though it had really been in grave danger, reached Malta safely four days after leaving Marseilles, and on November 4th the party was disembarked at Scutari. It had been arranged that Florence's nurses should serve in the base hospitals of that town, and there was more than enough work for a contingent of thirty-eight.

The two principal British hospitals at Scutari were the General Hospital and the Barrack Hospital. The former had been a Turkish hospital, but had been handed over to the British military authorities on the outbreak of war. Although by no means perfect, it was fairly well adapted for the purpose for which it had been built, and its equipment was on the whole passable by the standards of the time. As it had accommodation for a thousand patients, the British had thought that it would prove adequate for the campaign, but the huge casualties at the battle of the Alma caused them to revise that opinion. The Selimiyeh Barracks in Scutari, only partly completed, had therefore been acquired as a second hospital. The building was completely unsuitable for such use.

Ten of the nurses were sent to the General Hospital, the remaining twenty-eight taking up their residence with Florence in the Barrack Hospital. A tower, which became known as "The Sisters' Tower," had been allotted for the

use of herself and her nurses, but the roof was not watertight, there was no proper heating, practically no furniture or utensils, and the place was overrun with vermin. No preparation at all seemed to have been made for the nurses, and they found difficulty even in getting food from the commissariat. Florence, however, was not so much concerned with the plight of her followers as with the terrible situation of the patients in the hospital. The wards were in a scandalous condition. There were not enough beds, the blankets and sheets had not been washed for weeks, the ventilation was inadequate, and the sanitary arrangements were of the crudest kind. The nursing had been done exclusively by men, many of whom were criminally negligent, and nearly all of whom were incompetent. The stimulants which should have gone to the patients were often drunk by the attendants, and it was not uncommon for strict injunctions given by the doctors to be unfulfilled, either through ignorance or sheer wilfulness. Cholera patients were housed in general wards; wounded men were dumped in beds previously occupied by patients with highly infectious diseases, and sometimes without any attempt at disinfection; and everything was filthy.

Florence and her nurses were required to set to work immediately. The campaign had not been going well with the allies, and the war, which had been expected to end in a few weeks at the most, now seemed likely to drag on for years. The British, French, and Turks had maintained

the siege of Sebastopol, but had not an adequate army between them to surround the town entirely and cut it off from supplies. On October 25th, the Russians had made a sortie, and attacked the allies at Balaclava. The attack had only been repelled at enormous cost to the allies. The battle is famous for the courage shown on both sides, and especially for the charge of the Light Brigade. "It is magnificent, but it is not war," said the French General Bosquet, as he watched that mad effort. Through a misunderstanding – never cleared up, since the officer who carried the order perished among the first – the Light Brigade, believing that Lord Raglan had set them the duty of charging the whole Russian army, galloped forward to face death. Of the 600 soldiers, less than a third survived.

The wounded from the battle of Balaclava began to reach the base hospitals on the day that Florence Nightingale's party landed at Scutari. From the Crimea to Scutari was a voyage of between seven and ten days, and it was a voyage made at this period under almost unbelievable conditions – 74 out of every 1,000 died on the way. The ships were not suitable for the transport of wounded men; nearly all were insanitary and overloaded; and often a ship having hundreds of soldiers aboard sailed with only a single doctor to attend to their wounds. On arrival at Scutari, after their voyage from Balaclava, the men were carried, without any covering or care, to the hospitals, which were overcrowded. On the day

after Florence reached Scutari, the passages of the Barrack Hospital were lined with wounded. Not only were there no beds for them, but room could not be found on the floors of the wards for these new arrivals. The floors of the wards were already covered with patients.

It was the testing time for Florence. The Government had given her an official position, and informed the Chief Medical Officer in the East that every assistance was to be extended to the nurses in carrying out the work for which they had been despatched from England. But many of the medical men were antagonistic to women nurses. In England the nurses had been affectionately called Nightingales, in Scutari, Florence was scoffingly called "the Bird." Women were looked upon as certain to interfere with the work, and doctors told each other that the nurses would go into hysterics, upset the patients, and prove a serious hindrance to the overworked administration. Had the party reached Scutari at a time when patients were few in number, this attitude might have ruined the whole scheme; but, as it was, they arrived at a period of unexampled pressure. Florence and her party got into harness at once, and far from fulfilling the fears of the doctors, proved capable and useful in the earliest days. Some of the doctors were converted in the feverish week which succeeded the reception of the wounded from Balaclava, and, as for the patients, their welcome to the nurses had never been in doubt. Some of

them wept with joy at the sight of Englishwomen, and one soldier, in remarking that it was wonderful for women to come to " nurse the likes of us," expressed a sentiment that was in many breasts. The men who fought England's battles had been so often treated with contempt that they could hardly believe that England had sent nurses to succour the soldiers.

The rush of patients after Balaclava was followed by an even greater flow of wounded from the Crimea. On the day after the nurses reached Scutari, the battle of Inkerman was fought. The Russians had thrown themselves against the allies under the cover of a thick mist, and the British had suffered terribly in what is described as the fiercest battle of the war. In a week, the wounded from Inkerman were being carried ashore at Scutari for treatment in the General and Barrack hospitals.

Everywhere that Florence turned she found difficulties. Some of the nurses complained of their accommodation and food – four returned home in dudgeon, one had to be sent back to England as unsuitable ; and Florence was constandly fighting battles with the military authorities on behalf of her charges. While her coolness and knowledge had impressed a number of the doctors, others maintained a bitter opposition to the introduction of women into military hospitals, and delighted in putting obstacles in Florence's way. They hoped that she would make some mistake which could be reported as

evidence that women nurses were a failure, but Florence appreciated that she was surrounded with enemies and took elaborate precautions to prevent irregularities. The most obvious charge to level against the nurses was that they interfered with the work of the hospital. Florence therefore laid it down that nurses should not work in any ward until invited to do so by the responsible doctor. She was especially afraid that charges of immorality would be made against members of her party. At home immoral relations between nurses and patients were not uncommon, and Florence did not feel sure of all her followers. Risks had to be run, but, knowing how easily charges of immorality could be made if nurses served in the evening, she refused to allow her staff to enter the wards except in the daytime.

Florence herself, however, wandered through the hospital late at night on her errand of mercy, carrying a little lamp to guide her on her way through the dark passages where hundreds of men lay in pain and suffering. Longfellow, nearly four thousand miles away, was inspired to write " The Lady of the Lamp " in honour of the tender and self-sacrificing nurse who laboured in the Barrack Hospital of Scutari. But Florence Nightingale was more than a nurse. Her greatest qualities were to be shown as a reformer.

CHAPTER IV

1854 – 1855

Troubles with the nurses – William Filder – the commissariat – the Treasury view – transport muddles – Florence's reforms in Scutari – the extra diet kitchens – Macdonald of *The Times* – male orderlies – anti-popery – the Queen's letter – the battle against officialdom.

FLORENCE's first shock on arriving at Scutari had been to find that the hospitals lacked the barest necessities, and she never overcame her surprise that a Government organisation should perform its work so badly. The doctors needed lint, bandages, disinfectants, and medicine ; there was an acute shortage of crockery, and knives and forks were so few that, she writes, the patients had to " tear their meat apart like wild beasts." She provided such articles as she could from the stock that she had brought from Marseilles, but that store was soon exhausted, and, as demands continued to flow in upon her, she had to buy new supplies from her private funds. She became a commissary department in herself, and remarks that " nursing was the least of the duties into which she had been forced."

But she did not hand out goods indiscriminately. Her aim was to supplement the efforts of the local authorities, not to replace them, and she resolved that no care on her part would be spared to avoid the appearance of competition.

She explained that she would supply nothing that could be obtained from the official purveyor, and that all requisitions for goods must be countersigned by a doctor. This procedure angered some of her nurses, for, seeing the dire need of the patients, they thought that Florence was making difficulties in insisting upon doctor's confirmation. Florence, however, was determined to allow no departure from this rule unless in very special circumstances. She was responsible for the equitable distribution of the goods, and she could not take the risk of misappropriation. Moreover, she wanted the doctors to feel that the authority was theirs. As some of the doctors would never approve any issue from Florence's stores, while others were only too eager to take advantage of everything that she could supply, she did not achieve the fair division for which she had hoped, but she avoided the waste which would have been inevitable had the nurses been able to draw at will. One or two of them were not above striving after popularity by over-generous giving.

The official commissariat had broken down. The Government had appointed William Filder, a man of sixty-four, who had considerable experience in such work, as commissary-general, but he had not sufficient staff under him. England had possessed a mere skeleton of a purveying department, and as everyone had looked for an early cessation of hostilities, Filder had not been encouraged to build up an organisation. Money

was not lacking, and Filder had ample credits at his command. But frequently he refused to buy at what he considered to be enhanced prices lest he should later be criticised for wasting Government moneys. Enhanced prices or not, the French bought, and when, in desperation, the British decided to pay what the traders asked, the goods had often already been sold.

The supply of certain articles was severely limited in Turkey, and Filder turned to England. But while he had authority to buy in other countries, he was prohibited from spending money direct in England. He could only requisition, and his requisitions went through the Treasury, which solemnly deliberated upon the desirability of meeting his various demands. Kinglake, in *The Invasion of the Crimea*, describes one typical case. Filder wrote that, since he could not procure provender for horses in the East, he had "the honour to suggest that 2,000 tons of hay be forwarded to Constantinople during the course of the autumn." To send hay to the Crimea seemed to the Treasury a very doubtful proceeding. Besides, the officials argued, Filder had "suggested" that the hay be sent. "In ordinary official language," they defended themselves when called to account later, "a *suggestion* rather than a *request* that any act may be done implies that it is subject to modification, and that it is to be acted upon according to the best judgment that can be formed by the person to whom it is addressed."

The transport arrangements were very imperfect. There was a scarcity of shipping, and the vessels which the Government was able to charter were not properly used. The troops in the Crimea suffered severely from lack of supplies. Often the provisions that reached them from England were uneatable. Many of the men had come from garrisons in warm climates; now they were in the grip of a severe Crimean winter with clothes suitable only for sunny lands. The clothing sent from England was insufficient in quantity and shoddy in quality. Boots were much in demand, and great satisfaction was expressed at the news of a cargo from home. But the boots turned out to be for the left foot only! A great wind swept away the tents and stores of the allies on the field, and several vessels in the Black Sea, which were bringing supplies to the British, were sunk in the storm.

The hospitals at Scutari were also starved of supplies as a result of gross mismanagement. The authorities could not prevent the loss of the *Prince*, a vessel with a large cargo of medical stores, but they could have obviated other disasters. Goods intended for Scutari were loaded into the bottom of the hold of ships which also carried freight for the Crimea. The vessels would not unload all their cargo to get at the supplies for Scutari, and so went on to Balaclava; the stores were dumped in Balaclava Harbour, or brought back on the return voyage – in either event many of the articles had been rendered

useless and the delay had in some cases been fatal. Again, goods were sent to Constantinople to be transhipped to Scutari; but at Constantinople they were seized by the Turkish Customs, and long delays occurred before they were released, usually after considerable quantities had been pilfered. The Turkish Customs, Florence remarked, was a bottomless pit. One of the first suggestions she made was that the British Government should station a hulk at Constantinople, and that articles consigned to the British in the East should be transferred to this hulk, thus avoiding the difficulties experienced with the Turkish authorities.

But Florence's primary duty was to reorganise the internal affairs of the Barrack Hospital. Staggered at the filthiness of the wards, she had at once requisitioned scrubbing-brushes and soap, but clean floors alone did not make a healthy hospital. The sanitary arrangements were terrible. By coaxing the orderlies, she was able to effect some improvement, but in report after report she repeated that the problem was an engineering one, since the building had actually been built over "sewers of the worst possible construction, loaded with filth, mere cesspools." She denounced the inaction of the Government, and begged Sidney Herbert, to whom she made her reports, to use his influence to have sanitary experts sent to Scutari.

Wherever she turned, she found faults in organisation. She had seen many hospitals in

which the laundry arrangements were deficient, but never had she known one where the system had completely collapsed. A contract for laundry work had been given to one of the natives of Scutari, but he washed less than half a dozen shirts a month – for a hospital with two thousand patients! The soldiers, indeed, showed a disinclination to part with their garments to the laundry when the opportunity did arise. Thick with dirt and full of lice as a shirt might be, it was a precious possession to men who had no other, and they feared that once a garment left their custody it would never be returned. Nor were such fears unjustified; articles had disappeared, and strong complaints had been made against the laundry without effect. As for the bedding, some of it had been used for patients with highly infectious diseases, and was now, unwashed, used for surgical cases; few of the bedclothes but were filthy.

The men, sure that they would get their garments back, were willing to give them up for washing, but often it meant that they were left naked. Florence asked the commissariat to supply garments temporarily in such cases, but she met with a blank refusal. The soldiers, she was told, had been provided with a complete kit and should possess a change of clothes. The commissariat was right: the troops had been so supplied, but, as the war had been expected to end within a very short time, some of the divisions had been ordered to leave their kits behind – h

they landed in the Crimea. The commissariat, however, had no official cognisance of that fact, although it was well known at Scutari, and Florence had to provide extra garments from her own funds. In the first few months, she distributed some ten thousand shirts, for garments given out for temporary wear were often permanently retained. Florence could not blame the patients for keeping garments that were so valuable to them. But she stormed against the official stupidity which caused her to undertake the clothing of the troops, from some of whom she even received demands for new uniforms!

Of all her innovations in the hospital, none was more appreciated or more necessary than the extra diet kitchens. All the food served to the two thousand patients in the Barrack Hospital was cooked together in thirteen great coppers, with the inevitable result that part was undercooked, part overcooked. The system of distribution was quite as amazing. Dinners were sometimes not served in certain parts of the hospital until three or four hours after they had left the kitchen, and there was no means of keeping the food warm. Florence indicated how easy it would be to make better arrangements for distribution, but that was only one part of the problem. The doctors would often have prescribed special diets had any possibility existed of their orders being carried out, but the official kitchen could only cook meals to serve the whole hospital, and had neither the equipment nor the staff to provide

special dishes, even if the supplies had been available.

Within ten days of her arrival, Florence had shown what could be done with energy and ability and without much expenditure. Special diet kitchens under the control of members of her party were opened, and the innovation saved many lives. Food was properly cooked for the patients, and was served so that the appetite of invalids would be tempted. Unlike the official kitchen, Florence's kitchens provided meals at any time of the day. The indiscretion of individual nurses nearly ruined the scheme. Some of them apparently could not understand that it was as bad to overfeed the men as to underfeed them, and that rich food could be as harmful as the unappetising messes which came from the official kitchen. Quarrels, too, sometimes arose among the nurses regarding the allocation of delicacies from the extra diet kitchens, since one or two of the Nightingales thought only of their own wards, and of special favourites in these wards, and were willing to sacrifice the rest of the hospital so long as their own particular pets were supplied.

The money for these life-giving schemes came from the fund which had been contributed by the public before Florence left England, and for which remittances still reached her at Scutari. Without this fund she would have been greatly handicapped, for although she had authority from the Government to make purchases, she was restricted in the use that she could make of official moneys.

The Times gave her ready assistance in her work. When reports reached England of the condition of the wounded, that newspaper appealed for subscriptions from readers, and sent a commissioner (Macdonald) to the East to distribute the amounts collected for the comfort of the soldiers. Macdonald arrived two days after Florence. He saw Lord Stratford, British Ambassador at Constantinople, but Stratford was a man who resented interference by the public in official matters. In his view the Government had made admirable arrangements for the care of the wounded, and it was sheer impertinence for *The Times* to suggest otherwise. When Macdonald asked for suggestions how the money should be laid out, Lord Stratford proposed, quite seriously, that it should be used to build an English church at Pera, one of the suburbs of Constantinople! This attitude was typical of that of many of the British officials in the East. They refused to admit that the system had broken down in the least detail, and while Florence was writing home to Herbert that conditions were disgraceful, the medical authorities at Scutari reported to the Government that all was proceeding smoothly and that there was no shortage or defect. Lord Stratford naturally was dependent upon the information which reached him, and it was biased information. Some of the superintendents who misrepresented the position to the Government, however, did so wilfully, others really believed that no change was necessary. The latter felt

that it was wrong to " coddle " the troops, and looked upon anything as good enough for the soldiers. After all, the army was recruited from the lowest class of the community. Besides, soldiers ought to suffer, it was argued, and if they were treated with too much gentleness, they would become soft and so be useless on the battlefield. It was hinted that Florence would make the men so comfortable that they would not want to go back to the fighting line ; and she must have thought of the governesses who steadfastly refused to leave the home in Harley Street.

But there was another reason why the reports by the local authorities should be so misleading. To admit that the system had failed would have been a reflection upon those who were responsible for it. Those on the spot felt that they would have to share the blame if the real condition of affairs was disclosed, and it was too much to expect them to condemn themselves. And if the doctors in Scutari were absolved from blame, then the medical authorities at home would be accused of carelessness or worse. The army doctors were dependent for their promotion upon the goodwill of the Army Medical Board, and few of them were prepared to put their career in pawn by appearing to criticise the Board with whom their future prospects lay.

So it was that the officials at Scutari denied Florence's allegations, and that Lord Stratford's suggestion was that the only thing Commissioner Macdonald could do was to build an English

church. Florence told Macdonald a different story when he applied to her for advice, and it did not need more than a cursory examination of the hospitals for him to decide that the English church would have to wait. He bought large supplies of goods for the use of patients, without haggling about the price, and he placed his funds at Florence's disposal. It was Macdonald who wrote the description of Florence which became famous throughout the world: "When all the medical officers have retired for the night, and silence and darkness have settled down upon those miles of prostrate sick, she may be observed alone, with a little lamp in her hands, making her solitary rounds."

The Lady-in-Chief, as Florence was usually called, could do much by her talents as an organiser and by the expenditure of money at the right time and in the right place. She realised, however, that to provide an efficient nursing service the whole system must be entirely rebuilt. By her initiative, women had been introduced into military hospitals, and her wise direction seemed to make it certain that women would always be employed at base hospitals in future. But much of the work was left, and in her opinion must always be left, to male attendants. At Scutari these attendants were grossly inefficient. The old pensioners who had been drafted to the hospitals to look after the wounded had themselves gone through a hard school in former campaigns, and they treated the wounded as

they had been treated. They had considerable grievances. Their remuneration was low and their food was bad, and some of them showed their discontentment by scamping their work and doing as little as they could for their patients. Even those pensioners who were anxious to help the suffering proved to be for the most part entirely incapable. They knew nothing about nursing, and did not consider that there was anything to learn. Indeed they were too old to learn, and neither gentleness nor skill could be expected from them.

The pensioners, however, did not do all the work. It was shared with men from the front who were only slightly wounded or who had sufficiently recovered to be able to help their comrades. Florence set herself to teach these men the elements of nursing. She captured their hearts not only by her own self-sacrificing work, but by her patience in explaining what was required and by her appreciation of the efforts that they made to serve. They were younger and more adaptable, and she found good material among them. But almost as soon as they had become useful in the wards, they were passed as fit and recalled to the firing line. Then another batch of untrained orderlies had to receive tuition, and so it went on.

Florence protested bitterly to Sidney Herbert against this arrangement. Nursing, she claimed, was a skilled profession, and old pensioners without the least idea of how to look after the sick

and wounded were positively dangerous in hospitals. Men could be made into good nurses if only they received training, and many of the serving soldiers had proved themselves capable of excellent work. But the system did not permit such men to remain as orderlies in the hospitals. Soldiers were dying in Scutari because the male attendants were callous and inexperienced, and the solution was simple. Let the Government organise from young and active men a corps of male nurses, specially trained for service in the hospitals, and with higher pay, in order to attract good material. Such a corps would not normally be liable for fighting, but would be a semi-professional body and would be so recognised and treated. Florence worked out the scheme in great detail, and Sidney Herbert expressed full agreement with her views and promised to support the formation of a corps on the lines proposed by her. But the suggestion that not everyone could undertake nursing duties and that training was required for work in hospitals met with strong criticism. Only after a stern battle was the Medical Staff Corps formed and machinery built up for the training of hospital orderlies a year after Florence had worked out her scheme.

As the winter proceeded, the fighting in the Crimea dwindled away and the Scutari hospitals began to be emptied of their wounded. But their places were taken by the sick from the front, and in December the Barrack Hospital was more crowded than ever it had been, with over 2,300

patients. Frost-bite cases were frequent, and disease was rarely absent from the army. The soldiers in the Crimea were in a terrible plight during the cold months. Little food could be obtained from the surrounding country, and the supplies from home became even more irregular and inadequate. There were difficulties in distributing such stores as did arrive. Roads were lacking – why roads had not been built was later the subject of an inquiry; no provender was available for the mules, and they died in hundreds; supplies of food sometimes rotted at Balaclava because no means existed of transporting them to the famished army outside Sebastopol. The troops had dug themselves in for the winter, but they had had only shallow pits to protect them, not great systems of trenches such as were common on the Western Front in the War of 1914–1918. To add to the sufferings of the troops, half of them were inadequately clothed for a cold climate. An example of the confusion in distribution is shown by the fate of overcoats sent out in the autumn of 1854. They reached the army in the Crimea only after the warm spring weather had set in.

The extent of the mismanagement was not realised in England at this time, but sufficient had been reported in the newspapers to arouse public anger. Almost everything about the conduct of the war met with criticism, and Florence Nightingale's mission did not escape caustic comment. She herself was alleged to have joined the Roman

Catholic Church, and it was believed in some quarters that her only intention in nursing in the military hospitals of Scutari was to convert the soldiers to that religion. When it was proved that Florence had not adopted Catholicism, there came a new question. Why had so many Catholic nuns and members of the High Church been chosen? The country was violently anti-popish, and the public set up a clamour. Many people held that it was a deep-laid plot on the part of Rome to weaken the Church of England. The *Daily News*, which led the criticism – started by a letter signed "Anti-Puseyite" and backed up by one signed "A Reader of the Bible" – published Sidney Herbert's letter to Florence in its columns, and demanded an explanation why Lady Maria Forester had not been sent in command of the party. She had in fact been one of the first to suggest the despatch of female nurses to the East, and had been in communication with the Government on the subject four days before Florence had written to Sidney Herbert's wife. But Lady Maria admitted Florence's special aptitude and training for the work. She had thoroughly approved of the Government's appointment, and had helped to organise the Nightingales.

At the end of 1854 came a letter from Windsor Castle which largely stilled the tumult. Queen Victoria gave Florence's work her blessing, and the Queen would certainly not approve any Catholic enterprise.

"Would you please tell Mrs. Herbert," wrote the Queen to Sidney Herbert, on the 6th of December, "that I beg she would let me see frequently the accounts from Miss Nightingale or Mrs. Bracebridge, as *I hear no details of the wounded*, though I see so many from the officers, etc., about the battlefield, and naturally the former must interest *me* more than any one.

"Let Mrs. Herbert also know that I wish Miss Nightingale and the ladies would tell these poor, noble wounded and sick men that *no one* takes a warmer interest or feels *more* for their sufferings or admires their courage and heroism *more* than their Queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops. So does the Prince.

"Beg Mrs. Herbert to communicate these my words to those ladies, as I know that *our* sympathy is much valued by these noble fellows.

"VICTORIA."

The letter was sent to Florence and read to the sick and wounded in the Scutari hospitals. Copies were posted up in the wards, and the expression of the Queen's interest affected the soldiers deeply. That the ruler should show such feeling for them seemed to the men far more than they deserved, and the hospitals rang with cheers when the chaplain read the sovereign's words.

Not only did the letter from the Queen strengthen Florence's position at home, but it helped her in the East. The army authorities

many of whom were contemptuous of the Government, had looked upon female nurses as just another of the wild notions of non-professionals. But officers who despised Parliament most deeply were the most ready to render respect to the Queen, and the cachet of the sovereign's approval could not be ignored. Many of the official class, however, still remained violently antagonistic to Florence. Had she been content to engage in nursing work in the Scutari hospitals, accepting conditions as she found them, she would probably have been tolerated and perhaps even praised by the military.

But Florence was a reformer and an organiser, and she could not bear inefficiency of any kind. She attacked faults wherever she found them, and her trenchant criticisms incensed the administration. Dr. Hall, the Chief Medical Officer, looked upon her as an interfering woman who had overstepped her authority and was trying to exaggerate the importance of her mission. In his opinion she should nurse the soldiers, if nurse she must, and do no more. Certainly she should not dare to criticise or to suggest changes. A criticism of the medical organisation was a criticism of him, and his indignation against her mounted with every month that passed. Florence named him as her chief enemy, and assailed him as a "heartless beast." There were other officials whom she felt tried to ruin her work, and at one period she wrote bitterly, "There is not an official who would not burn me like Joan of Arc if he could, but they

know that the War Office cannot turn me out as the country is with me."

The hopes of co-operation with the authorities on the spot had not been fulfilled. Florence was supremely efficient herself, and she had little patience with those less gifted. When she saw a fault, she did not choose her words in pointing it out, and she did not hide her contempt for men who were satisfied to permit such mismanagement to continue. With the purveying department she fought a bitter battle from the first days of her arrival in Scutari. The officials of the commissariat resented what they regarded as her high-handed methods. She has been represented as having an utter contempt for regulations, but the contrary is the case. She was a woman who appreciated the need for regulations and respected them in their proper place, but she felt that the commissariat was hidebound. The rules required that every consignment of goods should be passed by a survey board before release. Florence, needing some supplies urgently, was told that this rule could not be waived, although on one occasion the board would not meet for three weeks! Her reply was to cause the boxes containing the goods to be broken open. The officials, unused to such defiance, exaggerated her conduct, and complained that she expected everything to be done in a moment.

Florence did not spare the purveying officials, but she admitted that the system was principally to blame. So far as hospital stores were concerned,

the practice was for the doctors to indent for what they required. If the goods were not in stock, the requisition notes were returned from the purveyor with the information that supplies were not available. But no indication was given when supplies would be received, and no record was made of the demand by the officials. When the goods arrived, therefore, the purveyor did not usually know who was in need of a supply, while the doctors, unaware of what had since reached the department or unable to find time in the midst of their other work to write out fresh requisitions, often did not receive an issue until weeks after the stock was on hand.

In her usual thorough manner Florence put forward a complete scheme for the reorganisation of the purveying department. She pointed out how unfair it was to put on to the overworked medical men the duty of sending requisition after requisition to the purveyor, and she explained some of the difficulties that had arisen under the system. She pressed for the institution of a system of recording each application for supplies, and of issuing the goods as a matter of routine as soon as stocks came to hand. But the purveying department had no machinery for undertaking such additional duties. It was already overloaded and had, Florence claimed, become unwieldy. She criticised the arrangement whereby a single office was responsible for food, clothing, hospital supplies, etc., and suggested that the department should be divided into three sections – one for

food, one for hospital supplies and clothing, and one for administrative purposes. And, she urged, let each section have a chief who would be able to take action himself instead of sharing responsibility among a number of men and calling them "a board."

Florence bombarded Sidney Herbert with reports, models of clarity and not without a mordant wit, in which she castigated the bunglers and advanced her views of the changes that ought to be made. The military authorities in the East were not unnaturally incensed that such criticisms of their work should be sent home. But Herbert was influential in the Government, and he was a staunch supporter of Florence's ideas. So long as he was a power in London, the officials dared not show their resentment against Florence too openly. At the beginning of the new year (1855), however, news reached Scutari which made the officials feel that their chance had come to dispose of this dangerous critic. Lord Aberdeen's Coalition had fallen, and Sidney Herbert was no longer a member of the Government.

CHAPTER V

1855–1856

Palmerston recalled – additional nurses in Scutari – Mary Stanley – religious bickerings – the Sanitary Commission – Alexis Soyer – Florence's illness in the Crimea – the fall of Sebastopol – the Nightingale Fund – Florence honoured by the Queen – defiance in Scutari.

HARDLY anyone, however eminent, escaped the blast of public criticism during the Crimean War, and in the early stages – before, indeed, hostilities had broken out – the Prince Consort had been singled out for attack as the cause of all the trouble. Prince Albert was believed to have caused the dismissal of Palmerston, to have dominated foreign policy, and to be trying to ruin the country for purposes of his own. Queen Victoria protested vigorously to the Government that some means must be found to stop the unwarranted criticisms of the Prince, and Lord Aberdeen, the Prime Minister, wrote that he could not "wonder at the indignation expressed by your Majesty at the base and infamous attacks made upon the Prince during the last two or three weeks in some of the daily papers," and promised that the matter would be ventilated by Lord John Russell in the Commons.[1] Two weeks later Lord Aberdeen wrote that he hoped he might "venture

[1] Lord John Russell was the leader of the House of Commons.

to congratulate your Majesty on the commencement of a change in respect to the newspaper attacks upon the Prince," and the Government's explanation of the position quietened the outburst.

When reports of the disasters and mismanagement arrived from the front, Prince Albert was again blamed, but most criticism was directed against the Government. The Duke of Newcastle, the War Minister, had appointed a commission to proceed to the East to inquire into the complaints regarding the hospitals in November 1854. It reached Constantinople only two days after Florence Nightingale, and its report confirmed most of the accusations that she had made concerning the lack of preparations made for the reception of the wounded. But England had also been shocked by the descriptions of the sufferings of the soldiers in the front line, and Roebuck proposed a wider investigation at the beginning of 1855. He wanted a Select Committee to be charged with the duty of examining the truth of the complaints of insufficient food and clothing, and to fix the responsibility for the muddle. Lord John Russell felt unable to oppose the motion, yet he was unwilling to appear to concur in what seemed to him a vote of censure upon his fellow-Ministers. He therefore tendered his resignation – a step which annoyed the Queen and which weakened the Government considerably. The debate took place on January 26th and 29th, 1855, and, despite a vigorous defence of the administration by Sidney Herbert and

Monckton Milnes on the first day and Lord Palmerston on the second, the motion to appoint a committee was carried by 305 to 148. Thus the Coalition Government fell. Lord Derby tried to form a Government but did not succeed, Lord John Russell likewise failed, and Palmerston was then summoned. His Cabinet did not differ greatly from that of Lord Aberdeen, but when Palmerston, against the wishes of a large number of his supporters, decided to appoint the committee for which Roebuck had pressed, several Ministers resigned, among them Sidney Herbert.

But those who had expected Florence Nightingale to be handicapped when Herbert was out of office met with disappointment. Although he no longer held an official position, he remained very influential in the administration, and he promised Florence that, if she continued to send her reports to him, he would see that they received the most careful consideration in the right quarters. Florence was glad to accept his suggestion, for she could write to Herbert more freely than to anyone else, and her trust in him was absolute. It was true that there had been a serious disagreement between them, and that Florence had felt herself harshly treated. In December 1854, a fresh batch of female nurses, nearly fifty in number, had been sent to the East. Herbert accepted the responsibility for despatching this additional contingent, and could not understand why Florence was so indignant on their arrival.

Female nurses had proved a boon in the hospitals of Scutari, and it seemed to Herbert perfectly reasonable to arrange for a further party. The country had pressed the Government to increase the number of female nurses; a phrase in a letter from Bracebridge had seemed to indicate that Florence would welcome assistance; and Herbert could see no reason why there should be protest. To Florence, however, it appeared a studied insult. She reminded Herbert that he had agreed to consult her before any such step was taken, and stated that, had she been consulted, she would certainly have refused. She accused Herbert of betraying her, and so greatly was she upset that she offered to resign. Herbert begged her not to desert the soldiers, but only after a severe struggle with herself did Florence consent to remain at her post.

The matter seemed a trifling one, but actually it was serious. Florence was fighting a battle with the officials, and the arrival of this new party complicated the position. Dr. Menzies, the medical superintendent at Scutari, stated bluntly that he would not have additional nurses, the doctors on the whole supported him, and accommodation could not be spared for these newcomers either in the Barrack or General Hospital. The authorities complained that they had been hoodwinked, and that their toleration of the first batch of Nightingales had been wilfully misconstrued into a general permission to import female nurses freely. They were resolved that no possible

doubt could arise in future regarding their attitude to female nurses, and their opposition to Florence became even more bitter from this time onwards.

After much wrangling, some of the new-comers were sent to Koulali, some to the Barrack and General Hospitals, while Florence took the opportunity to get rid of a few of the original batch of Nightingales, who had not given satisfaction – of her first party of thirty-eight, she considered that less than half were efficient.

The new-comers were not grateful to Florence for the fight that she had put up on their behalf. On the contrary, most of them seemed to think that she was jealous of their intervention, for personal reasons, and hankered to keep all the glory to herself. They blamed her for not obtaining better quarters and food for them, and worried her with trivial complaints of their treatment. But although they looked to Florence to right their wrongs, real and imaginary, they were reluctant to render her obedience. Florence had chosen the members of the first party, and had won the admiration and respect of most of its members by her conduct at Scutari ; but the new nurses had come to the East with an allegiance already formed for their own leader, Miss Mary Stanley (sister of Dean Stanley). Miss Stanley, whom Florence had met years before at Rome, had been plainly told that she would be under Florence's direction, but that was a position which she showed herself unwilling to accept. She had long experience in social work, and she

felt entitled to play a prominent rôle at Scutari. On her arrival, she had reported to the medical superintendent, and although she promised faithfully to obey Florence, nevertheless she often acted directly against Florence's instructions. And not only did she flout Florence's orders, but she interfered with the routine of the hospitals in a way which brought forth the strongest condemnation from the authorities. Her sense of her own importance made it impossible for her to remain in the background; she considered that she knew much better than the military authorities how to organise the work, and she tried to rule everyone. Friction naturally resulted from the collision of the self-important Miss Stanley with the men who had given their lives to the medical service.

There was enough work to keep all the nurses busy, had proper arrangements been made and strict discipline maintained. Typhus and cholera filled the wards and spread to the medical staff. At one time seven out of eight doctors were struck down and a single doctor was left to attend to twenty-four wards. A number of the nurses also contracted fever, and three of them did not recover. The death of the nurses affected Florence deeply, but she had little time to mourn the passing of those devoted helpers who had gone through many trials by her side. The living demanded her time and thoughts, and from early till late she was nursing in the crowded wards or directing the work of others.

Religious bickerings had always been a source of trouble, and they became acute after the arrival of Miss Stanley's party. One nurse had to be sent home for attempting to convert a patient. Charges were frequently made that Protestant nurses interfered with the faith of Catholic soldiers and vice versa, and Florence found the investigation of such accusations one of the most wearisome parts of her work. Innocent remarks were twisted into invitations to adopt Protestantism or Roman Catholicism, and fierce disputes were engendered by rumours that a nurse had said such-and-such a thing to a patient. Nor were the religious convictions of the nurses themselves free from attack. One parson demanded the dismissal of a nurse because she was a Socinian.[1] Another clergyman complained that a nurse was distributing improper books among the patients. But instead of pornographic literature, the nurse had distributed Keble's *Christian Year*.

But Florence had great compensations in the midst of these perplexities. Best of all was the knowledge that she was saving lives. The soldiers worshipped her for her service to them, and, as a sign of their respect and affection, they kissed her shadow when it fell across their beds. At home, although the extent of her work was not fully understood, her sacrifices were acknowledged, and people of all classes, among them the Queen

[1] Lelius and Faustus Socinus were theologians of the sixteenth century, who taught a doctrine not unlike that of the Unitarians.

and ladies of the Court, sent messages of encouragement, together with garments and luxuries for distribution to the wounded. Many tracts were, of course, sent to her for distribution to the patients, but Florence had no sympathy with those who wanted tracts to be handed out to the wounded and sick. "I said that I distributed them," she writes, "whether to the fire or not, I did not say."

Florence could feel that her work would not pass with the end of the campaign, and that she was building up a system that would endure. Sidney Herbert wrote that the reorganisation of the medical service and the introduction of trained male attendants in military hospitals was almost certain to be adopted in accordance with her views. The plan to maintain a store at Constantinople, under the control of the British Government, for the reception of goods intended for transport across the Bosphorus had also been favourably considered, and Florence was satisfied that the authorities at home were now recognising the soundness of her judgment. In February 1855 came news of a minor reform which she had advocated and which the Queen had ordered to be carried out. The sum of 4½*d*. was deducted from the pay of wounded soldiers during their period in hospital, but sick soldiers were mulcted in double that amount. Florence had pointed out that soldiers were as little culpable when they fell a victim to disease as to an enemy bullet, and that therefore 4½*d*. should be the deduction in both

cases. It was a small point, but it had rankled with the troops and its illogicality had troubled Florence's logical mind. At the same time she learned that another proposal made by her to the sovereign had been adopted. She had represented that a piece of ground should be obtained from the Turks for use as a British cemetery, and the Government had taken the necessary steps for this to be done.

She could also take some of the credit for the appointment, at the beginning of 1855, of a commission of three to inquire into the sanitary conditions. It was composed of Dr. Hector Gavie (who died in the Crimea), Dr. John Sutherland, and Sir Robert Rawlinson, and began its work in February 1856. Florence, who had been scoffed at by the military authorities in Scutari for her insistence that the sanitary arrangements ought to be entirely overhauled, found the committee of inquiry in entire agreement with her views. She had, they reported, saved the British army.

And in April of that year, Florence was joined by an amusing and valuable helper. Alexis Soyer, the famous chef of the Reform Club, announced his intention of giving his services to the Government, and wrote to *The Times*:

"After carefully perusing the letter of your correspondent, dated Scutari, in your impression of Wednesday last, I perceive that, although the

kitchen under the superintendence of Miss Nighingale affords so much relief, the system of management at the large one in the Barrack Hospital is far from being perfect. I propose offering my services gratuitously and proceeding direct to Scutari at my own personal expense, to regulate that important department, if the Government will honour me with their confidence, and grant me the full power of acting according to my knowledge and experience in such matters."

Soyer was something of a buffoon, but he was an expert in culinary arrangements, and introduced a number of highly beneficial reforms in the cooking arrangements in the Scutari hospitals. For Florence he had admiration amounting almost to adoration, and he counted it a privilege to serve her. He describes her as tall and slim, with a pleasing physiognomy, blue eyes, sparkling with intelligence; "her mouth," he continues, in his flowery style, "is small and well formed, while her lips act in unison, and make known the impression of her heart – one seems the reflex of the other. . . . With matters of the most grave import, a gentle smile passes radiantly over her countenance, thus proving her evenness of temper; at other times, when wit or a pleasantry prevails, the heroine is lost in the happy, good-natured smile which pervades her face, and you recognise only the charming woman."

At the beginning of May 1855 Florence decided to visit the hospitals in the Crimea. The

number of cases reaching Scutari from the battle-front had dropped considerably – in the Barrack Hospital the number had dropped to slightly over a thousand; and Florence felt that she could safely leave the base to investigate the condition of affairs in the hospitals at Balaclava. She had come to Scutari in November 1854 to find that 42 per cent of the cases treated in the hospitals succumbed to wounds or disease. When she started out for Balaclava, six months after her arrival in Scutari, the death-rate in the base hospitals had been reduced to 2·2 per cent. The miracle had not been accomplished by her efforts alone, and she did not deny credit to others. But to Florence Nightingale more than to anyone else must be ascribed this amazing triumph.

She was accompanied on her trip to Balaclava by Soyer (who took a coloured servant with him everywhere), Bracebridge, and a drummer-boy named Thomas, aged twelve, who called himself her "man." Soldiers who had been patients in Scutari had carried back tales of the work of the superintendent of nurses, while those who opposed her presence in the East had repeated stories of her interference with discipline and her high-handed ways. Many people, therefore, were anxious to see her, and the landing-place was crowded when the *Robert Lowe*, on which she travelled with her party, berthed at Balaclava. She had decided to live on the ship during her visit – when that vessel sailed she transferred to

the *London* – and there was a constant stream of callers going to and from her cabin.

Her purpose was to inspect the hospitals, in some of which were female nurses over whom she claimed authority. In Scutari she had never spared herself, and she did not spare herself now. The hospitals before Sebastopol as well as those in Balaclava were inspected, and, in conjunction with Soyer, she suggested many improvements in the culinary and other arrangements. She had always ignored the danger of contagion – Sidney Godolphin Osborne is one of the witnesses who refers to her "utter disregard of contagion" – and, although warned of the risk at Balaclava, she went into several wards where there were patients suffering from infectious diseases. It had been a matter for wonder to those who worked with her that she had so long escaped unscathed, but now, at Balaclava, she contracted the fever that had attacked the allies – known as Crimean fever.

Her constitution had been undermined by her arduous labours, and the doctors took a grave view of her condition and could hold out no confident hope of her recovery. Eight hundred feet above Balaclava, on the Genoese Heights, were a number of huts used as a sanatorium, and it was thought desirable to transfer her to one of these. The news spread in Balaclava that she had died, and the army sorrowed for the woman who had given so noble an example of public service – service to men who had been looked

upon almost as outcasts. Her death was reported in London, and the newspapers paid glowing tributes to her work and abilities and mourned her loss as a national disaster. And at Scutari, in the Barrack Hospital, men turned their faces to the wall and wept that the Angel of the Crimea was no more.

Skilful medical attention and devoted nursing, however, saved her life, and after two weeks she was out of danger. She wanted to complete her work in the Crimea, but the doctors refused to permit her to run such a risk, and strongly urged her to return to England. Florence compromised. She realised that in her present state it would be foolish to remain in the Crimea, but she would not go home. Her mission in the East was unfinished, and she was resolved that she would not leave until the army had been withdrawn. She determined, therefore, to sail back to Scutari, and make a visit later to the Crimea when she had completely recovered. A private yacht, the *New London*, which belonged to Lord Ward (later Earl of Dudley), was put at her disposal, and, about a month after leaving Scutari, Florence sailed into that port.

She had not yet recovered her strength, and it was only at the end of the summer that she was able to resume her full duties in the Barrack Hospital. Much had happened before then. There had been hopes of peace in the spring, and the nations had gathered at Vienna to discuss terms. Nothing had come of these negotiations,

but when the Tsar Nicholas died, in March 1855, it was believed that Russia would be anxious to end the war. The new Tsar, Alexander II, would not, however, agree to peace on the conditions proposed by the allies, and the fighting, which had languished, was resumed vigorously, with little Sardinia on the side of the British and French. At the beginning of June, a general attack was ordered, and the allies won some ground, but on the 18th of the month a further assault was severely repulsed. Lord Raglan, who had been in failing health, and on whom the weight of his responsibilities hung heavily, died on June 28th, and was succeeded by General Simpson. He was no more capable than Lord Raglan, and, when criticised by the Cabinet in the autumn, he resigned his command in favour of General Codrington.

From the beginning of her work in the East, Florence had had the unfailing support and encouragement of Mr. and Mrs. Bracebridge. At the end of July 1855, they returned to England, owing to illness, and their departure was a sad loss to her. For a time she had no one on whom to rely for such staunch friendship as had been given to her by the Bracebridges, but their place was soon afterwards taken by Florence's aunt, Mai Smith. Aunt Mai proved a faithful friend, and Florence needed one. For once again she was overburdened with work, and the Barrack Hospital was full to overflowing. At the beginning of September the allies had attacked two

batteries, the Malakoff and the Redan. The French had taken the Malakoff, but the British, who had a more difficult task, had been beaten back with heavy casualities. The Russians, however, did not stay to face another assault. In the night of September 8th, they withdrew from Sebastopol, after giving the town to the flames. Sebastopol, which the allies had besieged for nearly a year, was left a ruin. The war had cost England over 20,000 men, of whom only a quarter had died in battle.

Although the actual fighting was over, the British still remained in the Crimea, and Florence thought it her duty to complete her tour of the hospitals there. She set out in October, and spent three months in reorganising the British hospitals of the Crimea. Her previous visit had been cut short through illness, this second tour had to be abandoned because of an outbreak of cholera at Scutari. Florence hurried back, but the outbreak, although severe, did not last long, and the worst was over before she again took control in the Barrack Hospital.

There had been great rejoicing in England when the report of Florence's death was contradicted, and the news that she had refused to return home though her health was endangered by remaining in the East had been received with enthusiasm. Most people had expected her to withdraw on the fall of Sebastopol, and her decision to remain until the troops had been evacuated was the signal for another outburst of applause. Gross

mismanagement, incompetency, and bribery marked the conduct of the Crimean War on the British side. Florence stood out not only as a noble pioneer, but as a woman supremely efficient in her work. Queen Victoria had remarked of her, "Such a clear head, I wish we had her at the War Office"; and that comment represented a general opinion. England might have inefficient generals and officials, but she could show to the world a woman without an equal in ability and self-sacrifice. The Angel of the Crimea became idealised.

A movement sprang up to demonstrate the nation's gratitude to the heroine, and in November 1855 a meeting was held in London to inaugurate a fund. Sidney Herbert and other friends had been consulted on the form which the testimonial should take; one and all had explained that Florence would accept nothing for herself, but that she had an ambition to establish an institution for the training of nurses in England. The Duke of Cambridge presided, and it was decided that the fund should be called the Nightingale Hospital Fund, and that it should be placed at Florence's disposal for the establishment of a training school for nurses. Sidney Herbert expected her to build up "an English Kaiserwerth," but Florence, while she expressed her appreciation of all that was being done, insisted that she could make no plans in advance. Meetings to raise money for the fund were held throughout England and in some of the Colonies;

collections were made among all ranks of the army and navy ; Churches of every denomination co-operated ; Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, paid all the expenses of a concert at which she sang and as a result of which two thousand pounds was available for the Nightingale Fund. Other concerts and entertainments were held on a more modest scale, and the amount contributed grew rapidly. The organisers had set out to raise £50,000, and that sum would probably have been reached had not Florence closed the list when £44,000 had been collected. But it was not only by supporting the fund that people showed their appreciation. Reproductions of her portrait were eagerly bought, and decorated many shop windows ; racehorses were called after her ; her name was given to children ; songs recounting her deeds were highly popular, and verses about her in much demand.

Queen Victoria also paid her tribute. At the beginning of 1856, she wrote a characteristic letter from Windsor Castle, which began :

" You are, I know, well aware of the high sense I entertain of the Christian devotion which you have displayed during this great and bloody war, and I need hardly repeat to you how warm my admiration is for your services, which are fully equal to those of my dear and brave soldiers, whose sufferings you have had the *privilege* of alleviating in so merciful a manner."

With the letter was a diamond brooch, designed by the Prince Consort, with "Crimea" and "Blessed are the merciful" on one side, and on the other an inscription that the brooch was a present from the Queen for services rendered to the soldiers. Florence does not seem to have worn the gift except on one occasion, although the Queen had written that she hoped Florence would wear it "as a mark of the high appreciation of your Sovereign!"

Towards such tributes, Florence was indifferent. She felt that she had only done her duty, and it seemed to her that unnecessary fuss was being made of her work. She would have preferred that, instead of gifts and honours, the country had strengthened her official position. Now that the fighting was practically over, the military had prepared a fierce attack upon her. The professional class knew that an inquiry into the conduct of the war was inevitable, and may have decided that Florence, who had seen so much of the mismanagement, must be discredited before she gave her testimony. But the officials had justifiable complaints against her. She was often unfair to men who were doing their best under difficulties, and she had little appreciation of any system other than her own. Moreover, it was bound to cause resentment when Florence ignored the men on the spot and went direct to Herbert with complaints that could have been remedied locally – a course, however, into which she was often forced through the unfriendliness of the

officials. The authorities were also indignant that she should have so much influence. They might have clamoured for a reform and been refused by London, but, when Florence put forward the same suggestion, Herbert was often able to move the War Office. The officials complained that her word carried more weight than theirs, and that she got the credit for reforms which had been proposed by others before her arrival.

When Florence went to the Crimea, she met with rank discourtesy and in some quarters downright insult, and her jurisdiction was questioned. The Government had appointed her to be superintendent of nurses in Turkey, but the Crimea was Russian territory, and the officials argued that her writ did not run in Balaclava. Sir John Hall, Florence's old enemy, was the chief upholder of this theory, and at the beginning of 1856 he took a step which she regarded as a usurpation of her powers. The female nurses at Koulali, over whom Florence regarded herself in control, were dismissed from there to the General Hospital at Scutari. Their addition to the staff at the General Hospital made Roman Catholic nurses in the majority, and Florence had always tried to hold the balance equally between them. That, however, was only one of her points. More important was the fact that, without consultation with her, nurses under her charge had been dismissed from one hospital and sent to another. Hall claimed that, as Chief Medical Officer, he

must have the right to dispose of hospital staff as seemed good to him, but Florence felt that her position would be intolerable if her authority were to be successfully challenged in such a way. Mother Bridgeman, the Roman Catholic nun in charge of the nurses at the General Hospital and a woman who had been one of Florence's most valuable assistants, supported Sir John Hall, and denied Florence's right to interfere with the arrangement.

Florence demanded satisfaction from the authorities at home. The Government, she wrote, had promised her authority, but had sacrificed her to her enemies. During the whole campaign she had been a victim of calumny and gross misrepresentation, and she would no longer bear the attacks in silence. Let the country decide the question in dispute. In a stinging letter, she insisted that, in justice to her, Sidney Herbert should move for papers in the House of Commons so that Parliament could decide whether she or the officials had served England well.

CHAPTER VI

1856 – 1861

Third Crimean visit – welfare work in Scutari – return to England – visit to the Queen – agitation for Royal Commission on health of the soldiers – report to Lord Panmure – opposition of War Office – training scheme for nurses – illness – Sidney Herbert – army reforms.

THE question nearly caused a permanent breach between Florence and Sidney Herbert. He told her that, exhausted with her labours, she had lost her sense of proportion, and that it was foolish of her to insist upon a Parliamentary debate. He admitted, however, that her authority ought to have been officially confirmed by the new Government, and arrangements were made for her position to be specified in army orders. The ground was thus cut from Mother Bridgeman's feet, and in March 1856 she returned to England rather than accept Florence's orders.

Florence was not satisfied, and continued to demand a Parliamentary discussion. Herbert steadfastly refused to support what he considered to be unnecessary as well as dangerous, and he was probably right. It was true that Florence had been an outstanding success among many failures, and that her work had been handicapped through jealousy on the part of the officials, some

of whom were unfit for their jobs. But the debate could not have been confined to Florence and her treatment at the hands of the local authorities ; the history of the scheme for female nurses would have had to be considered, and there were weak spots in it. A few of the nurses had been drunkards and immoral, others had been convicted of various irregularities, more than one had written letters of criticism which had been used against the Government. It could be claimed that, as Government servants, they had no right to criticise the Government, but, apart from that point, some of the nurses' letters contained personal attacks on officials and were full of mis-statements. The responsibility would rest upon Florence as superintendent, and she would also be held responsible for the indiscretions of Bracebridge, who had, on his return to England, castigated the administration in a way which was difficult to defend.

Florence herself would not have escaped criticism, for some of her actions would have been hard to justify when described in the atmosphere of the Commons. She had broken regulations in emergency, and her behaviour would have been represented as a defiance of orders – orders which were approved by the House, always jealous of its final authority. Without condemning itself, the Government of the day could not have sacrificed the military officials, and Sidney Herbert foresaw that, whether or not Parliament supported Florence, the scheme of female nurses

might be discredited. The military caste had a strong body of supporters, and so many quarrels and indiscretions would have been brought to light that the country would at best have been inclined to question whether women were not more of a nuisance than a help in military hospitals.

She found consolation for her disappointment in work. In March she made her third visit to the Crimea, and completed the inspection of hospitals that had been interrupted on two previous occasions, once by her own illness, once by the outbreak of cholera at Scutari. She travelled about in a cart which McMurdo, chief of the transport division, had specially constructed for her, and which afterwards became a very famous relic. It replaced a highly uncomfortable vehicle without springs, and it proved valuable in covering the long distances between the Crimean hospitals. While Florence was on this tour, peace was signed at Paris (March 30th, 1856) ; but there were still many patients in the Crimea, and not until July had she finished her reorganisation. She had started welfare schemes for the soldiers at Scutari, for she was convinced that the drunkenness and immorality among the soldiers was largely due to the indifference of the Government. Florence had therefore established a café for non-alcoholic liquors, reading- and writing-rooms had been opened, classes and lectures arranged. Schoolmasters had been sent from England to teach the soldiers, most of whom were quite

illiterate, and the lectures proved highly popular. The Government, however, had now taken over the direction of these enterprises, and Florence was free to sail back to England.

The Sultan of Egypt, anxious to show his appreciation, presented her with a diamond bracelet for herself, and a monetary gift to be divided among the nurses and hospitals, and, with Queen Victoria's permission, Florence accepted the gifts before she set out on her homeward journey. The Government wanted to put a man-o'-war at the disposal of the popular heroine, but she preferred to sail quietly with Aunt Mai as an ordinary passenger. She reached England on August 5th, having travelled under the name of Miss Smith to escape attention. The newspapers, eager to report the arrival of England's idol, tried zealously to trace her, but, although there had been many representations of Florence, she passed unnoticed. Even her family was ignorant of her movements, and she arrived at Lea Hurst unannounced.

The labours of the Crimea had undermined her constitution, and for the rest of her life she was to be a semi-invalid. Her heart was strained, her nervous system had received a severe shock, and a few months after returning to England she was rarely able to leave her room. Her illness did not mean the end of her work. She had found her genius as an organiser and reformer, and for nearly half a century was to be one of the most influential and busy women in England.

The public wanted to fête the heroine who had done so much for the soldiers, but she rejected practically every suggestion that functions should be held in her honour. She had shown in the Crimea what could be done by good nursing and sanitation, and now she entered upon a vigorous campaign to raise the general standard of nursing – a campaign which was to last until the end of her working life. In 1859 she published *Notes on Nursing*, in which she put forward her views on the construction and organisation of hospitals, and within a month fifteen thousand copies were sold ; cheap editions were issued later, in response to the public demand, and the book was translated into several languages.

Florence knew, however, that, so far as the health of the army was concerned, she must move the War Office, and she had vowed to effect a revolution in the care of the troops, both in and out of hospital. When she received an invitation to visit the Queen's physician at Ballater in the autumn of 1856, she accepted with alacrity, for she was anxious to enlist the aid of the Queen and Prince Albert in her plans for the army. She suggested to them that the medical service of the army should be thoroughly investigated, and the Queen agreed with her. But in such matters the intervention of the Court had often proved unfortunate, and Florence was advised to address herself to Lord Panmure, the Minister at War. He came to Balmoral while Florence was in residence there, but, while he promised that the

whole question would receive his earnest consideration, he had no intention of moving if he could help it. The war was over, and he seemed to think that nothing need be done for the present.

This was exactly the attitude against which Florence protested, and she and Sidney Herbert combined to badger Lord Panmure into action. Florence had left Balmoral at the beginning of November and taken a suite of rooms at the Burlington Hotel, Old Burlington Street, and from there she conducted her campaign for a commission to inquire into the health of the army. The War Office capitulated, and in May 1857, after six months of pressure, a commission was appointed with Sidney Herbert as chairman. For a woman to serve on a Royal Commission was unheard of, and it hardly seems to have crossed anyone's mind that Florence should be a member. But she was the power behind the throne. A comprehensive review of the condition of the army health services, entitled *Notes affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army*, had been compiled by her, and this document formed the basis on which the commission worked. She guided Sidney Herbert, and when, three months after its first meeting, the Royal Commission reported to the Minister at War, its recommendations were largely founded on Florence's proposals.

The officials of the War Office were shocked, and Panmure considered that the commission had gone much too far. The officials condemned

some of the proposals as entirely wrong, others as unnecessary, and as for those which did seem to have advantages, the officials felt that the administrative machine should be left to carry them out in its own good time. A few minor reforms were introduced, however, and four committees were appointed to consider the major proposals. Florence suspected that the committees would shelve the questions, and she decided to muster public opinion rather than let the military caste ruin her schemes. She sent copies of her memoranda to Harriet Martineau and other publicists, and a fair amount of publicity was given to her views; but the public which paid tribute to Florence Nightingale as a heroine was slow to support her as a reformer and organiser. It was one thing for people to applaud with wild enthusiasm the work of Florence as a ministering angel, it was quite another thing for them to take an interest in drains and ventilation

There was other work waiting to be done. The Nightingale Fund of over forty thousand pounds was, by Florence's desire, to be devoted to the institution of a training school for nurses. She had hoped to start on the organisation of the establishment on her return from the Crimea, but, apart from her weak state of health, other duties had intervened. The committee felt that no one except herself could control the nurses' home, and preferred to wait until she had the time and strength to devote to the work.

The doctors, however, doubted whether she

would ever be strong enough to undertake such a task, for her health had steadily deteriorated. Her condition gave her family acute anxiety, and she was urged to withdraw from all her activities. She, who had been looked upon as eccentric and embarrassing, was now regarded with admiration by her parents and sister. Not only was she a popular heroine, but she was a person of influence and importance in political and official circles. Mr. Nightingale was proud and delighted ; Mrs. Nightingale forgot that she had opposed her daughter's plans and now basked in reflected glory ; Parthe, who had so often complained of Florence's conduct, had only praise for her victorious sister and was a most enthusiastic supporter of all that Florence suggested. Parthe, indeed, was very much happier in every way. She was now Lady Verney, for in June 1858, when nearly forty, she had married Sir Harry Verney, a wealthy widower with four children.

Florence, so strict a disciplinarian with others, was an unsatisfactory patient, and resented the attempts of her parents and sister to give her the nursing that she would have at once insisted upon for those under her own control. Work had to be done, and no bodily weakness could be allowed to interfere with it. Men's lives were at stake. The annual mortality among the soldiers at home was 175 per thousand, and the army was composed of men in the pride of their manhood. Florence was convinced that unsuitable barrack accommodation was largely responsible, and how

could she rest when men were being killed through ignorance and she knew the remedy?

With great reluctance, Florence informed the committee of the Nightingale Fund in 1860 that circumstances did not permit her to undertake the English Kaiserwerth which she had so often planned in her thoughts. It was decided, therefore, that the idea of a separate training college for nurses should be abandoned, and that the fund should be devoted to the training of nurses and midwives. St. Thomas's Hospital was selected for the training of nurses under the scheme, and in June 1860 twenty-four pupils were admitted for a year's training. They were to receive tuition in all branches of nursing, and were expected thereafter to devote their lives to public nursing. It was a very different scheme from that conceived by Florence in earlier years, but nevertheless it was a great step forward.

Florence drew up the regulations, and she emphasised that character and good conduct were as important as technical qualifications. She had seen too much of the immoral and drunken nurses in the public hospitals to take any risks, and she was inclined to err on the side of strictness. Twice a week the pupils received instruction from the chaplain; they were not allowed to go out alone, and dismissal was the penalty for consorting after hours with a medical student, however innocently.

Despite some quarrels among the probationers, and a few unsatisfactory pupils, the scheme proved

a great success from the beginning, and Florence learned with great pleasure that country hospitals were competing for the services of the nurses trained in the Nightingale School. New schools were founded in other centres in England, and the idea spread to the Colonies, the United States, and the Continent, where similar institutions were established, some of them under the control of nurses recruited from the Nightingale School. Three-quarters of a century ago the idea of training nurses was looked upon as highly original and even dangerous, and nursing was considered as work suitable only for the lowest class of women, who picked up their experience at the expense of the patients. To-day it would seem fantastic to permit degraded and untrained women to nurse the sick in our public hospitals, and every training school for nurses is a reminder of the pioneer work of Florence Nightingale.

Despite her weakness, Florence could probably have acted as matron of the school had she been willing to give up all her other work. But she had appointed herself the protector of the British soldier, and she felt that the army had first call upon her services. She had fought the officials of the War Office and gained minor successes, but the political chiefs had usually sided with their advisers and the major reforms proposed by Florence had been held up. Now, however, a political chief who was hand in glove with Florence reigned at the War Office. In 1859, Sidney Herbert was appointed Secretary for War

in Lord Palmerston's administration, and he entered upon his duties with the ambition to reorganise the army on the lines which he and Florence had often debated.

Herbert accomplished much during his tenure of office. Barracks were reconstructed, attention was paid to sanitation and ventilation, and better facilities were provided for the feeding of the troops. The Purveying Department was remodelled, and the recreation-rooms for which Florence had pressed (and which previously she had established in some places at her own expense) were taken under official custody and became a normal part of the amenities of the soldier's life. Steps were taken to carry into practice Florence's idea of preventive medicine, and the results of these reforms were seen in a considerable reduction in the death-rate within a few years.

But Florence was disappointed that Herbert could not accomplish more. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he was parsimonious in dishing out funds. That schemes on the need for which Herbert agreed should be held up because of Gladstone's passion for economy brought forth bitter protests from Florence, and she showed little appreciation of Herbert's difficulties. Gladstone was very powerful, but Florence seemed unable to understand the position, and she blamed Herbert for not pressing reform more vigorously.

Remorse overcame her when, in December

1860, Herbert had to resign from office. He had done the work of a dozen men, and he was exhausted with his labours. The doctors warned him that he could not continue to carry so heavy a load without complete collapse, and Herbert, accepting a peerage, took his seat in the Lords as Lord Herbert of Lea. He did not enjoy his new honours for long. He died in 1861, and Florence accused herself of having been in part responsible for his death. She had given him no rest, had made no allowances for his failures, and had urged him to shoulder new burdens despite his protests that he had already more than he could carry. "Poor Florence! Poor Florence! Our joint work unfinished" are said to have been his last articulate words. No reformer could have had a more faithful partner, but Florence only realised after his death how bravely he had fought for her schemes and how great had been his sacrifices. For half a century she was to mourn the skilful politician and the enlightened administrator who had guided so many of her schemes to success.

CHAPTER VII

1861 – 1880

Work for India – Florence and the Treasury – the attitude of the officials – statistics – the Red Cross – world-wide fame – the War Office – the Metropolitan Poor Act, 1867 – anxiety over nursing scheme – death of Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale and Selina Bracebridge – too old to campaign.

THE Burlington Hotel had too many memories of Herbert for Florence to continue to live there, and shortly after his death she gave up her rooms in the hotel. Queen Victoria had invited her to occupy an apartment at Kensington Palace, but she had refused the offer, and preferred to live in lodgings in Hampstead, or in the country with her sister Parthe or her parents. Her thoughts were turned to religion, and she wrote and published, for private circulation only, *Suggestions for Thought*, a book in which she expressed her strong belief in personal survival after death. It appeared as if Herbert's removal would be followed by her abandonment of public affairs, and that the rest of her life would be devoted to religious contemplation. But she resumed her labours when she discovered that schemes planned in conjunction with him were being shelved by the Government. Florence felt that she must preserve the work for which he had given his life, and she threw herself into the fray with something of her

old energy. She was now forty-one, and knew that she must accept invalidism for the remainder of her days, but physical incapacity seemed only to strengthen her mental equipment.

In the last years of his life Sidney Herbert had been associated with Florence in pressing for the reform of the conditions under which the British troops lived in India. The Indian Mutiny of 1857 had focused her attention on India – she had offered to organise a nursing service during the Mutiny, but her offer could not be accepted. The plight of the Indian army had shocked her, for the death-rate was 69 per thousand and she was certain that it was ten times too high (actually, in her lifetime she saw it reduced to about a twelfth). The faults in organisation which had existed in the home army were repeated in India, where there were also peculiar problems. It had always been her creed that many soldiers drank to excess because facilities for recreation were lacking, and this appeared to her to apply with particular force to the troops in India. The Government provided plentiful facilities for drinking, but housed the soldiers in totally unsuitable barracks and made no provision for their recreation. "If the facilities for washing were as great as those for drink," she commented, "our Indian army would be the cleanest body in the world."

She had agitated for a Royal Commission to survey the whole field, and she had forced the authorities to move. In 1859 a commission was appointed, first under the chairmanship of Sidney

Herbert, and then, when Herbert was appointed Minister at War, of Lord Stanley. Not only had Florence worked hard to get Herbert to accept the chairmanship, but she had packed the commission with men who were in sympathy with her views. As in other inquiries into the health of the troops, Florence supplied much of the information. She had diligently sought material from soldiers and administrators at home and abroad, and the commission, recognising her unique knowledge, allowed itself to be guided by her to a very large extent. But there was an enormous amount of information to be obtained and considered apart from what Florence was able to supply, and not for four years did the commission make its report – a report which runs to over 2,000 pages. The Government invited Florence to furnish her observations on the draft, and her contribution was a thoroughly sound piece of work, in which she pointed out the necessity for sanitary commissions, and urged that these commissions should be free from the red tape which characterised most Government organisations.

She illustrated her section of the book, and the Treasury objected to the cost of reproduction. Florence, who saw in this objection by the Treasury an attempt to silence her, undertook to bear the additional cost involved, but even so the Treasury would not make the full report available to the public. And in the condensed version which was issued, Florence's contribution was

omitted. Florence was determined that she would not be muzzled in this way, and published her observations as a separate document. So much interest was aroused by her remarks that the Government was compelled by force of public opinion to issue the full report, but, that having been done, it prepared to ignore the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Indian Sanitation.

The Government was not convinced of the need for the proposed reforms, and was aghast at the cost of carrying them out, and for the time being Florence could make no progress. In 1863, a paper by her, entitled, "How People May Live and Not Die in India," was read to the Social Science Congress, and her ideas of the means whereby the life of those who lived in India could be safeguarded created considerable interest. Ten years later, in 1873, another paper by her was read before the Social Science Congress, "How Some People Have Lived and not Died in India." It explained the progress that had been made in sanitary reform during those ten years, and was a triumphant justification of the claims that she had advanced so pertinaciously. She had hammered at the authorities at home and abroad. The viceroys and lesser officials in India had received voluminous reports from Florence on the need for reforms, if lives were to be saved. The administration at home had been harried with memorandum upon memorandum, and public opinion had been mobilised to attack the inaction of the Government.

Her principal lieutenant in this campaign was Dr. Sutherland, who had been a member of the Sanitary Commission despatched to the Crimea, and with whom Florence had formed a close partnership. But she had a body of expert helpers, and had organised a group which was devoted to her service and lost no opportunity to press reforms in India. Florence felt that any means was justified to attain her ends, and she used her influence to have her own nominees appointed to important official positions. Even with such support, however, she did not achieve all that she had hoped ; but her efforts produced startling changes and saved thousands of lives.

The conditions under which the British troops lived in India had been greatly improved, and she had forced the authorities to adopt measures of preventive hygiene in the Indian army as in the army at home. But it was not only the health of the soldiers with which she was concerned. She felt that Britain had a direct responsibility for the lives of the Indian people, and she knew that the appalling death-rate among the natives in the towns and villages could be tremendously reduced by the adoption of efficient sanitation. Ill health had prevented her from seeing the country, but she had an astonishingly wide knowledge of conditions in India. Seventy years ago few people appreciated the value of statistics, but Florence had always maintained that nothing could be built up without figures as a basis, and her statistics on India were more comprehensive

than those of the Government. The Government could have obtained statistics as detailed, if not more so, than those collected by Florence from officials all over India. But the authorities had not in the past required returns, and they did not trouble to make special investigation unless compelled to do so.

Florence had agitated for reform in the British army at home and abroad, and had carried through a large part of her measures. Now she demanded an almost entire revision of the system of administration in India, and it was a scheme far more extensive than anything she had previously attempted. The project was too vast, and it is not surprising that she made little progress. Three-quarters of a century after she advanced her proposals, many of them still remain to be brought into effect, but many others have since been adopted. If Florence Nightingale failed in her own day, she blazed the trail for new generations of Indian reformers.

The Government departments looked upon her as a pest, and it is not difficult to find the explanation of their attitude. The political chiefs had often no interest in the administrative side of their work, and, in office for only a few years, could not obtain a thorough grasp of the duties of a great department of State, even if they had the will. The permanent officials were overworked as well as underpaid, and the many suggestions made by Florence entailed additional labour for them. When she saw a fault in a system she set about

collecting all the information that she could and then presented a memorandum in which, usually after consultation with experts, she proposed the remedy. Her view was that anyone must recognise the defect and ought to be anxious to correct a failure when it had been pointed out. If officials did not act upon her proposal, she was inclined to put it down to sheer stupidity or to obstruction or to downright wickedness. The officials felt that Florence was an unreasonable woman. She rarely made mistakes, and her case, presented clearly and persuasively, might be unanswerable. But the officials very properly could not accept her schemes without the most careful examination. First of all the existing position had to be verified. Sometimes it was a question of statistics, and the administration was weak in statistical information. It might have taken Florence many months to collect her figures, and, if so, the Government department concerned would probably need twice as long to confirm them. For the administration could not be satisfied with the same information as a private person.

Florence was marvellously accurate, but she made mistakes. A mistake in her figures might be serious enough, but it would be far more serious if a Government Department were to issue inaccurate statistics, though in fact Florence made far fewer errors than the Civil Servants. Again, she could apply direct to an administrator in some obscure part of India, and would have her reply practically by return of post. When the officials

tried to get the same information, however, they must go through the ordinary official channels, which was a lengthy business. A man who had perhaps light-heartedly furnished information on a question to Florence would undertake a detailed inquiry before replying to a request for statistics from his superior. An administrator could not afford to risk a blunder when an official instruction called for figures.

Quite as much to the point, however, was the lack of time on the part of the staff of Government departments. Florence could choose her subject, spend as long as she liked on investigating it, obtain the views of experts, and carefully work up her case before presenting it. The officials, naturally, had their own work to carry on, and they hinted to Florence that they had a thousand things to do while she could devote her time to a single question if she so chose. The Civil Service was staffed on the assumption that it would keep the machine going, and no allowance had been made for the investigation of the many proposals which flowed in from Florence. The fault was largely with the system, and is perhaps inevitable in any huge administrative machine.

Florence felt that the organisation of the machine was very imperfect, and in particular she assailed the War Office for its antiquated ways. She was instrumental in getting a committee appointed to consider the work of the War Office, and some reforms were recommended and carried out. (How badly the

military machine creaked, and how frequently it has been under fire, is indicated by the fact that, since Florence Nightingale attacked it, no less than four hundred committees have deliberated upon its organisation !) It was with the War Office that Florence had the most constant dealings throughout the whole of her public career, and, although the officials were often antagonistic to her, the War Office consulted her on many points. Apart from her influence in political circles, and her prestige in the country, Florence was a recognised expert on the health of the troops, and her opinion was obtained as a matter of course on plans for new barracks and hospitals. Nor was it only the British War Office that sought her advice. Foreign Governments sent proposals to her for comment, and were eager to have her criticisms and suggestions.

Her fame was world wide. In 1864 the Geneva Convention was drawn up, and the Red Cross thus instituted. The movement did not originate with Florence, but it was her work in the Crimea which suggested the idea to Henri Dunant, and he generously admitted his debt to her. Florence's reputation was increased by the success of the movement, and at home and abroad she was honoured as the inspiration of the many schemes for the care of the sick in war and peace, among the soldiers and the civil population.

While she had worked to reorganise the hospital system of the army, she had recognised that the civil hospitals presented an even more urgent

problem. The success of the training scheme for nurses at St. Thomas's and elsewhere had helped to raise the standard of nursing, and Florence had been able to introduce a number of improvements into the public hospitals. She felt, however, that much still remained to be done. She had vigorously attacked the system under which the sick were treated as paupers in workhouses, and in 1866 she persuaded Gathorne Hardy, President of the Poor Law Board, to appoint a committee to consider the whole matter. Florence was invited to put forward her views, and pressed that the sick should be separated from the paupers, that special provision should be made for mental cases, that patients suffering from infectious diseases should be segregated, and better accommodation provided. The outcome of the committee's deliberations was the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867, which remedied many scandals, but which did not wholly satisfy Florence. A few years previously, William Rathbone, an M.P. of liberal views, had co-operated with Florence in a scheme for training nurses for service in the Liverpool workhouses. The experiment had been entirely satisfactory, and Florence had hoped that the new Act would make similar provision for London. The new legislation, however, marked a great step forward, and paved the way for a complete reorganisation in later years.

In 1872, five years after she had seen the first real attempt to reform the workhouse system of

nursing, Florence wrote : " This year I go out of office." She felt in 1872 that she had done her life's work as a power behind the throne, urging the Government departments to adopt enlightened views, agitating for reforms which seemed to her obvious but which clashed with prejudices and were often expensive to introduce. But although her influence in political circles had dwindled, her work did not cease. She continued to press for further improvements in the hospital system, but she considered that the last of her great campaigns had been fought and that she would never again undertake vast projects of reforms. Benjamin Jowett, who had become one of her closest friends and advisers, suggested that she should take up literary work, and she contributed a few essays to periodicals, principally on religion and social questions. Then she embarked upon a book composed of translations from the mystics of the Middle Ages, a piece of work, however, which was never finished.

She had written much, but most of her writing had been in the form of official minutes, and she found the completion of the translations more difficult than she had anticipated. While at work on the book, she sustained two severe blows. Her father died in January 1874, at the age of eighty-four, and shortly afterwards the news of Mrs. Bracebridge's death reached Florence. She had been rebellious against the trammels of her family in youth, and in later years the extent of her work had allowed Florence little time to give

to her father, but nevertheless she felt his loss deeply and accused herself of selfish neglect. Selina Bracebridge, the friend of her Crimean days, had been very close to her, and had been an unfailing comfort in the years of trial.

For a time Florence was afflicted with the depression that had so often overcome her in youth. She was fifty-four when her father died, and she could look back on a wonderful record of beneficent and unremitting service. But now she felt that others with her advantages and her abilities would have succeeded better, and that her total accomplishment was small. She accused herself of having neglected God and relied too much upon her own poor human efforts. Combined with her self-reproach was a feeling that she had missed some of the greatest joys in life, and she resented her loneliness. Princes and princesses wrote to her and called at her home, and her words were received with the respect due to a great woman. But she wanted other things. Where were the friends to whom she could turn for comfort and in whom she could confide? To many people she seemed like a highly efficient machine, and she had been, if not content, at least resigned to be regarded as a woman who was self-sufficient. Now she pined for sympathy, and mourned that not a soul in the world really loved her.

For the rest of her life such periods of dejection became more and more frequent; but after such dark depression she was usually restored by the

feeling that God had spoken to her and given the understanding that was lacking here below. Work remained to be done, and if, after the death of her father and Mrs. Bracebridge, she did not show the same energy as formerly, she still accomplished what would have been more than enough for most women. The other tasks that she had shouldered had made it impossible for her to give much time to the nursing school at St. Thomas's, but now that she was relieved of some of her duties, she became more closely associated with its direction. She had always tried to introduce religion into her work, and in later years religion figured even more prominently in everything that she did. And in her opinion the nurses at St. Thomas's lacked the religious spirit. After 1873 she began a series of lectures to the probationers, in which she stressed that nursing was not a mere profession, but a service that could only be carried on with success if nurses had God in their hearts. Some of the nurses had not the spirit of service and had entered upon their training with the view of obtaining remunerative positions. Other people might feel that technical qualifications were all important, but to Florence the work must be entered upon for the glory of God.

The response of the nurses was not what she expected, for some of them looked upon her lectures as impositions. In other departments also Florence met with disappointment. She had maintained her correspondence with viceroys and officials in India, and urged the authorities

at home to embark upon extensive schemes of irrigation to save the peasants from famine. In 1870 a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider Public Works in India, and Florence found that there was little, if any, opposition to her claim that irrigation was essential. But how was the huge expenditure to be met? How was irrigation to be carried out? On these questions there were divided opinions. The Government refused to shoulder the cost, and technical difficulties were raised regarding the proposed plans of irrigation. Florence stormed in vain. She wanted a wholesale scheme of reform. The Government had done something to improve the health of the natives, but, she asked, "What is the good of trying to keep people in health if you can't keep them in life? These ryots are being done to death by floods, by drought, by zemindars,[1] and usurers. You must live in order to be well." She expressed her views on the measures which were necessary in a book, under the title of, *The Zemindar, the Sun and the Watering-Pot as affecting Life or Death in India*, and urged the administration to free the peasants from the exactions of the landlords, the toils of moneylenders, and the haunting fear of famine. Florence had hoped that Gathorne-Hardy (Lord Cranbrook), who became Secretary for India in 1878, would support her, but, although he had been so helpful in the reformation of the workhouse system, he disappointed her hopes, explaining

[1] Landlords.

that finance was a difficulty that could not be overcome. In 1880, Lord Ripon was appointed Viceroy, and Florence, who was acquainted with him, appealed for his backing in her schemes. Something was done, but it was, in Florence's opinion, far too little.

She was now sixty, and she felt that she was too old to organise a great campaign for India, such as she had carried through with success for the reform of the health of the army and the hospitals. Her mother's death occurred in that year, and Florence was overcome with self-reproaches. After the death of her father, she had considered it her duty to give more of her time to Mrs. Nightingale, and for a short period in 1875 they had shared a house in London – "a red villa," Florence describes it, "like a monster lobster." The experiment did not prove successful, and Florence accompanied her mother to Lea Hurst. Mrs. Nightingale's mind failed, and Florence was as devoted a nurse as her own feeble condition permitted. Mrs. Nightingale was ninety-two and her death was not unexpected, but to Florence it was a severe blow, though there had never been any deep sympathy between mother and daughter. Queen Victoria wrote a letter of sympathy, and, in replying, Florence took the opportunity to try to interest the sovereign in certain reforms that had yet to be made. The Queen's only acknowledgment, however, was to send to Florence a copy of *The Life of the Prince Consort.*

CHAPTER VIII

1880 – 1910

District nursing – the Queen's gift – nurses' register – death of Lady Verney – rural hygiene – letter to mothers – failing powers – Victorian Era Exhibition – popular acclaim – world-wide fame – the Order of Merit – last years.

FLORENCE was deeply disappointed, for she had expected great things from addressing the Queen on the subject of district nursing and Indian and other reforms. Her own influence in political circles had waned. New men with whom she had little contact were in positions of authority, and, while her views still commanded deep attention, she lacked the power that had been hers in earlier days. She believed that with royal support she could yet convince the Government of the need for action, and the Queen's refusal to receive a petition from Florence was a heavy blow. But three years later Florence was granted the consent which she had previously sought. On April 23rd, 1883, Queen Victoria instituted the Royal Red Cross, and Florence Nightingale was naturally chosen for the decoration. She was invited to go to Windsor to receive it, but, in pleading that her health precluded her from making the journey, she again begged permission to address the Queen, and this time the request was favourably considered.

The result was not all that she had anticipated. Florence was left to rely upon her own resources in the fight for India, and the sweeping reforms for which she had agitated seemed as far off as ever. In 1887, however, the Queen made possible a scheme that Florence had long advocated and on which she had addressed the sovereign. She had pointed out that it was not enough to build and equip hospitals, and urged that there ought to be provision for nursing people in their own homes and for helping women to nurse members of their families in illness. In conjunction with William Rathbone she had started the experiment of district nurses at Liverpool, and it had been extended to several other places with success. Now the Queen devoted the money which the women of England had subscribed as a Jubilee gift to establish a nation-wide system of district nurses, and Florence, although disappointed that the Queen had not seen fit to lend her authority to advance Indian reform, was gratified that the district nursing scheme had been put on a firm basis by the royal endowment.

This royal gift in 1887 was made at a time when Florence needed encouragement, for she felt that her greatest work was in jeopardy. Fifteen years earlier, she had written that she went out of office, and this year she remarked that her "powers seem all to have failed and old age set in." But she was in the midst of a struggle which needed keen powers, and there was no sign of any failing.

She had revolutionised nursing, and her training scheme had been adopted in most civilised countries. Nursing had come to be regarded as an honoured profession, and nurses, who had been despised as incapable and dissolute, were esteemed as skilled and valuable workers in the cause of humanity. In the opinion of many nurses, however, a further step forward must be made. They claimed that the profession should be safeguarded by a register of nurses, on which would be inscribed only those who had undergone a course of training – a three-years' course was proposed. By this means, the public would be able to select the trained from the untrained nurses, and the prestige of certificated nurses would be increased. Florence had always opposed schemes of the kind. She maintained that the system of registration would be detrimental to the best interests of the nurses themselves, since it would put them all on one level, and that it would afford no protection to the public. Women without any love of nursing would be attracted to the profession for gain, and once they had received their training and been put on the register they would be accepted by the public as fully qualified. But Florence argued that they might not be technically qualified, since their training could be received at an inferior establishment – a point in which there is little force, since training schools could have been made to conform to a specified standard. Florence's main objection, however, was that women might be technically qualified

and yet wholly unsuitable for nursing work. A probationer might be of good character when she underwent her training, but might prove later to be of lax morals. Anyone who had been inscribed on the register would be accepted by the public as a fit person to nurse the sick, and Florence seemed to fear that nursing might relapse into something approaching its former condition.

There are few people to-day who will not admit that the registration of nurses has been beneficial to everyone, but Florence held the opposite view strongly, and she fought energetically against those who favoured a register. In 1886 the Hospital Association, which represented the nurses, appointed a committee to consider the matter, but it could not reach agreement. A number of the nurses resigned from the parent body and set up a separate association committed to the principle of the register. In 1889 a committee of the House of Lords, which was considering hospital affairs generally, reported against registration, and Florence, who had led the opposition, felt that the battle was won. The victory, however, was only temporary. Four years later, a section of the nurses applied for a Royal Charter. The petition was considered by the Privy Council in the ordinary way, and it was decided to grant the Charter, which was issued on June 6th, 1893.

Florence regarded herself as one who had been betrayed. Her services to the nurses entitled her

to be treated with respect, and respect was not lacking. But she expected much more. She wanted the profession to be guided by her, and was jealous of other leaders. These fresh leaders, although they admired her past work, could not always agree with her views, and they refused to accept her dictation. Even in her early years, she had been dominating and self-opinionated, and in her old age she could not bear contradiction. She condemned those who disagreed with her as stupid if not actually wicked, and was tenacious of her position as the head of the nursing profession. That the nurses who owed so much to her labours should reject her advice and follow other leaders was in her opinion the blackest ingratitude.

She felt that, since her words passed unheeded, she was no longer of use in the world, and when the last of her family, Parthe, Lady Verney, died in 1890 (May 12th), she would gladly have followed her. But she found a new interest after her sister's death. She spent much time at Sir Harry Verney's estate at Claydon, Bucks. While living at Lea Hurst and Embley Park she had been amazed at the lack of cleanliness and knowledge of hygiene among the people, and at Claydon she was again impressed by the need for teaching working-men's wives how to protect their own health and that of their families. She supported a plan for rural hygiene, and advocated the institution of an order of "health missioners," who would teach the people the dangers of dirt,

the advantages of good drainage and ventilation, and give instruction in first aid. "Dear Hard-Working Friends," began the letter which she issued in support of the scheme, "I am a hard-working woman too. May I speak to you? And will you excuse me, though not a mother?" She drew attention to the benefits to children from adherence to the rules of health, and pointed out that "it is health and not sickness that is our natural state – the state that God intends for us. . . . God did not intend all mothers to be accompanied by doctors, but he meant all children to be cared for by mothers." Something was done on the lines proposed by her in teaching the people to recognise the value of hygiene, but she had not now the strength to permit her to organise the tremendous battles of her former days and the scheme did not advance very far.

After 1895 she ceased to visit Claydon, and for the remainder of her life her home was at 10 South Street, Park Lane, London. Her eyesight troubled her, her memory became unreliable, but for ten more years, until her eighty-fifth birthday, she remained a woman with many interests, giving her advice on hospital questions, on the problems of nursing and sanitation, and maintaining her correspondence with administrators regarding Indian reform.

In the year of the Diamond Jubilee (1897) it was decided to hold a Victorian Era Exhibition, and the organisers proposed to show the development of nursing since the accession of the Queen.

To form such a section without reference to Florence Nightingale was impossible, but she thought it absurd that she should figure in the display, and at first rudely refused to participate. She relented later, and a bust of her and the carriage in which she had made her journeys in the Crimea were exhibited. The carriage, which Florence had not thought worth preservation but which Alexis Soyer had saved and presented to her, attracted much attention, and one old Crimean veteran was seen to kiss the vehicle which the Lady-in-Chief had used. The public had forgotten that she was still alive – her death had been reported several times ; and, as Jowett said, it had been " your fate to become a legend in your lifetime." There was a wave of popular feeling when the work of Florence was resuscitated by the Exhibition. That a woman in her thirties should have served the soldiers during the Crimean War was marvellous enough, but it seemed still more marvellous that the heroine should be alive only three years from the end of the century.

She had never been robust, and for nearly forty years had been an invalid, but her health in later days was better than that of the majority of women of her age. On her eightieth birthday (1900), congratulations flowed in from all over the world – from emperors and kings, as well as from ordinary members of the public in many lands, including those who had been christened Florence in her honour during the Crimean War. Until her

eighty-second year, she continued to transact her own correspondence, but then her friends insisted that a secretary should be employed for the purpose. A nurse was also added to the establishment, but Florence resented her presence and felt able to look after herself. When the nurse had tucked her up for the night, she would creep out of bed and tuck up the nurse.

Her mind had become clouded when the greatest honours were showered upon her. In 1907 the International Conference of Red Cross Societies sent "homage to her merits," and expressed its "high veneration." In the same year King Edward conferred the Order of Merit upon her "in recognition of invaluable services to the country and to humanity" – the first occasion on which a woman had been so decorated. Next year (1908), the common council gave her the freedom of the City of London, an honour which had been extended only to one other woman. But she had only occasional lucid periods, and hardly realised how the world had combined to do her homage. All her life she had been indifferent to honours. It had been sufficient reward for her to serve in the name of God.

She died in her sleep, on August 1st, 1910, at the age of ninety. The nation would have liked the heroine to be buried in Westminster Abbey, but Florence had asked that she should lie beside her mother and father at East Wellow, and that wish was respected. She had also left instructions

that her funeral should be of the simplest description, and that only two persons should attend it. But she was a national figure, and people came from far and near to pay their last tribute in the quiet cemetery of East Wellow.

The fame of Florence Nightingale is secure. She was a pioneer in women's emancipation, and few among either men or women have shown such great qualities in administration and organisation. In her own day, she was venerated as the Ministering Angel of the Crimea. She performed a noble service in the Barrack Hospital, and it is impossible to be unmoved by the story of her labours in the Crimean War. But even greater and more permanent work was done by her after the cessation of hostilities. She raised the standard of nursing, she advanced the cause of preventive medicine, she reorganised the military and civil hospitals, she forwarded Indian reform, and she championed the cause of the poor. Florence Nightingale brought rare gifts to the service of humanity, and, in the words that she applied to Sidney Herbert, she was "a saver of souls."

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