

## Selections.

## THE ADMINISTRATIVE POWER OF WOMEN.

WHATEVER may be the other lessons of the Crimean campaign, we think that there is one which it has taught with abundant effect, and that is the superiority of women to men for that species of administration which involves the relief of physical misery and the discipline of those passions by which the hospital, as well as the prison and the workhouse, is desolated. In a late work on the Eastern Hospitals, a series of facts are brought together in this connection, which are of so much interest that we cannot refrain from making from them copious extracts.

First, as to the superiority of the volunteer over the paid nurse; in other words, the superiority of woman as an administrator to woman as a machine. Hear the very striking testimony of a lady, who herself high-born and wealthy, left her home and devoted herself, in all the single unobtrusiveness of womanly dignity, to the work of ministering to the sick at Scutari:—

"I believe that we were of use, not in the way that many people have a vague idea of at first, *i. e.*, that we were to be constantly going about with a pocket full of lint and plaster and a case of surgical instruments, perpetually dressing wounds, (and I confess I had a faint vision of the kind myself before I went to Smyrna,) but with seeing the doctor's orders carried out with discretion, in the spirit as well as the letter, that nothing was done out of time, overdone, or neglected, in the keeping systematic regularity, and above all, in exercising a marvellous moral influence over the soldiers. That nurses, people from their own class, should be sent out to attend them, seemed natural enough, but that ladies (real ladies, as they used to say) should really come to see if they were taken good care of, filled them with surprise; and (for we are all more or less influenced by these things) the more the external indications of our position were kept up, the more influence we had with them; not that they were by any means slow to detect the counterfeit from the reality, under any disguise; on the contrary, they were remarkably acute, and anything like a noisy or boisterous manner lost ground with them at once; but treating them quietly and kindly never failed to produce the most unhesitating and cheerful obedience."

Another thus writes:—

"Two days after my arrival, Miss Nightingale went for me to go with her round the hospital. We went round the whole of the second story, into many of them, and into one of the upper corridors. It seemed an endless walk, and it was one not easily forgotten. As we slowly passed along, the silence was profound. Very seldom did a moan or a cry from those multitudes of deeply suffering ones fall on our ears. A dim light burnt here and there.—Miss Nightingale carried her lantern, which she would set down before she bent over any of the patients. I much admired Miss Nightingale's manner to the men; it was so tender and kind. All the corridors were thickly lined with beds, laid on low trestles, raised a few inches from the ground. In the wards, a divan ran round the room, and on this were laid the straw beds, and the sufferers on them. The hospital was crowded to its fullest extent. The building, which has since been reckoned to hold with comfort seventeen hundred men, then held between three and four thousand. Miss Nightingale assigned me my work. It was half A. corridor, the whole of B., half C., the whole of I., (on the third story,) and all the wards leading out of these respective corridors. In each corridor—there were fifteen of these—except in No. 1, where there were only six. This work I was to share with another lady and one nurse. The number of patients under our charge was, as far as I could reckon, about fifteen hundred.—*Eastern Hospitals*, vol. I., p. 69.

Now let us see what is the work in which these women were engaged:—

"The routine of the hospital was often interrupted by the arrival of the sick, who came in numbers varying from fifty to one hundred. We seldom had more than a few hours' notice, and often not that.—Sometimes it was not till the steamer was alongside the quay that we knew they were coming. This arose from all the sick in the camp being sent to Scutari first, and the steamer coming back from thence to Koulali. When they arrived, there was a general commotion. The principal medical officers, the commandant, and most of the medical staff went down to the quay to receive them and see them carefully carried up. Orderlies ran hither and thither, wardmasters and nurses were in a bustle, getting beds prepared. The kitchen-staff were hard at work to get coppers full of hot water and fires lighted in readiness for the doctor's orders. Ladies and sisters

looking after the clean linen. A different scene it was when the poor sufferers came in and no beds were ready, and no clean linen and no nurses to attend and watch by them. A blessed change it was. Very touching incidents often occurred among the sick just come in. They were so astonished to find so many comforts ready, and so many hands to minister to them. The quantity of clean linen was a great wonderment. They said they had more in a week here than in the camp for months together.—It took a long time before the linen stores were arranged in a satisfactory manner; but we at length succeeded, and had now the pleasure of knowing that there was no want in sickness which was not supplied to the British soldier."

It was not long before the results of this new influence were visible. Abuses which had resisted the whole male administrative force of Great Britain began gradually to melt. What the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Palmerston failed to move with the whole ponderous machinery of the war office, yielded to the delicate touch of Miss Nightingale. We have just seen what the effect of this new influence was. Let us take a glimpse, for a moment, of the scene that existed before it arrived. We quote from the same writer:

"It seems impossible to describe the Scutari hospital at this time. As we passed the corridors, we asked ourselves if it was not a terrible dream. When we woke in the morning, our hearts sank down at the thought of the woeful must witness that day. At night we lay down wearied beyond expression, but not so much from physical fatigue, though that was great, as from sickness of heart from living amidst that mass of hopeless suffering. On all sides prevailed the utmost confusion. Whose fault it was, I cannot tell. Clear heads have tried to discover in vain. Probably the blame should have been shared by all the departments of the hospital."

"But," may cry one of the fastidious objectors of our own day, who forgetting the fact that it is the very delicacy of this influence that secures its power, confounds that delicacy with weakness, "are not women liable to be destroyed in such a conflict of coarse and frenzied elements? Are not the delicate feelings of women as sure to be lacerated, and her dignity crushed in such a tumult of passion and pain as would be the frame of a child who is tossed among the wheels of a saw-mill?"

Let us hear what one of Miss Nightingale's staff says to this:

"The next day, in going my rounds, the poor man called me to his bedside, and burst into tears, asking me if I could tell him where Miss — lived, as he wanted to ask her to come and speak to him. When she did so, he again burst into tears, and humbly apologized for his unintentional rudeness, saying, "It's not the extras I care for, ma'am, but having been thought to speak rudely to one of your kind ladies." She quite reassured him when she replied that the sergeant had been entirely mistaken, and that she had never for a moment thought such a thing. "Whether in the strain of overwork, or the steady fulfilment of arduous duty," adds the lady, "there was one bright ray over shed on it—one thing that made labor light and sweet—and this was the respect, the gratitude, and the affection of the men. No words can tell it rightly; for it was unbounded, and, so long as we stayed among them, it never changed."

These facts develop, we think, two truths: 1st. That, in the administration of the great recuperative elements of government, so far at least as concerns the distribution of charity and the relief of suffering, women possess capabilities which make their presence, not as agents, but as auxiliaries, essential to the due working of the social machine. 2d. That, for the humanizing, not only of homes in their narrow sense, but of those great public homes which are constituted by hospitals, asylums, and prisons, the presence of women is indispensable.

Of these truths it is not necessary to take proof from abroad. Much more potently than Miss Nightingale,—with as great refinement, but with an increase of homely efficiency which may be illustrated in the sturdy New Englandism of the name of the one as contrasted with the more graceful but less practical coloring that floats over that of the other,—has Dorothy Dix gone from city to city throughout the American land, calling forth, forth by the energy of her intellect and the sagacity of her character, no less than by the fascination of her will, asylums in which, in a majority of the States of the Union, the sick in mind, and now the feeble in body, find a home.—*Episcopal Recorder*.

At a series of lectures on Italy, delivered in Edinburgh recently by Miss Maria White, Professor Gregory presented and read a letter from Joseph Mazzini, the Italian patriot, dated London, March 2, 1857, in which the following sentences occur:—

"I want two things: moral help especially, for a not very distant future; and some material help, if possible, for the present. The latter is the complement and the proof of the moral feeling. Sympathy is not a very strong encouragement to a nation who, like ours, has been too often bitterly deceived and abandoned by friends who urged her applaudingly on the career; but when tested by some real sacrifice, it produces a real increase of energy within those to whom it is addressed; and I know that the courage and the perseverance of my Italian working men would be redoubled the day in which I could be enabled to tell them, 'You have thousands of friends in Great Britain, and there is the proof.' The opinion that Italy must exist—that one bond of brotherhood must unite all her sons—that a single national flag must float for them all from Rome, the city of the Capitol and the Vatican—is now, thanks to the long series of our martyrs, universal in my country. The opinion that there is no hope for the foundation of a nationality in diplomacy, in foreign governments, or in the Piedmontese monarchy (which latter may possibly follow, but cannot initiate the struggle)—that we must strike the first blow—that it is only by a mighty insurrectionary rising that we can reach the aim—is every day

gaining ground in Italy, and linking together, in a collective work, the majority of our patriots. It is clear that these two opinions will in a short while lead to an open, bold, national movement. . . . I now claim help from you, in the name of our long sufferings and of our constant struggle—in the name of the services rendered by Italy to the cause of European civilization—in the name of the oppressed nations to which our own liberty would be the stepping-stone—in the name of the most sacred of liberties the liberty of conscience, which can only be proclaimed for the whole of Europe by the overthrow of the Papacy at Rome—in the name of our own principle, which must be represented as well in your international life as it is in your internal development—in the name, allow me to say, of the sin you committed when in 1849 you allowed your Government to approve and sanction the re-establishment, by foreign troops, of Papal tyranny in Rome, thus crushing our liberty in the bud. The international policy pursued by your Government has long been false to the natural tendencies of the British nation. That policy will last as long as secrecy in international transactions is permitted; it will die only when new nations arising shall proclaim, as we certainly shall, publicity—that is a continuous intercourse between the rulers and the people—to be the law of freedom.

JOSEPH MAZZINI.

## SIR JOHN BOWRING ON THE STATE OF CHINA.

We make the following extracts from a letter of Sir John Bowring, which has been published in the *Journal of the Statistical Society*:—

## POPULATION OF CHINA.

There has been no official census taken since the time of Kia King, forty-three years ago. Much doubt has been thrown upon the accuracy of these returns which gave 362,447,183 as the total number of the inhabitants of China. I think our greater knowledge of the country increases the evidence in favor of the approximate correctness of the official document, and that we may with tolerable safety estimate the present population of the Chinese empire as between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 of human beings. The penal laws of China make provision for a general system of registration; and corporal punishment, generally amounting to 100 blows of the bamboo, are to be inflicted on those who neglect to make the proper returns. The machinery is confided to the elders of the district, and the census are required to be annually taken; but I have no reason to believe that the law is obeyed, or the neglect of it punished.

## CHINESE REVERENCE OF AGE.

I have no means of obtaining any satisfactory tables to show the proportion which different ages bear to one another in China, or the average mortality at different periods of human life; yet to every decade of life the Chinese apply some special designation:—The age of ten is called 'the Opening Degree'; 20, 'Youth Expired'; 30, 'Strength and Marriage'; 40, 'Officially Apt'; 50, 'Error-knowing'; 60, 'Cyclo-closing'; 70, 'Rare Bird of Age'; 80, 'Rusty-visaged'; 90, 'Delayed'; 100, 'Age's extremity.' Among the Chinese the amount of reverence grows with the number of years. I made, some years ago, the acquaintance of a Buddhist priest living in the convent of Tien Tung, near Ningpo, who was more than a century old, and whom people in rank were in the habit of visiting, in order to show their respect and to obtain his autograph. He had the civility to give me a