

whilst it must be admitted that these have been most meritorious, it may reasonably be doubted whether their ministrations have not been misplaced. Most revolting scenes must have shocked them, and I am surprised that their mental powers could have remained unimpaired amidst all the horrid sights and sounds around them. Doubtless they have been supported by those high principles and that steadfast faith which encouraged martyrs at the stake. Their eminent purity and disinterestedness have crowned their exertions, but long experience has shown that women of a lower character cannot be generally employed in Military Hospitals without evils of the worst kind, and subversion of all discipline.

Whilst the substantial proofs of public sympathy with the sufferings of our troops in this war, and the relief extended to their relations, cannot be too highly praised, it may be questioned whether in some respects this sympathy has not been carried too far, and founded on a mistake. It seems to be the public opinion in England that sick and wounded soldiers necessarily require the comforts and luxuries of delicate females. Now, in the course of 44 years experience, in war and peace, and most parts of the world, I have witnessed the recovery of some thousands of these brave fellows, and received their thanks, yet they never enjoyed the assistance of lady nurses, nor the benefit of muslin bed-curtains, white counterpanes, feather beds, Champagne, or Eau de Cologne.

The Secretary of State for War, it is said, proposes an important change in the government of the Medical Department. The Medical Board in future is to consist of an equal number of eminent civil medical men and medical officers. It is reported that Dr. Andrew Smith, the Director General, has been asked to preside over this Board, and that he has declined, preferring retirement from the service. There is one point in which the civilian members will probably be deficient, namely, quick perception and exposure of the art of simulating disease, or what is commonly called "malingering," in which many soldiers are adepts. This requires a long acquaintance with the habits of soldiers to attain. About forty-five years ago a coalition Board of the description now contemplated was in office, but not long, for irreconcilable differences of opinion took place, and it fell to pieces. And it is not improbable that Lord Panzance's Board may be equally short-lived, and that the chief authority shall again be placed in a Director General.

Montreal, April, 1854.