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Memories
of the
Crimea

Sister Mary
Aloysius

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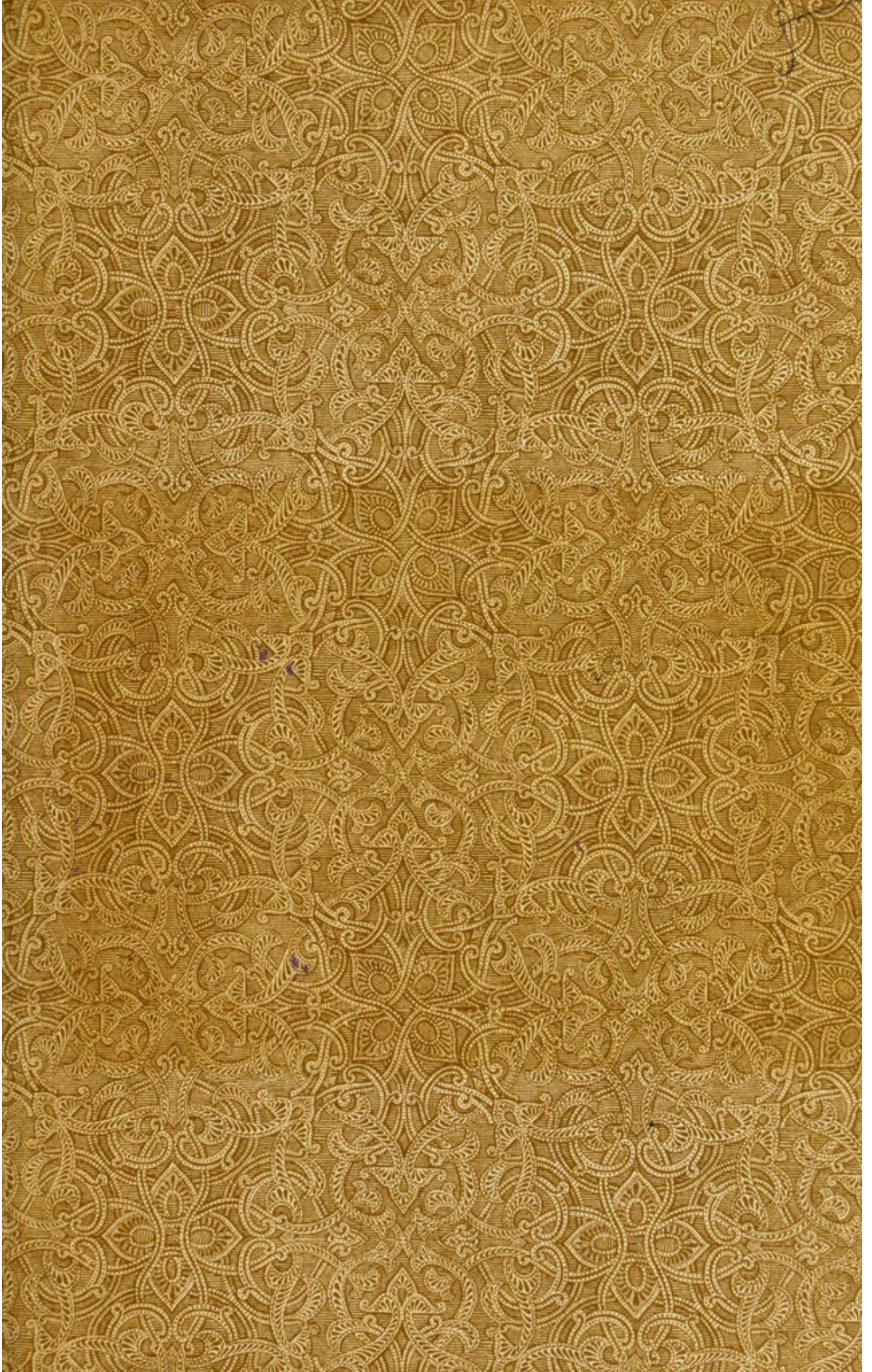
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P R E F A C E.

THE narrative of the Crimean War has found its place in European history ; and the story of its victories and defeats, of its glories and ghastly sufferings, have been eloquently told by both poets and historians. Yet, though the picture seemed complete in its interest and pathos, the following pages cast some new lights and darker shades on the incidents to which they refer, and impart to the whole an additional interest.

They tell of the hospitals—Scutari, Koulali, and Balaklava—filled to overflowing with the wounded and dying victims of the battlefield. And they also tell of many who were not the victims of shot or shell or sabre wound, but of the gaunt spectre of cholera or fever contracted by exposure in the trenches.

To minister to them was truly a noble field for the exercise of heroic Christian

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charity ; and one that appealed to all that was generous and self-sacrificing in the nation. The present little volume shows how, from Ireland and England, heroic Nuns went forth to minister to those dying soldiers, seeking and receiving no recompense save that which a God of charity has promised for what is done even for the least of His little ones. And the graves of Sisters Winifred and Elizabeth, still pointed out on the heights of Balaklava, speak with touching pathos of the character of their heroism.

Of the Irish Sisters who laboured in this merciful but perilous mission, one still survives at the Convent of Mercy, Gort, county Galway — the writer of this little book. Though weighted with the infirmities of age, she has yielded to the solicitations of friends, and given in these pages the graphic but simple history of her Crimean experiences. At a time when the ominous echoes of war resound once more through Europe from Eastern battlefields, the narrative must possess a special interest. For the charity that will minister to the dying soldier, even

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at the risk of life, will ever command the admiration of all that is best in human nature. And it is gratifying to be able to add, that the distinction of the "Red Cross," recently conferred on the author of this work by our gracious Queen, is a manifestation of our Sovereign's appreciation of those services, without parallel in our history for over three hundred years.

J. FAHEY, D.D., V.G.

Gort, County Galway,
Feast of Pentecost, 1897.

CHAPTER I.

“ARE THERE NO SUCH NURSES IN ENGLAND?”

ONE morning, as the Sisters were assembled for morning lecture in the Community Room of the Convent of Mercy, Carlow, the Reverend Mother read the following letter, received by the morning post from the Parent House of the Sisterhood, Baggot Street, Dublin :

MY DEAR REV. MOTHER,

The Government has virtually applied for Sisters, and offered to pay their expenses ; and as there is no time to be lost, I beg of you to send your candidates on Tuesday or Wednesday, to St. Catherine's, and if their service be not required they can return. The eyes of the whole world will be on the poor Nuns. I know you will select those that will give most glory to God. They will want a supply of clothing, etc. Five Sisters from Bermondsey have gone to the war as a private

charity. Give all the aid you can, and believe me, my dear Rev. Mother, affectionately yours in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. VINCENT WHITTY,
Superioress.

Enclosed with this letter were the copies of two others. One, addressed by the same Superioress to the Vicar-General, the Very Rev. Dr. Yore :

VERY REV. SIR,

We have heard with great pain of the sufferings of our countrymen engaged as soldiers in the East in the service of the Queen. We know it must be difficult, if not impossible, to procure for them skilful nurses speaking their own language and sympathising with their habits and feelings, and that care and attention in a strange land which would be so well supplied at home. Attendance on the sick, as you are aware, is part of the work of our Institute, and sad experience amongst the poor has convinced us that, even with the advantages of medical aid, many valuable lives are lost for want of careful nursing. It has occurred to us that as the French Sisters of Charity have been found so useful and acceptable to their coun-

trymen in the hospitals of Constantinople, we, too, might render similar service to our countrymen, and help to mitigate their sufferings in the English hospitals.

We, therefore, Rev. Sir, through you, and with your permission, in the absence of the Archbishop, beg leave to offer our services to the proper authorities to act as nurses in the care of the sick and wounded under the direction of the medical officers. Our services must necessarily be gratuitous. Only let us be transferred to the scene of our labours and be maintained there, and the survivors brought back to our own country.

Hoping to receive a favourable reply,

I am, respectfully and sincerely,

Yours in Jesus Christ,

SISTER MARY VINCENT WHITTY.

The other letter, from Dr. Yore to the Secretary of War, approving of the proposal, was as follows :

I have just received the enclosed letter from the Sisters of Mercy, making an offer of their services to attend our sick and wounded soldiers in the East. They have addressed the letter to me, in my character of Vicar-General and charged with the administration

of the diocese in the absence of the Archbishop. I need not say that their proposal has my hearty concurrence, and if the Government will accept of it I shall be happy to give my best services in carrying it into effect. I do not anticipate that we shall be able at present to send more than from ten to twenty Nuns, and it will be necessary that they be conveyed to the scene of their labours and maintained there, and that they be accompanied by a chaplain, who should continue during their stay and return with them, receiving the usual appointments of a chaplain.

When all the letters were read each Sister went to the choir, to visit the Blessed Sacrament, a custom which is usual after lecture or any notable event—and on their return any Sisters who wished to go were told to put their names into a little box left on the mantelpiece to receive them.

I believe the whole Community offered to go ; but only two could be spared, and the two selected were Sister M. Aloysius and Sister M. Stanislaus, both young and healthy, and well accustomed to attend the sick poor of the town, which they did when cholera had raged a short time previously. Now the

Bishop's permission had to be got. He was very kind-hearted, and did not so easily give his sanction. He paced up and down the reception-room, saying: "Out among soldiers, and perhaps on the field of battle too. I know they go out amongst the sick poor of the town, but this is quite a different thing."

However, after some time he gave his consent, with a fervent blessing and a promise of daily remembrance in the Holy Sacrifice—and endless injunctions to Rev. Mother to provide us with warm clothing and other comforts. But this solicitude was not needed, as no Community in the Order had a kinder Superior than St. Leo's had.

And now there is no time to be lost, we are to be ready to start when the telegram arrives from Baggot Street. We had to say good-bye to many a dear one outside the Convent as well as within. Dr. Yore appointed Dr. Quinn, afterwards Bishop of Brisbane, to accompany two of the Baggot Street Sisters in search of volunteers for the Crimean Mission. Bishop Quinn often narrated this incident at the Antipodes. I give it in his own words:

“ While sitting with a few agreeable friends I was informed that two ladies in a carriage outside wished to speak to me. I went immediately to ascertain who they were and what might be their business. I found they were two Sisters of Mercy, and after exchanging salutation, one said they would be obliged if I would get my hat and cloak and accompany them. I asked where to. She replied there was no time for explanation—they were already in danger of being late for the train, they would tell me on the way. It appeared that a number of Sisters of Mercy were wanted as nurses at the Crimea, and the Government applied to Dr. Manning to obtain them, and the two Sisters already mentioned were on their way to the South of Ireland to collect them. After travelling all night, we arrived at Kinsale very early in the morning. Having seen the Sisters to their Convent, I went to the church to perform my devotions. I soon fell into a sound sleep where I knelt, and so continued till aroused by the commotion of a number of persons around me. These good people looked perplexed and alarmed at seeing a

stranger, dressed as a priest, in such a helpless, inexplicable condition. I felt bound to allay their concern by explaining how I came there. When the Rev. Mother M. Francis Bridgeman heard the business on which the Sisters had come, she sent to request that the Bishop would be good enough to come down from Cork. He arrived within a few hours, and the whole Community, commencing with the Reverend Mother, begged on their knees to be allowed to join in the perilous expedition. All they saw in the dreadful accounts which had reached home from the Crimea was that it afforded a short cut to Heaven. The Bishop allowed the Superioress and two Sisters to accompany us."

Were Dr. Quinn's relations with the Sisters unknown, it might appear that they treated him rather cavalierly in summoning him off so suddenly. In truth, he was a lifelong friend—from his ordination to his consecration he was chaplain or confessor to the Parent House; previous to the opening of the *Mater Misericordia* he was appointed by Archbishop Cullen to accompany the

three Sisters of Mercy who went to Amiens to study the hospital system in 1852, and made a tour of inspection of the principal hospitals in Europe, that the great hospital they projected might have the benefit of the most recent improvements, and that those destined to conduct it should have the fullest knowledge of hospital management.

The appeal from the East no Sister of Mercy could resist; and highly privileged did those deem themselves who were chosen for the enterprise. The hospitals were represented as filled with the dead and dying. The trenches were filled with the stark and stiffening corpses of many a frozen warrior; no food save the vilest could the brave men procure, very often no medicine, no attendance. Reports of the condition of the wounded at Alma, September 20th, and at Inkerman, November 1st, 1854, horrified the humane, and wrung tears from the tender-hearted. Neither linen nor lint could be found to dress their gaping wounds; orderlies were their only nurses. Our allies did not suffer in this way. They summoned their Sisters on the first appear-

ance of sickness, and the questions were constantly asked: "Are there no such nurses in England? Can the women do nothing for us in this fearful emergency?" But the women only waited to be asked. Lady M—— F——, the widowed daughter of an Irish nobleman, engaged three nurses, furnished money for their outfit and expenses, and offered to take them to the East herself should no one more competent be found. For the two thousand five hundred sick in the Scutari hospitals there were ten physicians, who certainly with the best intentions could not do much for these hapless patients.

But Baggot Street and Carlow were not the only Irish Convents in which this appeal of charity met with an immediate and practical response. We had some Sisters from Cork and Charleville. The response from Kinsale was equally prompt and generous; and thence came the Superioress, Mrs. Bridgeman, to whom the Sisters and the enterprise were greatly indebted.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST STEPS.

THE telegram came, and we were to start in the morning by the first train. Dr. Dunne, the President of Carlow College, said an early Mass, that we might have the happiness of receiving Holy Communion ; and we began our journey accompanied by Rev. Mother, the Mother Assistant, and our respected friend, Dr. Dunne. We reached Baggot Street about eleven p.m., and surely we got a loving greeting from the dear Sisters. Mother M. V. Whitty and Mother Xavier were as busy as they could be packing up. They had heard so much about Turkey and its lazy inhabitants that they were afraid we could get nothing out there ; so they were determined to put in everything they could think of—soap, starch, smoothing irons, a medicine chest. As for warm clothing, there

was no end of it. We might well call it the "Parent House"; and we, the band of Sisters of Mercy going out to the East, can never forget their loving kindness.

Our future Rev. Mother, M. Francis Bridgeman, had already left for London with some of the Sisters; and we were to follow in the morning with other Sisters just arrived. And now the morning came, and we bade adieu to this truly happy Convent home. Reaching Kingstown about seven in the morning, we took our places in the steamer. There were great crowds waiting to see us off—"Sisters of Mercy *en route* for the seat of war"—and then, as the vessel moved off, a fervent "God speed you" arose in one loud cry.

Some of our party had to go to Blandford Square, others to the Convent of Mercy, Chelsea. The following letters, describing the journey and the reception in London, may perhaps bear insertion here:

MY DARLING REV. MOTHER,

We reached here last night about twelve o'clock, and were most affectionately greeted by Rev. Mother, who was expecting us. We

had a very rough passage, and were very sick, but are now as well as ever, thank God. Our future Rev. Mother welcomed us this morning. Dear Sister M. Stanislaus is quite enthusiastic about her already. I must say I don't think we heard half good things enough about her: she seems to have both head and heart; and the Sisters here say she is a Saint as well. With such a Superioress we shall, with God's blessing, have a holy and successful mission.

We are getting such welcomes and pettings as we travel on that I fear we shall be spoiled if we ever return to dear St. Leo's. Our luggage is increasing so much that I think we shall have a good supply by the time we reach Turkey. I am very happy, and every day more and more grateful to God for being one of the chosen few for the great work. Pray, dearest Mother, and, oh! do get the prayers of the dear Poor for your own

Ever affectionate child in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. ALOYSIUS.

Thousands of loves to each of the dear Sisters.

And Sister M. Stanislaus wrote:

MY DEAREST REV. MOTHER,

I remained on deck while the vessel steamed out of Kingstown Harbour, to give,

perhaps, a last look at my native hills, and feast my eyes once more on its beautiful bay. But my head began to reel, and I was obliged to adjourn to my cabin till the captain announced Holyhead. We soon took the train for London. Mr. Lucas, Editor of *The Tablet*, under whose care we had been placed by his relative, Mother V. Whitty, looked after our luggage, and was kind and attentive to us. When leaving us, we told him that we should offer a special prayer for him. He said he was sure we would on the score of universal charity, but he had no other claim. I am sure the Sisters in the old house at home will pray for him.

Will you, dear Rev. Mother, pray every day to the Blessed Virgin, that we may have health to discharge our duties to the poor, sick soldiers? If any of us got delicate at Scutari, it would be a great upset. Thank the dear Sisters a thousand times for all their kindness—the Rev. Mother and Sisters here are as kind and affectionate as if we were all their own. This morning we were introduced to our Eastern Mother—a fine, warm-hearted woman. I loved her the minute I saw her. Last night I prayed that I might like her, and that she might like me, and I think my prayer was granted.

MEMORIES OF THE CRIMEA.

Fond love to all, and believe me, my own
dearest Rev. Mother,

Your devoted child in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. STANISLAUS.

This is the next note by the way :

Convent of Mercy, Chelsea,

December 1st, 1854.

MY DEAREST REV. MOTHER,

In the morning we leave London for our
glorious mission. It will be carried on in
a manner worthy of religion. Our dear Rev.
Mother seems to have been specially selected
for it. We travel in our veils, in the face of
England—no disguise whatever. We are re-
ceiving gifts and blessings all day, and have
scarcely time to ask who sends them.

Dr. Manning gave us a most beautiful ex-
hortation this morning. How I wished you
had heard him—he is heart and soul in the
mission, and said so many beautiful things
about the amount of good to be effected
that you would long to be of the happy
band. You would think the Sister Mis-
sionaries all came from the one Convent—
so united are they. Excuse this shabby
note ; my next will be from Paris.

Ever your devoted in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. ALOYSIUS.

Notwithstanding the clear stipulations of Dr. Yore, there was some hesitation about our getting a chaplain—the authorities said if we got one, “the ladies should get one also.” Rev. Mother said, “Why not give them one, if they desired it?” At last, Father Ronan, S.J., was named; and, perhaps, they could not have found one more fitted for the position. A fine, strong, young priest, cheerful and good; this appointment gave general satisfaction. Next, Rev. Mother was installed in her office by the London Vicar-General, Dr. Whitty (Cardinal Wiseman having left for Rome). Dr. Manning came to say good-bye and give us a last blessing. Lady Herbert came too—she was extremely nice. They told us that she was on the high road to Catholicity.*

On the morning of the 2nd of December, 1854, we left this dear, happy Convent, and its cherished inmates, who gave such a welcome to their Sisters from the Emerald Isle, and reached London Bridge Station long before dawn, where we formed part of as

* Wife of the Secretary of State for War. She became a Catholic shortly afterwards.

curious a group as ever London Bridge had witnessed. The ladies and paid nurses wore the same costume, and a very ugly one it was. It seemed to be contract work, and all the same size, so that the ladies who were tall had short dresses, and the ladies who were small had long dresses. They consisted of grey tweed wrappers, worsted jackets, white caps, and short woollen cloaks, and, to conclude, a frightful scarf of brown holland, embroidered in red with the words, "Scutari Hospital." That ladies could be found to walk into such a costume was certainly a triumph of grace over nature.

We started from Portsmouth, and we reached Boulogne about one o'clock p.m. The Sisters of the Ursuline Convent had some of the boarders to meet us with an invitation to lunch, but there was not time for that. The poor fisherwomen greeted us most warmly on our way to the hotel for lunch. The host and hostess got quite beside themselves at having fifteen veiled Nuns in their house. It appears that all the French veiled Nuns are cloistered. They would not take money for our refreshments.

As we travelled on, sad news reached us from the seat of war—thousands, wounded and dying, in the hospitals. Paris we reached very late. Next day, Sunday, we heard Mass, and got Holy Communion at the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires. At two o'clock we went to Vespers, and we remained till four.

Miss Stanley,* who had charge of the party, was untiring in her attention to us. Next morning, after an early Mass, we took the train for Lyons, travelling all day. The whole country looked like a pleasure-ground, laid out by the hand of a more than terrestrial gardener. Green hills, rising above each other, gave a delightful effect to the richly cultivated valleys. Here lay acres devoted to the vine, there rose the lofty cypress, the mulberry, and the cedar. We passed Dijon, saw the church in which St. Francis de Sales preached and was first seen by St. Jane Frances de Chantal. We drove through a shallow part of the Seine, Loire, and Rhone, and reached Lyons about ten at night. We

* The sister of Dean Stanley. She too became a devout member of the Catholic Church.

drove to the hotel, where an immense crowd awaited to see us. We were a great curiosity ; such a large party, and in such different costumes, all going to the seat of war.

Next morning we had the unspeakable happiness of getting Mass and Holy Communion, owing to the kindness of Miss Stanley, who seems to know the hours and customs as we travel on. She has been nearly all over the world, which is a great advantage to us. Immediately after breakfast we started by boat for Valence. Our first accident occurred here. The boat struck on a sand-bank, and it took several hours to raise her. We did not proceed direct to Marseilles, as we intended. It was late when we arrived at Avignon—we were shown to the hotel which is supposed to be the palace occupied by the Popes during their stay in the city. Here Miss Stanley was quite at home. Never can we forget the hostess's attention. Indeed, all through France we had met with the greatest kindness. We got two Masses next morning. In Marseilles, where we ended our railway travelling, we rose early next morning and spent a long time in the church.

CHAPTER III.

PERILS BY SEA.

ABOUT three o'clock in the afternoon we took our places in an old French vessel called the *Egyptus*. The gentlemen of the party were not quite satisfied with it, but it was the only one available. It was crammed with cavalry bound for the seat of war. The day was wild and stormy, and the night was one to be long remembered. One of the sailors said the devil raised the storm, but that "Mary would calm it." It took some hours to get everything right: at last the vessel moved. I do not think there was ever such a medley in any ship as in the old *Egyptus* that memorable evening. We kept as much as possible on deck. We passed the Straits of Bonifacio and the Straits of Messina—land visible on both sides. The Italian mountains, enclosing all so Catholic,

were particularly attractive, but were surpassed in beauty by Sicily. We anchored at Messina for some time, with the permission of the Governor. The scene, viewed from the ship, was enchanting. The ladies brought us some boughs from the Convent bearing their golden oranges. Boats passed and repassed from our ship to the shore; the Sicilians rowing over oranges and figs, which were purchased and liberally distributed to all on board. A poor woman continued cruising around the vessel all day, singing a hymn to the Madonna for charity, which was freely bestowed on her. We set sail again and left behind us the comfort and security of *terra firma*. The night was very fine; but next day, about eleven o'clock, a most terrific storm arose, accompanied by rain, thunder, and lightning—and then the night—oh, such a frightful night, and how dark! The top was blown off the cabin; the engineer's hut washed off deck. The vessel, now so long on one side, would suddenly turn over with such a fearful crash that we expected every moment would be our last; but dear Rev. Mother, whose courage

never failed, told us, over and over again, that there was no fear; that our Heavenly Father never took us from our Convent homes to leave us in the bottom of the Mediterranean; that He had more work for us to do—in a word, that we were not going to get the crown so easily. The captain put in next day to Navarino, for shelter and repairs.

The ninth day of our voyage we anchored on the shore of old Athens. The coast is some distance from the old town. The day being beautifully fine, with the aid of a glass we could see the Areopagus and other places of note. Many Athenians came on board, in costume very like that of the Highlanders. An Athenian priest came to visit us, and on his return sent two Sisters of Charity to see us, bringing a present of oranges and flowers. One of the Sisters was Irish—a great and unexpected pleasure. She was charmed to meet Nuns from the Emerald Isle. The other was French, and got a welcome from the French soldiers, who gathered round to show their respect for the daughter of St. Vincent de Paul. The Sisters had no Con-

vent at Athens, but came from Smyrna to attend cholera patients.

We set sail again, and the captain said we should have fine weather for the rest of the voyage. At last we neared our destination. The hills of Armenia became visible. We were overjoyed to see any portion of a place so dear and memorable to us. Passing the plains of old Troy and many other places of note, we entered the Dardanelles, past fortifications, and any number of gipsy tents—they pitch their tents in the old vessels along the coast. We cast anchor at a little town called Gallipoli, where the English troops first landed: there was a hospital for the English. Two Sisters of Charity embarked on their way to Galata, a suburb of Constantinople, where their Convent was, the Mother House of their Order in the East. And then, thank God, we arrived quite safely on shore at the Turkish capital.

CHAPTER IV.

“NOT WANTED AT SCUTARI.”

THE delight of seeing the magnificent city of Constantinople, after long and irksome confinement in a cabin, can scarcely be conceived. Those marble palaces and domes rising out of the placid waters of the Bosphorus into the lovely blue of an Eastern sky—turn your eyes where you will, and you see one thing more lovely than another. From all we had heard and read, the Turks alone seem out of place in this Garden of Eden.

But, as we were expecting every hour to embark, messages had been sent to Scutari ; but no reply had come. The vessel had to be cleared of passengers and luggage at no distant hour, when, at last, strange news for the Nuns arrived :

“Not wanted at Scutari.”

The War Office had made a mistake in sending out the party—no room for them! We were astonished, and no wonder: in a strange country, and among very strange people. What were we to do? Dear Rev. Mother, who was always calm in the midst of difficulties, wrote to the Sisters of Charity at Galata, asking hospitality for a short time, till she could see her way as to the future. Miss Stanley applied to the British Embassy for her party. In a wonderfully short time we saw two of the French Sisters coming over to our ship in a boat. And were they not welcome?

They brought a loving greeting from their Superior. At once they saw after our luggage; and a large boat from one of the war vessels came to bring us ashore. We had to pass through Constantinople, and we knew that "All is not gold that glitters." We had not expected anything quite so bad as what met our view in the narrow filthy streets. And now, what shall I say of the dear, kind Rev. Mother of the French Sisters at Galata, who waited in the hall to welcome her fifteen guests? She did so with as much

affection as if we were all her own children. We were one in faith, and in that far off country we were able to join in the prayers and devotions as if we were in the dear little chapel of St. Leo's, Carlow. They first brought us to the choir, which was to us a third Heaven. There, before our Divine Lord, many a fervent prayer was said. He knew all our hearts, and how earnestly we desired to be at the work which we came to do. We were then shown into a large school-room, which had just been emptied of children to accommodate us. We were naturally pained at putting the Community to so much inconvenience; but in their own kind and cheerful way they did their best to make us feel quite at home. Many of our Sisters spoke French fluently, so that we had no difficulty in that way. The Sisters had a private chapel, but there was also a large church attached to the Convent, which belongs to the Lazarists or Vincentian Fathers—some French, others Armenians. In Galata, the poorest division of Constantinople, the French and Catholic Armenians principally resided.

It was Christmas Eve at the Convent of

Galata. The little chapel was adorned with flowers and candles. We had midnight Mass, a great pleasure to us; and then all the fuss and preparation reminded us of our own dear Convent. Before Mass we had a most interesting ceremony—the reception into the Church of an Eastern princess, grand-daughter to the Bey of Algiers. On Christmas morning we had six Masses and Benediction—our first Christmas Day in the East.

I must now say something of the duties of these Sisters of Charity. They had large schools, containing sixty boarders—including Russians and twelve African slaves from the Soudan. They visited the sick poor in their homes, and brought them all the comfort they could. Their work in the hospitals was well known. In a word, there was nothing too difficult for those self-sacrificing Sisters, where God's glory was concerned; and then, when the active duties of the day were over, their spirit of prayer was wonderful. They combined the active and contemplative life perfectly. We were all deeply impressed by the fervour of these dear daughters of St. Vincent de Paul.

I must say a few words, too, about the French Naval Hospital, where we heard Mass while waiting for our chaplain, who did not arrive for nearly a month after us. The wards of this beautiful hospital were divided by glass partitions, and when the door of the pretty little chapel was opened every patient had a view of the altar, and could assist at Mass without the slightest inconvenience; it was most consoling to see how carefully the spiritual and temporal wants of the patients were attended to. On Sunday four of the young cadets served at Mass, and presented arms at the Elevation. They were very polite and kind to us. Indeed, the comfort and care told on the patients—they looked calm and happy.

CHAPTER V.

IN HOSPITAL AT LAST.

CHRISTMAS over, we hourly expected some news from headquarters. We longed to be at the work, and every day we heard that the poor soldiers were dying by hundreds, and we idle and close at hand. Rev. Mother was in correspondence with the authorities; and at last a despatch came to say that five Sisters were to proceed to Scutari, to the General Hospital; while arrangements were made for the other ten Sisters to proceed to a house on the Bosphorus, to await further orders. At once the five Sisters started for Scutari: Rev. Mother, Sister M. Agnes, Sister M. Elizabeth, Sister M. Winifred, and myself. When we reached Scutari we were shown to our quarters, consisting of one little room, not in a very agreeable locality. However, we were quite satisfied none better

could be found, and for this little nook we were very thankful.

Of course, we expected to be sent to the wards at once. Sister M. Agnes and the writer were sent to a store, to sort clothes that had been eaten by the rats; Rev. Mother and Sister M. Elizabeth either to the kitchen or to another store. In a dark, damp, gloomy shed we set to work and did the best we could; but, indeed, the destruction accomplished by the rats was something wonderful. On the woollen goods they had feasted sumptuously. They were running about us in all directions; we begged of the sergeant to leave the door open that we might make our escape if they attacked us. Our home rats would run if you "hushed" them; but you might "hush" away, and the Scutari rats would not take the least notice.

During my stay in the stores I saw numberless funerals pass by the window. Cholera was raging, and how I did wish to be in the wards amongst the poor dying soldiers! Before I leave the stores I must mention that Sister M. Agnes and myself thought the English nobility must have

emptied their wardrobes and linen stores to send out bandages for the wounded—the most beautiful underclothing, the finest cambric sheets, with merely a scissors run here and there through them to ensure their being used for no other purpose. And such large bales, too; some from the Queen's Palace, with the Royal monogram beautifully worked. Whoever sent out these immense bales thought nothing too good for the poor soldiers. And they were right—nothing was too good for them. And now good-bye stores and good-bye rats; for I was to be in the cholera wards in the morning.

Where shall I begin, or how can I ever describe my first day in the hospital at Scutari? Vessels were arriving, and the orderlies carrying the poor fellows, who, with their wounds and frost-bites, had been tossing about on the Black Sea for two or three days, and sometimes more. Where were they to go? Not an available bed. They were laid on the floor one after another, till the beds were emptied of those dying of cholera and every other disease. Many died immediately after being brought

in—their moans would pierce the heart—the taking of them in and out of the vessels must have increased their pain.

The look of agony in those poor dying faces will never leave my heart. They may well be called “The Martyrs of the Crimea.” We went round with hot wine, and relieved them in every way as far as it was possible. We went to the Catholic soldiers, took the names of those in immediate danger, that the chaplain might go to them at once. He was there ; but it hastened matters for him to get the list of worst cases. The beds were by degrees getting empty. If stretchers were bringing in some from the vessels, others were going out with the dead. We were able to get the men on the floor to bed ; then, of course, we could see after them better.

The cholera was of the very worst type—the attacked man lasted only four or five hours. Oh! those dreadful cramps ; you might as well try to bend a piece of iron as to move the joints. The medical staff did their best, and daily, hourly risked their own lives, with little or no success. At last every

one seemed to be getting paralysed, and the orderlies indifferent as to life or death.

The usual remedies ordered by the doctors were stuping and poultices of mustard. They were very anxious to try chloroform, but they did not trust any one with it except the Sisters. Rev. Mother was a splendid nurse, and had the most perfect way of doing everything. For instance, the stuping seems such a small thing, but if not properly done it did more harm than good. I will give her way. You have a large tub of boiling water, blankets torn in squares, and a piece of canvas with a running at each end to hold a stick. The blankets were put into the boiling water, lifted out with a tongs and put into the canvas, when an orderly at each end wrung the flannel out so dry that not a drop of water remained, before a preparation of chloroform was sprinkled on it, and it was applied to the stomach. Then followed a spoonful of brandy, and immediately after a small piece of ice, to try to settle the stomach, and finally rubbing with mustard, and even with turpentine. Rarely, very rarely, did any remedy succeed ; and, as a rule, it was

not the weak or delicate who were attacked, but the strong and healthy. One day a fine young fellow, the picture of health and strength, was carried in on a stretcher to my ward. I said to the orderlies, "I hope we shall be able to bring *him* through." I set to work with the usual remedies; but the doctor shook his head, and said: "I am afraid it's all no use, Sister." When the orderlies, poor fellows, were tired, I set to work myself, and kept it on till nearly the end—but you might as well rub iron; no heat, no movement from his joints. He lived about the usual time—four or five hours.

A hurried line to my Convent home, St. Leo's, Carlow, ran as follows:

Scutari Hospital,
January, 1855.

MY DEAREST REV. MOTHER,

You are, no doubt, very anxious for some news of your two dear ones now so far away. I am here, at the place so often talked of. And what am I doing? If you could only get one look at this dreadful place it would never leave your mind or heart; but

you would be consoled to see the Sisters in the midst of so much suffering. The hospital consists of long corridors, as far as your eye can reach, with beds at each side ; and, as I write, poor fellows, both wounded and frost-bitten, lie on the floor. We are in the wards late and early. When we go to our apartment, to get a couple of hours' rest, we groan in anguish at the thought of all we leave undone.

Pray, pray much for us, my own dear Mother. In great haste,

Your ever fond,

M. ALOYSIUS.

I really grudge the few minutes I have taken to write this—don't expect letters.

Week in, week out, the cholera went on. The same remedies were continued, though almost always to fail. However, while there was life there was hope, and we kept on the warm applications to the last. When it came near the end, the patients got into a sort of collapse, out of which they did not rally.

We begged the orderlies, waiting to take them to the dead-house, to wait a little lest they might not be dead ; and with great difficulty we prevailed on them to make the

least delay. As a rule, the orderlies drank freely, "to drown their grief," they said. I must say their position was a very hard one—their work always increasing—and such work; death around them on every side; their own lives in continual danger—it was almost for them a continuation of the field of battle.

The poor wounded men brought in out of the vessels were in a dreadful state of dirt; and so weak that whatever cleaning they got had to be done cautiously. Oh, the state of those fine fellows, so worn out with fatigue, so full of vermin! Most or all of them required spoon-feeding. We had wine, sago, arrowroot. Indeed, I think there was everything in the stores; but it was so hard to get them. We went every morning with the orderlies to get the wine, brandy, and other things ordered by the doctors: we gave them out according to their directions. The medical officers were kind enough to say they had no one to depend on but the Nuns. Sometimes, if allowed, the man might drink in one draught the brandy ordered for the day, which, of course, would do him great

harm. An orderly officer took the rounds of the wards every night, to see that all was right. He was expected by the orderlies, and the moment he raised the latch one cried out: "All right, your honour." Many a time I said "All wrong." The poor officer, of course, went his way; and one could scarcely blame him for not entering those wards, so filled with pestilence, the air so dreadful that to breathe it might cost him his life. And then what could he do even if he did come? I remember one day an officer's orderly being brought in—a dreadful case of cholera; and so devoted was his master that he came in every half-hour to see him, and stood over him in the bed as if it was only a cold he had; the poor fellow died after a few hours' illness. I hope his devoted master escaped. I never heard.

It was said that the graves were not made deep enough, and that the very air was putrid. There were no coffins, canvas and blankets had to suffice.

I must say something of my poor frost-bitten patients. The men who came from the "Front," as they called it, had only thin

linen suits—no other clothing to keep out the Crimean frost of 1854-1855. When they were carried in on the stretchers, which conveyed so many to their last resting-place, their clothes had to be cut off. In most cases the flesh and clothes were frozen together; and, as for the feet, the boots had to be cut off bit by bit—the flesh coming off with them—many pieces of the flesh I have seen remain in the boot. Poultices were applied with some oil brushed over them. In the morning, when these were removed—can I ever forget it?—the sinews and bones were seen to be laid bare. We had surgical instruments; but in almost every case the doctors or staff-surgeons were at hand, and removed the diseased flesh as tenderly as they could. As for the toes, you could not recognise them as such. Far, far worse and more painful were these than the gun or sword wounds; and what must it have been where they had both? And then the poor frost-bitten fellows were so prostrate—no matter what care most of them got, they could not survive. One poor frost-bitten soldier told us that when, lying

ill at Balaklava one night, he tried to stir his feet, he found them frozen to those of another soldier whose feet were lying against his.

A letter written by a Sister at the time will best continue the narrative at this point :

We have just received some hundreds of poor creatures, worn out with sufferings beyond any you could imagine, in the Crimea, where the cold is so intense that a soldier described to me the Russians and the Allies in a sudden skirmish, and neither party able to draw a trigger ! So fancy what the poor soldiers must endure in the " trenches."

It is a comfort to think that these brave men had some care, all that we could procure for them. For at this time the food was very bad—goats' flesh, and something they called mutton, but black, blue, and green. Yet who could complain of anything after the sufferings I have faintly described—borne, too, with such patience : not a murmur !

The Catholic soldiers had every consolation of their religion ; the chaplains, untiring, were late and early in the wards. Of

course, we were free to say prayers for them, and, whenever we could, a word of instruction or consolation. One day, after a batch had arrived from the Crimea, and I had gone my rounds through them, one of my orderlies told me that a man wanted to speak one word to me.

When I had a moment I went to him. "Tell me at once what you want; I have worse cases to see after"—he did not happen to be very bad. "All I want to know, Ma'am, is, are you one of our own Sisters of Mercy from Ireland?" "Yes," I said, "your very own." "God be praised for that!"

Another poor fellow said to me one day, "Do they give you anything good out here?" "Oh yes," I said, "why do you ask me?" "Because, Ma'am, you gave me a piece of chicken for my dinner, and I kept some of it for you"—he pulled it out from under his head and offered it to me. I declined the favour with thanks—I never could say enough of those kind-hearted soldiers and their consideration for us in the midst of their own sufferings.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH THE SICK AND WOUNDED AT KOULALI.

I SHALL now return to the Sisters from whom we parted at Galata. The day five of us left for Scutari the other ten took up their abode at Therapia, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, about eight miles from Constantinople. The house belonged to the British Embassy. The Ambassador's house was very near where Miss Stanley and her party were staying. The Sisters, all so anxious to be at work, were storming Heaven with prayers, and at last news arrived that a new hospital must be opened—there were such numbers coming from the Crimea and nowhere to put them. There was a Turkish barracks in a lovely place on the banks of the Bosphorus, called Koulali, in which there were Russian prisoners. They were removed, poor fellows, I don't know where—

and the barrack was given for a hospital. Attached to all Turkish barracks there is a hospital, and this also was given.

The first batch of sick and wounded that arrived numbered four hundred and ninety ; and, perhaps, such desolate, worn-out looking patients never before entered any hospital. Dear Miss Stanley, who had been all along such a kind friend to the Sisters, entered heart and soul into the work. Miss Hutton, who was named as the Superintendent, was only too glad to hand it over to the Sisters, of whom five were apportioned to each hospital, giving a secular lady, nurses, and a Sister in each ward. In the beginning there was great rubbing and scrubbing to make the wards anything like those of an English hospital ; and so successfully that the ladies, the doctors, and nurses were all delighted ; while, as for the orderlies, they used to look round in great delight and exclaim : “ There is nothing like it anywhere.”

Father Ronan, S.J., the chaplain, quickly gained the love of all classes : he was so kind with the soldiers, and perhaps there are no people in the world more grateful than they.

There was any amount of real, genuine goodness under those red coats, or, as we had them out there, those poor linen suits. The work of the hospital went on beautifully. The doctors themselves called it the "Model hospital of the East."

Some thousands passed through the hospital during the Sisters' time there. The liberality of the soldiers adorned the chapel, where there was daily Mass. Convalescent patients thronged to the daily Mass; men off duty came when it was possible; and the Sisters had the satisfaction of knowing that no Catholic ever left Koulali without receiving the Sacraments, nor did a single Catholic die without the Church's consolations.

There was the greatest harmony between the Sisters and the ladies; but Miss Stanley, Miss Taylor, and Miss Hutton had the first place in their hearts. Miss Stanley and Miss Taylor were High Church Anglicans coming out; but before Miss Stanley returned to England she had been received into the Church by Father Ronan, thus yielding to her convictions against her old inclinations.

From all that I have seen and heard of the English, I believe, once they are convinced, they will step over every difficulty to do what they believe to be right. Miss Taylor was also received into the Church by the same priest, who received others also; while many of the poor soldiers who had fallen away from the Faith were by him restored to the grace and friendship of God. Miss Hutton was Low Church; but Rev. Mother, who had continual intercourse with her, often told us that she had never had dealings with a more honourable and upright mind. It was now Easter, and Miss Stanley must soon say good-bye to "her dear fifteen," as she called us—she came out only in charge of the party, and had delayed her return longer than she intended.

During the stay of the Sisters at this favoured spot they had a visit from the Purveyor-in-Chief, Mr. Scott - Robinson. He was a Scotsman, and, before he paid us a visit, he had taken a survey of the hospitals. The ladies, nearly all, were ill; the nurses sick, too, and gone home; and it appeared, as he stated, that it was the Sisters who

were doing the work of the hospital. He called on Rev. Mother one day, and requested to see our quarters. She at once showed him everything, and he expressed surprise that we were so badly lodged. At once he went through the hospital, even to the doctors' quarters, and made us out much better accommodation. He placed entirely at our discretion all the stores, food, and clothing, and told Rev. Mother to act as if the hospital were her own. He said that we need not trouble ourselves any more about reports to the War Office, and that he would answer for us.

The weather was fearfully hot at this time, and insects of all kinds abounded—fleas, flies, bugs, ants, mosquitoes. As for rats, dogs, and donkeys, they were innumerable, and you may imagine how hard it was to get a sleep. Among other disquietudes, there was a gunpowder explosion, and the two hospitals were near being blown up. Moreover, we had several shocks of earthquakes. I was in one of the wards, and suddenly felt the ground move under me, as if I stood on the waves of the sea. After this was a

sudden trembling, and the windows began to shake with a strange noise ; pictures, a clock, and other things, fell in the ward. The poor patients were terrified. There was an open square in the centre of the building, and all made a rush to get there ; you may imagine what a scene it was—some hobbling, some tottering, and in their various degrees of undress. The shock lasted three minutes. We had another during the night—oh ! such a strange and thrilling sensation, something like an electric shock.

When Miss Stanley * reached England Her Majesty the Queen (anxious, of course, to hear all about her soldiers) sent for her ; and when the interview was nearly over Her Majesty asked her what she thought the poor soldiers would like—she was anxious to send them a present. Miss Stanley said : “ Oh, I do know what they

* Miss Stanley afterwards organised in London a Home, a lodging-house for women, a laundry at Westminster, a penny savings' bank, a society to distribute flowers to the poor and hospitals—and a contracting agency, at her own risk, for Government clothing, whereby work was supplied to soldiers' widows and other poor women. She rendered besides valuable service during the Cotton Famine ; also to the Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded. She had a great heart for the poor soldiers : she thought nothing was too good for them ; and she was right.

would like—plenty of flannel shirts, mufflers, butter, and treacle.” Her Majesty said they must have all these things; and they did come out in abundance: Koulali got its share of the gifts. But the very name of butter or treacle was enough for the doctors: they said they would not allow it into the wards, because it would be going about in bits of paper and daubing everything. So Rev. Mother at once interposed, and said if the doctors allowed it, she would have it distributed in a way that could give no trouble. They apologised, and said they should have known that, and at once left everything to her. Each Sister got her portion of butter and treacle (which were given only to the convalescent patients), and when the bell rang every evening for tea she stood at the table in the centre of the ward and each soldier walked over and got his bread buttered and some treacle if he wished spread on like jam. We told them it was a gift from the Queen; and if Her Majesty could only have seen how gratified they were it would have given her pleasure. One evening Lady Stratford, and some distinguished guests who were staying

at the Embassy, came, and were much pleased to see how happy and comfortable the men were, and how much they enjoyed Her Majesty's gifts.

CHAPTER VII.

TO BALAKLAVA.

Now I come back to Scutari, which was the principal scene of my labours. The cholera continued during the summer months, with less terrible results; but typhus fever broke out in its worst form. Every bed was occupied: I was assisted by a lady, two nurses, and orderlies. Every one knows the nursing that is required in cases of fever. The constitutions of the men were so undermined that they were not able to endure any sickness. Each day we had a number of deaths, and each day others took the dead men's places—themselves to die. Some kind friends sent out a quantity of aromatic vinegar, of which there was some in the stores also; this was the greatest refreshment the poor patients got. When a little of it was put into water, and they were sponged with it

over and over, they used to hold out their poor hands for more. My lady companion in the ward (Miss Smythe) caught the fever and lived only one week. It was hard on these ladies, many of whom, I suppose, had left luxurious homes, and were totally unaccustomed to that kind of work, some of them never having seen a dead man before. They often regretted that they had no experience, and they leaned on us in every difficulty. Sisters of Mercy have a novitiate of four and a-half years, during which they are exercised in various works of mercy; so to them it was no new thing to face disease and death. To live for the Poor had been for many years the resolve of each heart. Trained as we had been, the health and strength of the Sisters withstood the shock under which the health of the ladies sank. No wonder that Miss Nightingale should lean on Mother Mary Clare, of Bermondsey,* and her four Sisters, who were with her at the Barrack Hospital.

Even the health of our dear and valued

* See Appendix for fuller notes about the work of the contingent of Nuns and nurses from the Bermondsey Convent.

friend, Father Ronan, began to fail, and he was ordered home by the doctors, to the regret of poor patients as well as our own, and that of the officers with whom he messed. But as the patients at Koulali were by that time nearly all convalescent, we felt that we might soon be going ourselves. We had some kind friends among the Protestant clergy; others of them seemed to be watching our every movement. We could not help feeling that they regarded us with great suspicion, and we often got letters from the War Office which we felt were owing to their reports. The letters used to amuse us very much; they accused us of interfering with the religion of the Protestant soldiers, and informed us that we were only nurses—that St. Paul said women were not to preach or to teach! Dear Rev. Mother would not feel put out by reports of that kind—she knew well that the War Office was misinformed, and that the truth would triumph. It is not our way to force the conscience of any one. Even if we had never promised the War Office not to interfere with them, the Protestant soldiers

had been quite safe. The Holy Spirit alone can enlighten the soul. Nor did the millions of tracts sent out from England, and freely distributed amongst the Catholic soldiers, gain one "convert." One of the Protestant patients said one day: "I care not for creed or difference of opinion—to me you are all angels of mercy, and on behalf of my comrades and myself I express my gratitude." One day the sergeant-major of a Highland regiment was carried in on a stretcher. He had been drinking. The doctor examined him, and did not order him any stimulants. When the time came that the stimulants were being given out in the ward, he was inconsolable to find there was none for him. He was just getting out of delirium, and he told me that if he did not get a little he would not be alive next day. He said the doctor was young, and did not understand his complaint. I thought myself that it was absolutely necessary for him; so I went to the doctor and asked him to allow me to give him a little. He said: "Very well, Sister, let it be only a little." We became great friends. He was sent home as an invalid;

and when he was carried from the ward he raised himself up on the stretcher and cried out : “ I thank you, my blessed lady ; but for you I should be in my grave. May my blessing and the blessing of God be with you ! ” There was no use in my telling him that the title he addressed to me was one given only to the Queen of Heaven. In a word, we found the Protestant soldiers only too grateful and respectful.

One of the friendly Protestant clergymen, most of them very nice and polite, responded to our wish to be on happy terms with them, and asked Rev. Mother where she got her clothes so beautifully made up. She told him one of our lay-Sisters did them. “ Well,” he said, “ I am in a wretched state about my collars.” She at once offered to get them done for him. Others followed suit : with much pleasure she got them all done. We never heard that any of the Protestant ladies who worked with us in the wards made an unkind remark of us, save one—Miss A.—who made a charge against us that we were “ proselytising.’ So Rev. Mother, with her usual decision, at once de-

terminated to see the lady and hear all about it. She did so, and the following is the conversation that was held :

Rev. Mother : “ I am informed, Miss A., that you assert that, to your own knowledge, the Sisters are interfering with the religion of the Protestants ? ”

Miss A. : “ Yes, I do, to my own knowledge. ”

Rev. Mother : “ Well, pray tell me in what instance and in what ward did it happen ? ”

Miss A. : “ In Dr. Psalter’s. ”

Rev. Mother : “ And with what Sister ? ”

Miss A. : “ I am sure I don’t know. ”

Rev. Mother : “ What was the man’s name ? ”

Miss A. : “ I don’t know—I forget. ”

Rev. Mother : “ What was the nature of the instruction ? ”

Miss A. : “ I did not ask. The man said to me one day that he was complaining of not seeing the minister, that only for the Popish Nuns he would know nothing about his religion ; that they sent their priest into the ward three times a day. That was all he said. ”

Rev. Mother : “ And how could that lead you to suppose that the Sisters had been speaking to him on religion ? ”

Miss A. : “ I don't know ; but I thought they had done so. ”

The Superintendent, Miss Hutton, was present, and said she could not help feeling disgusted with the accusation. Yet we knew very well that the War Office would never send us out such preambles and preachments if they were not being misinformed.

At last the Koulali hospitals were to be given up to the allied Sardinian troops—the patients being all convalescent, and the hospitals at the “ Front ” sufficient to accommodate the present sick and wounded. Meanwhile, Rev. Mother had been in correspondence with Sir John Hall, the principal medical officer in the East, about our going to Balaklava, to take charge of a hospital of which, he said, Miss Nightingale had given up the charge. Both he and the Purveyor-in-Chief were most anxious that we should make no delay ; and on the 7th of October, 1855, we left both Scutari and Koulali, on board the *Ottawa*, bound for Bala-

klava. Sir J. Hall made the arrangements for our voyage. We did not leave Scutari or Koulali without regret. In the latter, particularly, we had kind friends amongst the ladies and doctors. And what shall I say about the poor soldiers who had been under our care for so many months, and our devoted orderlies? Indeed, I think I may say with truth that we left amidst the prayers and blessings of all and the tears of many. Father Woollett, S.J., came to fetch us. The morning of our departure all our little commodities were packed up; and the doctors came to our quarters laden with good things for our breakfast—toasted bacon, eggs, and jam. At last the good-bye was said to this dear spot, and we proceeded to the vessel. We passed the Embassy, and Lady Stratford and many others greeted us as we sailed off, accompanied by Father Woollett. On the morning of the 10th of October we were in view of the heights of Balaklava, and just at the mouth of the harbour. Signals were hoisted to see if we might enter. The entrance is between immense rocks, and the passage so very narrow that only one vessel can

enter at a time. The harbour itself forms a basin.

Hours passed, and the signal had not been responded to. Besides, there were other vessels before us, waiting for admittance. Anchor could not be cast on account of the rocks, and out in the Black Sea we were likely to spend the night. We could hear the sound of the cannon and shell doing their work of destruction. In truth, we were at that moment where we would never be but "For Heaven, Lord, and Thee." At last, about six in the evening, an express came to say that a tug was lying hard by to convey us ashore. It lay some distance from the ship, and could only be reached by our ship - boat. The waves were mountains high when the boat came alongside. Rev. Mother was on deck, and at once she stepped in, accompanied by Sister M. Joseph, Father Woollett, and a Protestant clergyman from Koulali.

Miss Nightingale, who had come up from Scutari, was on board; and as soon as the tug had left its first burthen ashore it returned to take her and the rest of the Sisters

over. The captain, however, thought it safer to put to sea than to venture over ; so we did not find ourselves landed in the harbour of Balaklava till eight next evening. Father Woollett, S.J., was waiting to bring us to our quarters. The way to our hut was up a steep hill. The hut was made of wood, not too closely put together ; there was a door, and above the door a window, and another window at the opposite end. A new hut was to be erected for us ; but these arrangements were very slowly carried out. When we reached the hut, Rev. Mother welcomed us as if it was to a palace. She had a cloth spread on the floor, and two orderlies were looking after our dinner. I am sure we never enjoyed anything so much as this our first dinner in the Crimea—our dear Mother was ever so well, and as happy and cheerful as any of us. We had no ladies or nurses in Balaklava : all the nursing, day and night, was to be done by the Sisters. The poor orderlies got us our dinner, something, they said, like mutton ; but the sheep had come from Malta, and were nearly dead from hunger and hardship before they reached

the Crimea. When Sir John Hall heard of our arrival, he came and welcomed us, and gave us the charge of the General Hospital, in which we had the use of one small room. Fifteen or sixteen huts had patients in each of them. The huts were very straggling; and at this time the mud was something dreadful. Who has not heard of the mud of Balaklava? It increased the labour very much. When we began our work we discovered that the soldiers had had some little care bestowed on them, but the poor sick civilians had had none: they were regarded as intruders. Amongst them were Maltese, Greeks, Italians, Americans, Germans, and Negroes. Some of the Russian prisoners were there also. Without neglecting the soldiers, we were able to show some special attention to these poor fellows. Strangers in a foreign land, they had the greatest claim to compassion.

All were at work, and on our very first day we had visits from some of our Scutari and Koulali friends. Father Unsworth, an extremely nice English priest, and the senior chaplain in the Crimea, was also a visitor.

Nothing, he said, could be more edifying than to see Lord Killeen going at the head of his gallant Hussars so punctually to Mass on Sundays—five hundred cavalry, with their brass helmets and long swords, mounted on their chargers, ascending the great hills to pay homage to the God of Armies. Sister M. Elizabeth's brother, Captain Hersey, a young officer of only twenty, came to visit her, dressed in his uniform (within the last few years this gentleman built a church at his own expense in Galway for the use of the soldiers). Young lads of seventeen and eighteen were being sent out to fill the ranks. From a hill at the back of our hut we had a view of the English, French, Sardinian, and Turkish camps.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO MARTYRS OF MERCY.

EACH Sister had charge of two wards, and there was just at this time a fresh outbreak of cholera. The Sisters were up every night; and the cases, as in Scutari and Koulali, were nearly all fatal. Rev. Mother did not allow the Sisters to remain up at night, except in cases of cholera, without a written order from the doctor.

In passing to the wards at night we used to meet the rats in droves. They would not even move out of our way. They were there before us, and were determined to keep possession. As for our own hut, they evidently wanted to make it theirs, scraping under the boards, jumping up on the shelf where our little tin utensils were kept, rattling everything. One night dear Sister M. Paula found one licking her forehead—

she had a real horror of them. Sleep was out of the question. Our third day in Bala-klava was a very sad one for us. One of our dear band, Sister Winifred, got very ill during the night with cholera. She was a most angelic Sister, and we were all deeply grieved. She was attacked, at about three o'clock in the morning, with the symptoms which were now so well known to us: every remedy was applied; our beloved Rev. Mother never left her; she was attended by Father Unsworth, from whom she received the last rites of our holy religion; and she calmly breathed her last on the evening of the same day. A hut was arranged in which to place the remains; and, so alarming were the rats—and such huge animals were they—that we had to watch during the night, so that they should not touch her. She, the first to go of our little band, had been full of life and energy the day before. We were all very sad, and we wondered who would be the next. Rev. Mother was anxious to have her buried near Father Wheble, the first Crimean Martyr. But Sir John Hall said that that place was

likely to be desecrated, and that it was better to look elsewhere. And they did, indeed, find on the hills of Balaklava a spot of ground between two rocks, with just room for about two graves, and this was her last resting-place. Father Woollett, Father Unsworth, and Father Malony preceded the coffin chanting the prayers, and we followed immediately after. Miss Nightingale was at the funeral, and even joined in the prayers. The soldiers, doctors, officers, and officials followed. When all was over we returned to our hut, very sad ; but we had no further time to think. Patients were pouring in, and we should be out again to the cholera wards. Besides cholera, there were cases of fever, in fact of every disease. Others had been nearly killed by the blasting of rocks, and they came in fearfully disfigured.

Father Woollett brought us one day a present of a Russian cat ; he bought it, he told us, from an old Russian woman, for the small sum of seven shillings. It made a particularly handsome captive in the land of its fathers ; for we were obliged to keep it tied to a chair, to prevent its escape. But

the very sight of this powerful champion soon relieved us of some of our unwelcome and voracious visitors. The arrival of Father Duffy, S.J., from Dublin, did something to cheer us up at this time. Also an officer waited on Rev. Mother to say that the men of his regiment, the 89th, begged as a favour that they might be allowed to put a marble cross over Sister Winifred's grave. She did not hesitate to accept with gratitude this mark of kindness.

The extra kitchen got on well—a stone building, with a large oven like a baker's. I do not know if it was there before the English arrived, or was built purposely. At all events, it suited very well; we had a charcoal stove also; the dinner tins were placed all round this to keep everything hot. I had the charge of this, helped by three first-class orderlies, besides a party of what are called fatigue men, who came down every day from the "Front." To have everything served hot and comfortable to the different wards was our dearest Mother's earnest wish, and many a lecture had the Sister-in-charge on the subject:—rice, sago, arrowroot, chops

when they could be got, and sometimes chickens. If the orderlies had their own way, they would wring the head off the chicken, put it down with the feathers on, and then take off the skin and feathers together; they thought we gave ourselves entirely too much trouble. They used to take great pleasure in having the kitchen very clean. One morning, when I went to see after the breakfast, I said: "Really, Tom, the kitchen is beautifully clean." "Yes, Ma'am, he replied, "and we have the milk made as well."

A great piece of shell came down one day, and made a terrific noise at the kitchen door. I really got a fright, and said, "Oh, are the Russians coming?" "No, Ma'am," said one of my orderlies, "and if they are itself, many a fine British soldier will be laid low before one of ye are touched."

There were many useful things in the stores suitable for the kitchen, but it was next to impossible to get anything out of them. You would be told over and over that there was not such a thing to be had. But Rev. Mother was all energy where the

wants of the sick were concerned, and made a great fight with Mr. Fitzgerald, the Deputy-Purveyor, till she got what she wanted. Mr. Scott-Robinson sent us waterproof cloaks from Constantinople at this time. There was rain and snow, and he thought we might find them useful ; but they were of too fine and delicate a texture for us. They were French, and only fit for French ladies. We returned them with many thanks.

Rumours of peace came one day only to be contradicted the next. Rev. Mother now received a letter from Dr. Lyons (son of Sir W. Lyons, of Cork), who wanted to know if there was anything he could do for us. He was stationed at the "Front," and he advised her to get out more Nuns, as they were sure to be wanted. Other hospitals, he said, were to be opened, and who could do the work like the Nuns? I hope we did not get proud.

Christmas had come round once more. It was fearfully cold—the soldiers said that the wind blowing from Sebastopol would cut the head off a man. That Christmas Day of 1855 we had four Masses, and crowds at

Holy Communion. We had a saintly chaplain, Father Gleeson, a Vincentian. He had no mercy on himself. He came out with a little stuff soutane and not a particle of warm clothing. We could only hope that when our little Jesuit, Father Woollett, came from the camp he would make him put on a suit of fur like his own. Rev. Mother gave him warm gloves and a muffler, but he came down next morning without them. She gave him a great scolding, but it was all the same. The climate was so fickle that, after a sunny day our blankets might be frozen at night.

There was great work in the kitchen that Christmas Day. There were any number of nice puddings, and even plum puddings for the orderlies, who had a little money to spare and procured what was necessary for them. But only imagine, the rats, the dreadful rats, sucked a hundred eggs in the night, and killed the few chickens that were for the day. We were all indignant—and the eggs so scarce too. What was to be done? Well, the best we could, and the puddings were not too bad. We had a good deal of cleaning up in the kitchen after the Christmas

dinner, and our fatigue men were from the cavalry regiments : they looked so respectable I often felt a little delicate at asking them to do any dirty work. An officer came every evening to collect his men, and he generally said : "I hope, Sister, you have no complaint to make." We never had any. Very often these men had to go the same night to the trenches, or other places of danger.

At this date a friend in the camp sent Rev. Mother a copy of *The Illustrated London News*, with the following paragraph:

"Miss Wise has been succeeded by sixteen Nuns (we were only fifteen), principally Irish ladies, who, having received instructions from Miss Nightingale, appear to be very attentive to their charge, and eminently deserving the name they bear—Sisters of Mercy. They are attired from head to foot in the deepest black ; even their heads are carefully hooded. The only relief to this sombre attire is the double string of beads hanging from their girdles. I was quite startled on my first introduction to one of these ladies. I had not even heard of their arrival, and, having a patient in a very critical state in one of the

hospital huts, I went down about midnight to pay him a visit. On opening the door, I beheld by the light of a wretched little lamp just such a phantom as Bulwer has drawn in *Lucretia*: darkness in every corner of the room, and a tall figure draped and hooded—darker even than the night—gliding from bed to bed. I am sorry to say that one of the Sisters, two days after their arrival, was seized with cholera and died.”

During the month of January fever cases became very numerous, and, of course, night watching continuous. If a fever patient is not well nursed during the night no amount of care will bring back what he loses—some nourishment must be given every two hours, or more frequently, as the doctor may direct; we had bad cases of typhus and typhoid, and in these cases nursing is everything. The doctors were often surprised in the morning to find their patients so well over the night—no matter how clever a doctor may be, if he has not a good nurse, who will attend strictly to his directions, little can be done. The following report, sent by the Deputy-Purveyor to the War Office, dated December 24th, 1855,

came before me only lately, and I hope it will not be out of place here. He says :

“ The superiority of an ordered system is beautifully illustrated in the Sisters of Mercy. One mind appears to move all, and their intelligence, delicacy, and conscientiousness invest them with a halo of extreme confidence. The medical officer can safely consign his most critical cases to their hands. Stimulants or opiates ordered every five minutes will be faithfully administered though the five minutes' labour were repeated uninterruptedly for a week. The number of Sisters, without being large, is sufficient to secure for every patient needing it his share of attention : a calm resigned contentedness sits on the features of all, and the soft cares of the woman and the lady breathe placidly throughout.”

The Sisters engaged in the wards found it a great help to have the extra kitchen carefully attended to. Though the orderlies were good and fairly sober, still they could not be trusted in preparing food in any way fit for a delicate patient—it could scarcely be expected. Whenever they went to the “ Front,” to get their pay, no matter what

good resolutions they made, they were very seldom presentable for a day or two.

Early in 1856 rumours of peace reached us from all sides. But our Heavenly Father demanded another sacrifice from our devoted little band. Dear Sister Mary Elizabeth was called to a Martyr's crown.

She was specially beloved for her extraordinary sweetness of disposition. The doctor, when called, pronounced her illness to be fever—she had caught typhus in her ward. Every loving care was bestowed on her by our dearest Mother, who scarcely ever left her bedside. Death seemed to have no sting for this saintly Religious—she was continually renewing her vows and making her profession of faith. She had no wish to live or die, feeling she was in the arms of her Heavenly Father. “He will do for me what is best,” she whispered, “and His will is all I desire.” A little before her death she said: “Rev. Mother, I could never express to you how happy I feel. There is not one drawback.” Rev. Mother said to her: “You know, dear Sister, all our wants. Will you not help us when you see God face

to face?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I surely will." She thanked all the Sisters, embraced and took leave of them most affectionately, retaining her senses to the very last. She had no agony—the fever simply consumed her.

It was a wild, wild night. The storm and wind penetrated the chinks so as to extinguish the lights, and evoked many a prayer that the death-bed might not be left roofless. It was awful beyond description to kneel beside her during these hours of her passage and to hear the solemn prayers for the dead and dying mingled with the howling of the winds and the creaking of the frail wooden hut. Oh, never, never can any of us forget that night: the storm disturbed all but her, that happy being for whom earth's joys and sorrows were at an end, and whose summons home had not cost her one pang or one regret. Her happy death occurred on Saturday, the 23rd of February.

The death of our dear Sister Mary Elizabeth was announced by the chaplain in the different divisions after Mass. It was also announced that the office would be at three,

and the funeral immediately after. The 89th begged Father Unsworth to ask the captain to allow them off parade, that they might attend the funeral, which he willingly did. Detachments from every regiment joined them. The 89th requested the honour of being allowed to carry the coffin. Hundreds of soldiers formed a treble file on each side of the passage from the hospital to the hut, where eight priests, the Sisters, and the soldiers chosen to bear the coffin had assembled. Every head was uncovered as the procession passed slowly down the hill to the chapel. It was a thrilling sight to see the multitude of various nations, ranks, and employments, amid holy silence unbroken save by the voice of tearful supplication. A contest arose later between the medical staff and the officers as to which should have the honour of putting a cross on her grave. We took no part, save to feel truly grateful for the kind feeling of which it was evidence.

The graves of our two dear Sisters were tended with loving kindness. A chaplain who visited the place long after the Sisters had left, found these lonely graves on the

brow of that rugged hill enclosed by a high iron railing set in cut stone—the whole being visible from the Black Sea beneath. They were decked with beautiful flowers and evergreens planted by the loving hands of their soldier friends, and marked with white marble crosses bearing their simple epitaph. On the arm of the cross of Sister Winifred's grave the priest found a paper, on which were written the following lines, composed, as he afterwards heard, by one of her orderlies :

Still green be the willow that grows on the mountain,
And weeps o'er the grave of the Sister that's gone ;

* * * * *

And most glorious its lot to point out to the stranger,
The hallowed remains of the sainted and blest ;
For those angels of mercy had dared every danger,
To bring to the soldier sweet comfort and rest.

Some other verses, these written by a friend, on the death of Sister Winifred, may be allowed a place in this history :

They laid her in her lonely grave upon a foreign strand,
Far from her own dear island home, far from her native
land.

They bore her to her long last home amid the clash of
arms,
And the hymn they sang seemed sadly sweet amid war's
fierce alarms.

MEMORIES OF THE CRIMEA.

They heeded not the cannon's roar, the rifle's deadly shot,
But onward still they sadly went to gain that lowly spot ;
And there, with many a fervent prayer and many a word
of love,
They left her in her lowly grave with a simple cross above.

And yet she was a gentle soul, a timid fearful thing,
Who, like a startled fawn, had sought her Convent's
shelt'ring wing ;
Had left with glad and bounding heart a world she could
not love,
And chosen for her own chaste spouse the Lamb of
stainless love.

She thought to spend her peaceful days within those
cloisters grey,
And with Matin song and Vesper hymn beguile her life
away.
She little thought again to roam amid the world's dark
strife,
Save where sweet mercy led her steps to soothe the woes
of life.

Yet far away from her Convent grey, and far from her
lowly cell,
And far from the soft and silvery tone of the sweet Con-
vent bell,
And far from the home she loved so well, and far from
her native sky,
'Mid the cannon's roar on a hostile shore she laid her
down to die.

She loved full well her Convent home, and loved its
cloisters grey,
And loved full well those holy spots where she had knelt
to pray,

MEMORIES OF THE CRIMEA.

Yet, with a purer, deeper love, she loved the soldier
brave,
And left her home, and left her all, his sinking soul to
save.

She went not forth to gain applause, she sought not
empty fame ;
E'en those she tended might not know her history or her
name ;
No honours waited on her path, no flattering voice was
nigh ;
For she only sought to toil and love, and mid her toil to
die.

They raise no trophy to her name, they rear no stately
bust,
To tell the stranger where she rests, co-mingling with the
dust ;
They leave her in her lowly grave, beneath that foreign
sky,
Where she had taught them how to live, and taught them
how to die.

Sister Winifred was English by birth, and
Sister Elizabeth was Irish.

CHAPTER IX.

IN AND OUT OF COMBAT.

ABOUT this time fresh accusations were made to the War Office, to the Commander-in-Chief, and others, that the Sisters interfered in religious matters with the non-Catholic patients. It became so serious that Rev. Mother wrote to Lord Raglan, explaining the strictly conscientious attitude of the Sisters. His Lordship expressed himself pleased and satisfied; indeed, no one could hold intercourse with our beloved Mother M. F. Bridgeman without recognising in her the highest form of principle and practice. She had given her word not to interfere with the religion of non-Catholic patients, and, rather than violate that word, as everyone who knew her felt, she would willingly undergo any martyrdom. There was no danger of her violating her contract,

even when attempts were made to encroach on her own rights. It is quite clear that our dear Mother had much to endure from these continual false accusations, not one of which was even attempted to be proved against us.

And all this time we did not, I believe, get even a shirt, a pair of stockings, in fact any article of clothing, from the stores ; but we had tracts reviling our holy religion, as well as pictures of the worst description, too bad to be written about—the writer of this sketch pleads guilty to having burned thousands of them, and in doing so believes she was doing good for the Protestant soldiers as much as the Catholic. In the midst of all this we had many kind friends. Protestants were quite as ready to defend us as Catholics. Lord Napier and Ettrick frequently bore testimony to the fidelity with which the Nuns kept to their contract of non-interference. At Edinburgh, on a later occasion, he said :

“ At an early period of my life I held a diplomatic position under Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in Constantinople. During the distress of the Crimean War the Amba-

sador called me one morning and said : ' Go down to the port ; you will find a ship there loaded with Jewish exiles—Russian subjects from the Crimea. It is your duty to disembark them. The Turks will give you a house in which they may be placed. I turn them over entirely to you.' I went down to the shore and received about two hundred persons, the most miserable objects that could be witnessed, most of them old men, women, and children. I placed them in the cold, ruinous lodging allocated to them by the Ottoman authorities. I went back to the Ambassador, and said : ' Your Excellency, these people are cold, and I have no fuel or blankets. They are hungry, and I have no food. They are dirty, and I have no soap. Their hair is in an indescribable condition, and I have no combs. What am I to do with these people ? ' ' Do ? ' said the Ambassador. ' Get a couple of Sisters of Mercy, they will put all to right in a moment.' I went, saw the Mother Superior, and explained the case. I asked for two Sisters. She ordered two from her presence to follow me. They were ladies of refinement and intellect. I was a stranger and a Protestant, and I invoked their assistance for the benefit of Jews. Yet these two

women made up their bundles and followed me through the rain, without a look, a whisper, a sign of hesitation. From that moment my fugitives were saved. I witnessed the labours of those Sisters for months, and they never endeavoured to make a single convert."

The military men were not less enthusiastic. When Colonel Connolly, brother-in-law to Mr. Bruin, of Carlow, was travelling, after his return from the war, near the Bruin Estate, a fellow-traveller spoke disrespectfully of Nuns. The Colonel, a Protestant, not only made a warm defence of the ladies who had nursed him in Russian and Ottoman regions, and for their sakes of all other Nuns, but handed the assailant his card, saying: "If you say another word against these saintly gentlewomen I shall call you out." The slanderer subsided very quickly.

It was said at one time that the War Office was on the point of issuing a mandate forbidding us to speak even to the Catholic soldiers on religion—or to say a prayer for them. However, that mandate never came: we often thought the Guardian Angels of

the soldiers prevented it. Dear Rev. Mother wrote to her own Bishop, telling him of our troubles, and the following was his reply:

MY DEAR REV. MOTHER,

Your work is so manifestly the work of God that we must expect various contradictions as a matter of course. Whatever they may be there is always one even course to be followed: bear up cheerfully and happily against them all, be firm in your just rule of acting, and do not leave your post. It is only when you have returned to your native home, full of merit before God, that you can begin to enjoy fully the happiness of your present mission. The works you are engaged in would in themselves seem of sufficient importance to justify all the labours you have endured and all the risks you have encountered. It is scarcely necessary for me to say anything in confirmation of the duties and calling of a Sister of Mercy. Noble as benevolence undoubtedly is, you are not mere philanthropists in the restricted meaning of the term, though in its true sense the philanthropist is one who would minister to the comfort, the true and great comfort of the soul no less than to the wants of the body. I thank God most fervently for the manifest

protection afforded you in your many trials, and hope to see all return home soon and happily. I remain, dear Rev. Mother,

With sincere regard, yours very truly,

WILLIAM DELANY.

We had received also the following letter from Dr. Manning—afterwards Cardinal—in allusion to the many trials with which our path was likely to be strewn :

78 South Audley Street, December 1st, 1854.

MY DEAR SISTERS IN JESUS CHRIST,

It seems but right that a few words of encouragement should be addressed to you who have so generously offered yourselves to go on a new and difficult mission, in which many unusual and unforeseen trials may come upon you. You will, however, always bear in mind for whose sake you go forth, and to whom your services of consolation are rendered. This thought, without such words at least as I can write, will suffice to strengthen and to cheer you under all you may have to endure. Nevertheless, there are certain points on which you may not think a few words without their use. At first, you may perhaps meet with many privations and in-

conveniences in leaving the quiet and order of your simple Convent home to enter on a life of travel, activity, and labour, sometimes it may be with slender or bad provisions for food and dwelling, and with rough fare, even in the few things your ordinary life requires.

You will not, I know, let privations or hardships overcome you or draw from you a word of complaining ; but you will bear all those things with a cheerful heart for His sake Who often had not so much as time to eat, nor had He where to lay His head. Again, in conversing with many people, as you needs must do, you cannot fail to meet with many trials from the ill-temper of the evil, the slights and injustice of adversaries, the rudeness and censure of many who are good in many ways. Prepare yourselves for this mortification, and offer it gladly to our Divine Lord, who bore all manner of contradiction for you. Another subject about which you will have need to exercise yourselves in the spirit of patient and glad compliance will be the work of learning how to treat medical and surgical cases. All of you have probably had experience in nursing ordinary sickness, and that alone is enough to make you feel how much more will be required of you than you have yet

had opportunity to learn : you are going, therefore, to work as learners with a spirit of exactness and humility, and you will receive, I well know, the directions of physicians and surgeons with a prompt and cheerful readiness. We need never be ashamed to learn, and every lesson we acquire is a new gift—which we may lay out again in the service of Our Lord. Begin your work, therefore, from the beginning, from the simplest rules of practice, and learn accurately everything which relates to the care of the sick, the dressing of wounds, the handling of special cases of medical or surgical treatment. Being already called to the grace of the more perfect life, be not content with an imperfect or ordinary knowledge and skill in the nursing of the sick and wounded, but strive to be as perfect in this ministry of consolation as in the life of the counsels. And, lastly, be not discouraged at the change from the recollection and tranquillity of your cloister and choir to the ceaseless motion and publicity of the world of work, in which you will have to live. God is able to make the hospital a cloister and your own heart a choir. His graces will be with you in the measure of your daily and hourly need. If you leave Him in the silence of your Convent it is to find Him by the bed-

side of the wounded. You leave Christ, for Christ, and wheresoever you go for His sake He will be with you.

Many prayers will be put up for you without ceasing, and oftentimes the Holy Sacrifice will be offered for you that you may "spend and be spent" with glad hearts for our dear Lord's sake, and receive from Him the reward of joy which is laid up for those who serve Him in the least of his brethren. May His loving care bring you safely home again; if not, I trust there will be more crowns in Heaven. Forgive these words from one who has no worthiness to be your counsellor, and give me a place in your prayers; and may the grace of God be with you all! Believe me, my dear Sisters in Christ,

Your faithful and humble servant
for His sake,

HENRY EDWARD MANNING.

By degrees patients became less numerous, and news was continually reaching us that peace was certain. However, the doctors wished us to remain till the last, and Rev. Mother would have done so but for an unexpected event.

Before we came to Balaklava in Octo-

ber, Miss Nightingale had withdrawn her nurses, so that the hospital was vacant. Now, Miss Nightingale was named by the War Office as the Superintendent of the nursing staff in the East ; and in April, 1856, she again assumed the charge of the General Hospital at Balaklava, saying she had directions from the War Office to do so. Under these circumstances, and as peace was being proclaimed, Rev. Mother made up her mind to leave. The patients were nearly all convalescent ; and she was rather glad to get home before the great crush of soldiers and civilians started for England. Miss Nightingale was very anxious that we should remain. However, Rev. Mother thought it was not necessary, and wrote the following letter to Sir John Hall :

DEAR SIR,

As it is no longer in your power to continue us here on the terms on which you accepted our services in the Crimea, I beg to resign my charge to you from whom I have received it. May I also offer my best thanks for the uniform kindness we have received from you and those who represent

you? For it, as well as for the cordial co-operation and appreciation shown us, we shall ever feel grateful. During the sixteen months of our Mission in the East, our difficulties and trials have been many, and often painful and perplexing. But it is due to the medical officers, as well as to those of the Purveying Department, to say that they did not arise from them—these we have found ever willing to work with us and kindly and cordially to accept our services. Then, the delicate and cautious respect and gratitude ever evinced by the patients of different creeds and countries has been to us a source of constant thankfulness. May I beg you will kindly take the necessary means to arrange for our passage home as soon as convenient? and

Believe me to be, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. F. BRIDGEMAN.

This is what Sir John Hall wrote in reply :

MY DEAR MADAM,

I cannot permit you and the Sisters under your direction to leave the Crimea without an expression of the high opinion I

entertain of your administration, and of the very important aid you have rendered to the sick under your care. I can most conscientiously assert, as I have on other occasions stated, that you have given me the most perfect satisfaction ever since you assumed the charge of the nursing department of the General Hospital at Balaklava, and I do most unfeignedly regret your departure. But, after what has occurred I would not, even with that feeling uppermost in my mind, urge you to stay.

I enclose a letter from Sir William Codrington, Commander-in-Chief, expressive of the sense he entertains of your services and those of the Sisters, which I trust will be acceptable to your feelings; and I feel assured you must leave us with an approving conscience, as I know you do with the blessings of those you have aided in their hour of need. To Him Who sees all our outward actions, and knows our inmost thoughts and wishes, I commend you. And may He have you and those with you in His holy keeping is the prayer of yours faithfully,

JOHN HALL, Inspector-General of Hospitals.

This distinguished medical officer often recalled with pleasure his connection with the

Sisters of Mercy in the East, and continued to take the deepest interest in their Institute. Once, when some postulants for the Sisters of Mercy happened to be in the same vessel with him, going to New Zealand, he no sooner learned their destination than he took them, as it were, under his protection—paid them the most polite and fatherly attention, taught them little games, and did all he could to relieve the monotony of their voyage. But, above all, he awakened their enthusiasm by speaking of his acquaintance with the Sisters in the Eastern hospitals, giving instances of their bearing during those perilous times.

The following was the letter from Sir William Codrington to Sir John Hall :

SIR,

I regret much to hear that circumstances have induced Mrs. Bridgeman, Superior of the Roman Catholic Sisters, to quit the General Hospital and proceed to England with the Sisters who have been associated with her. I request you to assure that lady of the high estimation in which her services and those of the Sisters are held by us all, founded as that opinion is on the experience

of yourself, the medical officer of the hospitals, and of the many patients, both wounded and sick, who, during the fourteen or fifteen months past, have benefited by their care. I am quite sure that their unfailing kindness will have the reward which Mrs. Bridgeman values, viz., the remembrance and gratitude of those who have been the objects of such disinterested attention.—Your obedient servant,

W. CODRINGTON, General Commander.

These have paid their tribute to our Rev. Mother—I will pay mine. That she was richly endowed with gifts of nature and grace was beyond all doubt. Her very appearance, her manner, and address, were most attractive, and her mind and talents highly cultivated. But, above all, there was a halo of sanctity about her that seemed to have entwined the affections of those who knew her closely around her. The Sisters she had in the East were from different Communities: some from Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Kinsale, Charleville, Liverpool, and Chelsea. Yet one and all of them held her in the same love and veneration—and with all these superior talents she governed more

like a Sister than a Superior. We used to gather round her in the evenings, and tell her all the events of the day. She had many sleepless nights, but they were spent in prayer, in close commune with Him for Whom she lived and laboured. I could wish every word I have said to be written in letters of gold; and, perhaps, there were few of the Sisters who knew her better than I did. Her whole anxiety was that we should keep alive the interior spirit, and be as much Religious in our new sphere of action as in our Convent homes. Some of her "beautiful reminders," as we used to call them, are noted in our old journals.

Though our Sisters from Bermondsey were with Miss Nightingale at the Barrack Hospital, we rarely met—it was such an enormous place, capable of accommodating some thousands of soldiers. They left England with her, and of them she speaks most affectionately.

CHAPTER X.

HOMeward BOUND.

WHEN we began our work of packing up and preparing for the voyage, we had many visitors. Miss Nightingale, the Protestant clergyman of Koulali, Dr. Beatsin, Dr. Hamilton (of the Guards), the Purveyor, Father Unsworth, Father Duffy, S.J., Father Strickland, S.J., and poor soldiers and orderlies in crowds.

We sailed from Balaklava on the 12th of April: the day was beautifully fine, and the accommodation in the *Cleopatra* first class. We owed an everlasting debt of gratitude to Sir John Hall, for his great kindness in thus arranging for our homeward voyage. We had a private saloon; the captain told us he had got orders to see after our comfort in every way; and Father Woollett, S.J., accompanied us.

A two days' sail across the Black Sea brought us in view of the minarets and mosques of Constantinople, with the beautiful marble palace of its Sultan. We anchored in the Bosphorus for a day or two, and had visits from the Sisters of Charity, priests, doctors, and other kind friends. We had a lovely view from the vessel, and gave a last sad look at the once beautiful Church of Santa Sophia, now, alas! a Turkish mosque; a church once so magnificent that, when the Emperor Justinian entered it after it was completed, he exclaimed in an ecstasy of delight: "Solomon, I have surpassed thee." It was the most richly decorated temple that ever stood upon the earth. The altar was solid gold encrusted with the most precious and costly stones. There, also, St. Gregory the Great and St. John Chrysostom preached and laboured.

As the vessel moved, we took a last look at gorgeous Constantinople. The Russians call it the city of the Czar—time will tell that, I suppose. We passed Therapia and our former hospital, Koulali. Soon all the beautiful sights were lost to our view; we sailed

into the Dardanelles and arrived at Gallipoli. As we sailed through the Archipelago, we passed Abydos. We reached Malta that evening — *Deo gratias*. Three or four rockets were let off and two blue lights; the pilot arrived and we were soon in the harbour. The admiral's boat drew up, and an officer stepped on board to make official inquiries — whence we came, whither we went, and who or what the main body on board were. Having been answered satisfactorily, the happy official went his way. A cannon-shot from a man-of-war lying near us announced the hour of nine, and we were off to rest. At half-past six in the morning two Jesuits came on board to convey us over in a boat. The Maltese who rowed the boat took out their scapulars and put them outside their jackets, that we might know they belonged to us. It was a most delightful morning. We got Mass, confession, and Holy Communion at the famous Church of the Knights of St. John: the Jesuits had no church of their own in Malta, but officiated at St. John's. When we had finished our thanksgiving we were conducted by Father Woollett and

another kind Father to their College, where we had the privilege of sharing the hospitality of the good Fathers. There is a beautiful throne inside the sanctuary, near the stalls once occupied by the knights. We heard this was erected for the use of Mr. Moore O'Ferrall, who was Governor there for some time. But we were told he never used it, preferring to kneel and pray amongst the poor people. "The prayers of the humble shall pierce the clouds." Our vessel was waiting for us, and we could make no further delay. The morning of the 30th brought us in view of the rock of Gibraltar, and we arrived there at noon. The Most Rev. Dr. Hughes and many priests came to visit us. The Bishop thought we should go to his palace, and had his carriage waiting for us: but as we did not go he remained with us nearly all day. He was Irish, thoroughly Irish; he wore a large black cloak and a broad brimmed hat with a piece of green ribbon around it: we often heard of him from the soldiers who were stationed at Malta; they all seemed to know and love him. The day was fine, and we were all

on deck, so we gathered round him to hear his beautiful stories.

It was now the 1st of May, and Ascension Day. We set sail again, and passed Cape St. Vincent. Our passengers were few. One was Major Pakenham, a distinguished hero of Alma and cousin to the victor of Waterloo. We were greatly amused when he told us he had with difficulty got into the ship, the captain of which assured him he had got orders to keep things very quiet for the Nuns. The Major said he would neither sing nor dance! We became great friends. He was most anxious to know how we spent our evenings; he said he knew very well how we spent the day. He was quite delighted when he heard we had such happy, cheerful evenings, and could play, sing, or do anything that gave us pleasure. He spoke with respect and affection of his cousin, the Hon. Charles Pakenham, once a captain in the Guards, who, exchanging a sword of steel for the sword of the spirit, was received into the Church by Cardinal Wiseman, and became a Passionist Father.

The wind was in our favour, and at last

we approached the dreaded Bay of Biscay. But our voyage was, on the whole, a good one. In the English Channel we had rather a cold and dreary reception. On the 7th of May we came in sight of land, and hoped to be in Spithead that evening. We soon after arrived at Portsmouth, and after much railroad fuss we started for London, accompanied by Father Woollett, S.J. We reached the London terminus at about nine, and went to Blandford Square Convent, where thousands of loving greetings awaited us. After a delay of two days, during which time we visited our much loved Sisters at Chelsea, and had innumerable visitors, including Cardinal Wiseman, came the dreaded parting with our much loved Mother M. F. Bridgeman and her two Kinsale Sisters—she having determined to visit her Convent in Derby. That parting left a blank in each heart never to be filled up till the last trumpet will bring us all and our cherished friends together to that happy home where partings and sorrows are unknown.

We left Blandford Square for our Convent in Liverpool, and we spent two happy

days there. The Dublin, Carlow, Cork, and Charleville Sisters arrived in Baggot Street on the morning of Corpus Christi, 1856. A grand *Te Deum* was sung after Mass, and no Sisters of Mercy ever got a more loving welcome than we got from our dear Sisters at Baggot Street. Then we all looked anxiously to our own Convent homes. Some started next day, and others had to remain to see one or other, and amongst the rest the Carlow Sisters. The Archbishop was out of town, and left word for us to wait till his return ; but our dear friend, Dr. Dunne, came when he heard we had arrived, and told us it was better to start at once by the evening train, that great preparations were being made in the town to give us a reception, and that we were not expected till next day. We were only too glad to start at once.

Arrived in Carlow, we got down to the Convent quickly, but not without cheers for the "Russian Nuns." The dear Sisters we parted from eighteen months before were all inside the gate to welcome us. When the Bishop heard of our arrival he sent Dean

Hughes to bid us welcome, and say that he would come himself in the morning, and that there would be a solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving for our safe return on the following Sunday, in the Cathedral, to conclude with the *Te Deum*.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

AT the urgent request of some respected friends I have embodied in the foregoing pages the substance of my old Crimean journal which has been so long thrown aside. Our much loved Rev. Mother M. F. Bridgeman and all the Sisters have gone to their eternal home, save one, the writer of this journal, the most unworthy of the cherished band. But their labours did not end with that eventful mission. In the service of the suffering poor, in hospitals, schools, and orphanages, and in visiting them in their wretched homes, they worked bravely on to the end, till their heavenly Bridegroom called them to receive the reward of their hidden labours. This journal would be much more interesting could I have seen each little diary kept by the dear Sisters who

are gone ; but they have nearly all disappeared except one, and my own was in great part eaten by the rats at Balaklava. Carlow was my first Convent home ; from there I went to the East, and soon after my return I was sent to Gort, county Galway, where I now am.

If any of the English ladies or others who have aided in the mission are still alive, I beg to send them my warmest remembrance, and an assurance that I have daily remembered them in my unworthy prayers. Of one of these ladies I may add a word. Soon after Rev. Mother's return to Kinsale, Cardinal Wiseman sent her the following letter which he had received, and which he thought would give her pleasure :

MY LORD CARDINAL,

Casually taking up the *Record* of the 4th inst., the following words arrested my attention—they form part of an extract of a “Lenten Indult” read in Roman Catholic churches, and which purports to emanate from yourself: “Circumstances seemed to call upon them to pay a public tribute to a class of labourers in the Aceldama of the

Crimea—their humble but laborious Nuns. It must have been a source of pain to Roman Catholics that no manifestation of feeling had ever been witnessed towards them, while charity that had sprung up suddenly in the world had been honoured by Royal praise, and commemorated by lasting monuments.”

Of the labours of the Sisters of Mercy in the Crimea it is not for me to speak. I know of them only by report of those who witnessed them, and thankfully bear testimony to their priceless value; but of the twelve Nuns who worked at Balaklava, eight were under my direction at Koulali from the 10th of April to October 1st, 1855. I consider it a privilege to bear witness to their devotion and obedience, to the perfect truthfulness and exquisite tact with which they performed the duties of nursing during those weary months. As an individual, my testimony is of little value; but the position which I then occupied gave me opportunity which no other possessed of watching—and I did so narrowly—the spirit which guided them, and the manner in which their work was done; and rather than the deep injustice of refusing all honour and thanks to the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy should

be done in England's name, I have broken the silence most dear and fitting to a woman. Much more might be said ; but I know that neither the Mother Frances or her Sisters seek for praise here, and, at the risk of exciting a smile at Protestant fondness for Scriptural allusion, I would add that they are surely blessed in not receiving their reward of men.—I am, my Lord Cardinal, yours faithfully,

EMILY HUTTON,

Lady Superintendent at Koulali Hospital.

Father Strickland died in the Crimea, where he caught typhus fever in the French Hospital. He was buried with such military honours as usually accompany to the grave only a general officer of the first rank. Father Strickland was generally beloved and respected in the camp. When fever and scurvy raged like a plague amongst the French troops—many of the French chaplains fell victims—the men were daily dying without Sacrament. The three Jesuits, Father Woollett, Father Duffy, and Father Strickland, offered their aid, as there was very little sick duty amongst the English

troops ; and they daily rode over to the French, and spent a portion of each day in their hospitals. Father Woollett first caught fever, but recovered ; Father Strickland went to an early grave, and is now, I trust, enjoying a martyr's crown, the fruit of his zeal and charity—the sixth priest buried in the Crimea.

In December, 1856, the Convents heard that Bishop Grant had been officially informed that the Sultan graciously wished to present the Sisters who had nursed the Turks as well as Christians in the Ottoman Empire with a memento of his appreciation of their services. Lord Panmure, in making this communication, besought the Bishop to express to the “Sisterhood the sense entertained by Her Majesty's Government of the devotion displayed by them in attending and mitigating the sufferings of the sick and wounded soldiers in the East.” The Nuns, whose services had been wholly gratuitous, declined to accept any gift which might be construed as a remuneration ; but as a decided refusal might be offensive to a foreign Potentate, whose expressed appreciation of

their services was entirely unexpected, they laid the matter before authority. The following was Cardinal Wiseman's reply to the Mother Superior of the Carlow House :

London, December 17th, 1856.

MY DEAR COUSIN AND REV. MOTHER,

After mature consideration I decided that the Nuns of Bermondsey, on their coming to our Hospital, should accept the Sultan's gift, it being quite understood by the War Office that it was not bestowed on the individual Nuns, but on pious works through the hands of their Communities. This being the case, why refuse to accept a sum, however small, for the poor, which, if refused, will only go to Protestants for worldly purposes? I own I do not see why. In Ireland there may be reasons which I do not know, but here there are not. I could not consistently allow or advise one house to accept and tell another to refuse. I must, therefore, reply to your note that I think you should accept and apply the money to some charitable purpose.—Your affectionate cousin and Father in Christ,

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

Bishop Grant wrote to Cardinal Cullen on

the same subject ; and other letters that followed may be given here :

December 15th, 1856.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

The War Office has taken great pains to arrange the Sultan's gift in the way least likely for the Nuns to receive it. They told me to write the accompanying letter, which was to express that the Sisters received it for distribution amongst the poor, and in no way for themselves ; and I am glad that your Grace has seen no difficulty in allowing the Baggot Street Community to receive it. The Sisters of Mercy in other Convents in Ireland objected, but I think that the enclosed letter guards them sufficiently, especially when it is considered that they have received no communication from our own Government, and they remain, therefore, as they were, free from any gift or reward. If your Grace approves, will you represent this to the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, so that his Sisters may not object to receive the gift.—Yours sincerely,

THOMAS GRANT.

To Sir B. Hawes.

The revised list of the Sisters of

Mercy who attended the hospitals in the East are now in your hands, and in the name of their respective Communities I beg leave to express their gratitude to the Government for having allowed them to assist their brave fellow countrymen during the war. It is pleasing to them to reflect that their desire to undertake the duties assigned them solely from motives of charity and without any personal remuneration has been admitted and recognised by their country; and that, therefore, in being permitted to distribute the gift of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan amongst the poor and infirm, they will not lose the honour which they so highly prized of having been allowed to devote their services, without hope of any earthly reward, to the alleviation of the sufferings and care of the sick and dying soldiers of the expeditionary army. If you still intend me to receive the gift of the Sultan, it will be my duty to forward the letters to the respective Communities to whom it is sent, or restore it to the War Department.

✠ T. GRANT,
Bishop of Southwark.

MY DEAR REV. MOTHER,

The enclosed letters show that our de-

cision regarding the expediency of receiving the Sultan's gift was founded on a false presumption. It seems now that the money is for the poor, that the Sisters are to be the almoners, and that their heroic charity has been the occasion or cause for selecting them to distribute amongst the poor the bounty of His Sublime Majesty of Constantinople. Would it not appear, then, that there is no compromise of either feeling or principle in accepting the donations for distribution amongst the distressed? You can let me know your views, dear Rev. Mother, and return the letters, that I may send them back.—Yours sincerely,

✠ JAMES WALSH.

The Sultan's gift was £230, divided between the different Communities that sent out Sisters.

We received innumerable letters from the poor soldiers, and I cannot close without giving a sample of one or two:

I thank you kindly for all your goodness to me. I hope your reward is in store in Heaven for you and the remainder of your dear Sisters that served God, and with

His help saved many a poor soldier's life. When far from a friend in a distant land, our meek Sisters brought the heavenly smile and the spirit of God into the wards among the broken-hearted soldiers. I can never forget your kindness. The Lord reward you for all your goodness and kindness to me! No more at present; but I remain, your faithful servant,

CORPORAL JAMES BRAZIL.

The following letter was written from Scutari, and forwarded to us at Balaklava:

DEAR SISTER,

I write to send my best respects to you, hoping they will be acceptable. For me to draw any inference from how very good and civil you were to me, is to think you won't be vexed with my audacity in enclosing a note for you. But if it displeases you, all you have to do is to tell Tom Connors that I should not enclose a note for you, and you will be obeyed. Dear Sister, the sergeant of the Rifles and myself unite in sending our best respects to you. Our feelings on this point are incomprehensible; we cannot express how lonesome

MEMORIES OF THE CRIMEA.

we are since you left. Please do us the honour to write to us, dear Sister.—I have the honour to be

Your obedient, humble servant,
JOHN HOPKINS.

A P P E N D I X.

OF the other group—the mainly English group—of Sisters of Mercy who worked quite separately from the mainly Irish group in the Crimea, a brief history should be made.

When the war between Russia and the allied armies of England and France broke out in 1854, and our Government resolved to send to the Crimea a regularly organised staff of nurses, of which Miss Florence Nightingale was placed at the head, Bishop Grant of Southwark obtained permission at once to place upon it a number of Sisters of Mercy. There was, however, at that time, but one Community of Nuns in the Diocese of Southwark, within the limits of whose rules and vocation an undertaking of this sort seemed to lie. The members of this Community were few in number, and were already fully occupied by their labours of love amongst the poor and sick in their own neighbourhood. Yet, when the Bishop arrived one evening at their Convent in Bermondsey, and explained

to the Superior the sad state of affairs, and dwelt on the terrible sufferings of the wounded soldiers, and on their need of good nursing, sisterly sympathy, and religious consolation, she offered herself and four other Sisters for the perilous mission. Two days later the Bishop wrote to the Superior to say that the Government wished them to go immediately—in fact, they were to start the very next morning. They had, therefore, only a few hours in which to prepare for a long and dangerous journey, with the details of which they were quite unacquainted, only knowing that they were to start for Turkey at half-past seven in the morning, and that they went for the love of God.

“And who is to take care of you from this to Turkey?” asked one of their amazed well-wishers. To which the Sisters only replied that “they hoped their angel guardians would kindly do so.” Father Collingridge ran out and purchased for each Sister a railway rug and a small travelling bag, into which she stowed her clothes and books of devotion. Bishop Grant came the next morning, before the time of departure, to bid the travellers an affectionate good-bye. He gave them a letter of introduction to Mr. Goldsmid, a friend in Paris, which was their first halting-place, and recommended them to put up for the night at the Hotel Meurice. On their arrival very late in the capital,

they found the hotel full, and in their perplexity carried their letter to the house of Mr. Goldsmid. They were told that he had retired for the night, and nothing would induce his man-servant to disturb him. Tired with their journey, alone and friendless in a great city, they had a sense of desolation that was very acute. The servant, compassionating their plight, conducted them to the Hotel Clarendon, where, fortunately, they could be taken in, and were comfortably entertained. Early the next morning Mr. Goldsmid arrived, bringing a telegram from Dr. Grant, desiring the Sisters to wait in Paris for a day or two, until further arrangements had been made. The Government having consented to ten Nuns being placed on the staff of nurses, the Bishop was most anxious to obtain five others to join those who had already started from Bermondsey. With this desire uppermost in his mind, he went to the Convent of the Faithful Virgin, at Norwood, to ask the orphans to pray for the additional volunteers. "Here is permission to send ten Nuns," he said to the Superior, "and I have only five." "My Lord," she replied, after a thoughtful pause, "we have no mission for the service of the sick, but you can dispose of us as you think fit." "God be praised!" said the Bishop, and it was decided that on Monday morning—it being then Saturday—a party of five

should be ready to start. There was a generous rivalry among the Sisters as to whom should be chosen for the difficult service ; and when the five were duly selected they went at once into the chapel, and kneeling before our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, they offered their lives to Him. Before six on Monday morning the Bishop was at the station to bid them God-speed on their journey of love and self-sacrifice ; but at the last parting his heart was too full to speak—he could only silently bless them.

The two detachments of Nuns met in Paris, and, joining Miss Nightingale, they sailed together from Marseilles, and, after a rough voyage, in which the vessel was nearly lost, reached Scutari. On landing they were escorted by soldiers to the huge barracks, capable of holding five thousand men, which had been handed over for the use of the English by the Sultan, along with the adjoining hospital, containing accommodation for two thousand beds. Nothing could be more desolate than the room allotted to the Sisters. Its only article of furniture was a decrepit chair ; no fire could be obtained, and an icy wind blew through the broken windows. The luxury of a cup of tea, made with slightly warm water, and without milk or sugar, was obtained through the energy of a soldier ; and this, along with a small slice of bread, constituted their first meal

after landing on a foreign shore, worn out by the fatigue and sickness of the voyage.

The Battle of Inkerman was fought on the day following the arrival of the nurses, and henceforth the hospitals were crowded with the dying and the dead. How many lives were saved by the gentle ministrations of the Sisters those who were present at these awful scenes could, perhaps, form some idea ; but how many souls gained eternally by the suggestions of faith and charity and contrition that fell from their lips on dying ears, will not be known until the day when those who bring many to righteousness shall shine with a sevenfold radiancy in the firmament of God. "No painting," says Miss Grace Ramsay, from whose beautiful memoir of Bishop Grant we have gathered the facts here related, "however graphic, could convey a true idea of what they, one and all, endured in their self-imposed warfare with death and sickness. In the stinging cold of an Eastern winter, when everything froze hard, they were without a fire ; their food was scanty, and so bad that it reduced them to a choice between sickness and hunger. During the first six weeks of their arrival a drink of pure water was a luxury not to be had !" The Sisters had no second habits, so that when they came home, as they often did, drenched with rain, they had to remain in bed until the wet clothes were dried at the kitchen fire.

The soldiers vied with each other in paying attention to the Sisters. "You would be surprised at the nice feeling the men show," one of them writes from the Scutari barracks; "they are so cautious in their manners, and never utter a bad word or an oath before us. If one chances to say what the others think too free in our presence, the whole ward cry out 'hush!'" Still, the position of the Sisters was a trying one—in the midst of three thousand soldiers; frequently coming into contact with foreigners, amongst others the Turks, who accosted them, respectfully enough, by the familiar name of "Johnny"; and, worse than all, deprived of all chance of solitude or of opportunities to join together in the performance of their habitual devotions. Very practical and very real were the every-day struggles of that life of charity and toil. Yet, on the other hand, as the writer before quoted observes, "a poem undoubtedly it was, mystic and wonderful, but not visible in its beauty to common eyes. It was a poem attuned to no earthly key, but to the voice of souls enamoured of the Cross." This heavenly music found an echo in the soul of Dr. Grant, who snatched time from his already well-filled hours to keep up a regular correspondence with his absent and "dear daughters in Christ," giving them all the home news, ever sympathising with them in their trials, and

urging them to a close and closer union with their Divine Master, whose Passion he implores them ever to bear in mind. He tells them that even amid the hurry and noise of the wards they should be united to "the interior and mysterious life of their crucified Lord, and that their duties are only means to express their love for Him!" He urges them to "bear courageously all toil and suffering for the love of our sweet Lord, and to make amends for so many sinners who deny Him." "The best way," he says, "to avoid distractions will be to recollect as often as possible that Christ, our dear Lord, lives in each of your sick flock; and so you will feel yourselves living in the immediate presence of Him Who has said: 'Whatever you do to one of these little ones is done to Me.'" As time advances, and the winter is succeeded by an intensely hot summer, the Bishop tells them that when overcome by the heat they must "think of our dear Lord going about the same Asia, healing the sick, and obliged to rest at the well, and asking the Samaritan to give Him to drink."

At one time the Bishop was greatly disturbed by rumours about an attempt to prevent the Sisters from speaking on matters of religion even to those of their own creed. He had written to them on their first setting out: "Do not introduce religion to any but Catholics. When you can, suggest an act

to the dying of contrition, faith, etc." They had gone out, as he constantly reminds them, as Nuns first and then nurses; and now, when he hears of a plan which is to reduce them to be nurses only, he writes to the Sisters to say that "it will be contrary to the express agreement with Government," and that if carried out, which fortunately it never was, their duty will plainly be to return home. Then, again, people said that the Nuns did not work well with Miss Nightingale, and an ultra-Protestant pamphlet appeared, pointing out the absurdity of "Catholic Nuns transferring their allegiance from the Pope of Rome to a Protestant lady." The tidings of these sayings and doings, when they reached Scutari, caused much merriment among the parties most nearly concerned. One of the Sisters playfully addressed Miss Nightingale as "Your Holiness," and the latter retorted by dubbing her "the Cardinal."

A year had now elapsed since the valiant little band had set out towards the East. "What a dream," writes one in a letter home, "it all seems! One can scarcely believe that it will be a whole year next Wednesday since we left dear old Bermondsey. Yesterday there were great rejoicings for something—a victory gained, we know not where, for we live happily ignorant of all that goes on beyond the walls." In the

following month, for the second time, the cholera broke out at Scutari. The angel of death was indeed abroad, and many of the occupants of the hospital wards fell beneath the shadow of his wings. Two of the Sisters had been seriously ill for some time, but had stuck to their posts through all; and now a devoted lay-sister fell a victim to the raging epidemic, and was buried by the soldiers with every mark of affection and respect. Miss Nightingale was at Balaklava at the time, and she wrote to the Rev. Mother at Scutari, asking her, if possible, to get additional Nuns from England. She concludes her letter thus: "I cannot express to you, dear Rev. Mother, the gratitude which I and the whole country feel to you for your goodness. You have been one of our chief mainstays, and without you I do not know what would have become of the work. With love to all my Sisters, believe me, dear Rev. Mother, ever yours affectionately and gratefully, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE." Consequently, three more Sisters found their way from Bermondsey to Scutari, though not in time to join in the Mass celebrated on the Christmas Day of 1855 by Father Bagshawe in the little chapel which had been appropriately decorated by the soldiers for the great festival. As Lent came on, the rigour of the climate and the continued strain and fatigue began to tell

seriously on the health of the Sisters, and especially on that of the Rev. Mother. Bishop Grant writes, therefore, to beg them not to tax their strength further by fasting, reminding them, by the way, that "Our dear Lord wishes us to look cheerful in Lent."

On Good Friday three of the Sisters accompanied Miss Nightingale to the "Front," and did service about five miles from Bala-klava. "They had a tent to themselves," we are told, "open to the weather in many parts, and on awaking next morning they found themselves covered with snow, which had fallen heavily all night. They were consoled for those little discomforts by the arrival of a gentleman on horseback bearing them the princely present of some eggs, tied up in a handkerchief. The benefactor proved to be the Protestant chaplain of the detachment, who showed the Nuns many other acts of kindness and courtesy, which they strove to acknowledge by washing his neckties, a process performed under difficulties, the teapot filled with boiling water doing duty as a smoothing iron. Miss Nightingale, writing from the new encampment to the Sisters at Scutari, says: "I want my Cardinal very much up here. The Sisters are all quite well and cheerful, thank God for it! They have made their hut look quite tidy, and put up with the cold and inconveniences with the

utmost self-abnegation. Everything, even the ink, freezes in our hut every night." "Sister A——," she writes again, "is such a very steady worker, she has seven sick-huts. Sister C—— is very commanding and courageous, and not easily daunted." One of the Nuns had a dangerous attack of fever, through which Miss Nightingale insisted on nursing her herself. One night, while watching by the sick-bed, she saw a huge rat upon the rafters right over the Sister's head; and taking an umbrella, she knocked it down and killed it without disturbing the patient.

And now at last, in April 1856, a peace was concluded; but, as the work among the wounded did not cease simultaneously with the cessation of the war, the Sisters still continued their stay in the East, with the exception of the Rev. Mother, whose shattered health and home duties rendered her return to England an imperative necessity. "Work away merrily!" were her parting words to those whom she left behind at Balaklava and Scutari. In a farewell letter addressed to her by Florence Nightingale, the latter says: "You know that I shall do everything I can for the Sisters whom you have left me. I will care for them as if they were my own children. But it will not be like you. I do not presume to express praise or gratitude to you, Rev. Mother, because it

would look as though I thought you had done this work, not unto God, but unto me. You were far above me in fitness for the general superintendency in worldly talent of administration, and far more in the spiritual qualifications which God values in a Superior; my being placed over you was my misfortune, not my fault. What you have done for the work no one can ever say. I do not presume to give you any other tribute but my tears. But I should be glad that the Bishop of Southwark should know, and Dr. Manning, that you were valued here as you deserve, and that the gratitude of the army is yours."

The other Sisters remained more than two months longer on the scene of their long and loving labours; their return to England being commemorated by Bishop Grant in a Pastoral, in which he spoke of them as those who had "earned for themselves not, indeed, the perishable glory of earthly victory, but the promise of everlasting reward and of unfading crowns."

The Sisters had from the first refused all remuneration for their services; and when, after their return to England, Lord Panmure wrote to "express to the Sisterhood the sense entertained by Her Majesty's Government of the devotion displayed by them in attending the sick and wounded soldiers in the British hospitals in the East," and to

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offer them a sum of money, the Nuns generously declined it, expressing at the same time a willingness, which the Government readily gratified, to distribute it among the poor and sick of their own district, preferring for themselves to be rewarded only by His grace and love, for whose sake alone they had undertaken a difficult and a noble work.

The following correspondence has in this very Jubilee Year, 1897, passed between the Queen, and the author of this volume :

Pall Mall, London, S.W.,
February 15th, 1897.

MADAM,

The Queen having been pleased to bestow upon you the decoration of the Royal Red Cross, I have to inform you that in the case of such honours as this it is the custom of Her Majesty to personally bestow the decoration upon the recipient when such a course is convenient to all concerned; and I have, therefore, to request that you will be so good as to inform me whether it would be convenient to you to attend at Windsor some time within the next few weeks. Should any circumstances prevent your receiving the Royal Red Cross

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from the hands of Her Majesty, it could be transmitted by post to your present address.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

GEORGE M. FARQUHARSON.

Sister Mary Aloysius.

St. Patrick's, Gort, county Galway,

SIR,

February 17th, 1897.

I received your letter of the 15th, intimating to me that Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen is pleased to bestow on me the Order of the Royal Cross, in recognition of the services of my Sisters in religion and my own in caring for the wounded soldiers at the Crimea during the war. My words cannot express my gratitude for the great honour which Her Majesty is pleased to confer upon me. The favour is, if possible, enhanced by the permission to receive this public mark of favour at Her Majesty's own hands. The weight of seventy-six years and the infirmities of age will, I trust, dispense me from the journey to the Palace. I will, therefore, with sentiments of deepest gratitude, ask to be permitted to receive this mark of my Sovereign's favour in the less public and formal manner you have kindly indicated.

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours in Jesus Christ,

SISTER M. ALOYSIUS.

