

**Douglas Hill** (ed.), *Letters from the Crimea: Writing Home, A Dundee Doctor* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2010), pp. xi + 224, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84586-094-3.

This fascinating series of letters from a newly minted surgeon, Dr David Greig, to his mother, father and sister is a valuable addition to the rich collection of memoirs of British officers who served in the Crimean War. The letters were discovered during a house clearance and are reproduced from typed copies dated 1906, not the original handwritten letters. Whoever typed them was not familiar with Russian place names or French soldiers. For example, the Vorontsov or Worontzow Road is spelled Worongow, the Zouaves are Soaves, the Redan is sometimes the Kedan and the Malakoff, the Zalakoff. The editor does not give us the correct spellings or explain the significance of these places, and for those unfamiliar with the terrain, it would be helpful to have a map. There are short identifications of some of the characters in the story and an introduction giving the larger context of the war by the military historian Trevor Royle. However, no explanatory notes accompany the text and there is no index.

There are two appendices, one a chronology of the war, and the second, 'Florence Nightingale and Dr David Greig.' It is indicative of the way Nightingale has come to dominate the history of the Crimean War that this appendix includes only Greig's references to Nightingale herself and not his more interesting comments on her nurses and their efficacy. He thought the orderlies could do just as good a job as the nurses and considered the religious Sisters, who are now generally thought to have been the best of the British nurses, meek, quiet creatures who, although willing, were not able to do much. The hospital nurses, he said, came from the better class of nurses at home and were sadly disappointed by the limited amount of work they were permitted to do and wished that they had remained at home. They expected to be nursing heroes but instead found the soldiers

'the most miserable specimens of humanity' (p. 107).

Greig graduated from Edinburgh in 1853 and arrived, together with two colleagues, in Scutari in November 1854. All three contracted Crimean fever, and Greig, who at one point was thought to be dying, was the sole survivor. For Greig, the war was a diversion, what would now be a year of travelling abroad after finishing university and starting one's career. He joined the army, he told his parents, 'to get surgical practice, to see the world, to get the éclat of being at the war, and to get a year or two's recreation before settling into practice' (p. 31). At the end of the war, as he considered his future career, he wrote that he did not consider the year and a half in the East a complete waste of time. 'I would not have missed seeing what I have seen for any sum of money and only regret that I was not with the army from the very first' (p. 201), he wrote, but he had done more than amuse himself. He was the Assistant Surgeon in his regiment to whom all the most serious operations were assigned and he became a distinguished member of the Army's Pathological Board.

Greig worked in Scutari for his first two months, the months when there were the greatest shortages, then went to Koulali, and finally to Balaclava and the camp before Sevastopol, where he served in the trenches as well as in the field hospitals. His observations contrast strongly with those of the Parliamentary commissioners and the nurses who wrote about the war. He found it all very 'jolly': 'We are all in first rate health and like the style of things very well. We have of course a great many hardships but I can tell you we enjoy them gloriously' (p. 29), he wrote ten days after arriving in Scutari. He maintained this attitude, at least to his family, throughout the war. As well as his surgical work he describes his domestic arrangements, the floggings every third or fourth day which he, as a surgeon, had to attend, the various entertainments of stoning and shooting wild dogs, theatres, rides through the camps, and after the peace was signed, the parties with the

## Book Reviews

Russian officers and an expedition to Baktchi-Serai and Simferopol. Greig's letters give us a better picture of the day-to-day life of a Crimean War surgeon than any other memoirs published so far.

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**Sioban Nelson and Anne Marie Rafferty** (eds), *Notes on Nightingale: The Influence and Legacy of a Nursing Icon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. ix + 172, £12.50/\$18.95, paperback, ISBN: 978-0-8014-7611-2.

Florence Nightingale left as a legacy her ideas and template for nurses' training and public health reforms based on statistical evidence. In this book, eight nurse historians and scholars write about facets of Nightingale's life and work; each paper provides information drawn from primary sources about Nightingale's goals, actions, and achievements. She is characterised as a spiritual person with practical concerns about health care as she led a delegation of nurses to care for soldiers in British military hospitals in Scutari, Turkey. She wrote books about nursing and hospitals, reported about public health and sanitation problems throughout the British Empire, and organised a nursing school at St Thomas Hospital in London. Ms Nightingale is revered and criticised for her beliefs and actions, and the authors frankly discuss her ideas and dealings in nineteenth-century Victorian society.

Nelson and Rafferty introduce Nightingale's areas of interest and influence, and describe her evolution from an impressionable young woman, to a politically astute social activist and a revered icon. Nelson traces the development of Nightingale's influence in the next paper, and outlines 'the Nightingale imperative' (p.9) for nursing seen in her organisation of care for the sick in a London clinic, for casualties in

hospitals in the Crimea, and of a nursing school in London in 1860. Nightingale brought recognition of nursing as a respectable profession for women who were able to improve health outcomes for the sick and injured. She campaigned to reform public health and hospital care by corresponding with influential people in the Sanitation Movement, British Parliament and universities.

Helmstadter's paper describes Nightingale's best-known humanitarian mission, which was to lead a team of female nurses to care for injured soldiers in military hospitals in the Crimean War. Nightingale was instructed by the Secretary of War to ensure that all nurses would obey the orders of military doctors and purveyors in the hospitals implicitly, and prevent religious disputes. Nightingale selected nurses from various social and religious backgrounds, and monitored nurses' deportment in the military hospitals. Nightingale faced many challenges with her group of nurses in the Crimea; however, she established a fully functioning and respectable nursing service and proved that female nurses could exercise authority through their work, overcome social, religious and gender biases.

Godden provides insight into conditions that influenced nurses' training at the Nightingale Training School. Despite the challenges encountered with the Nightingale School, two Nightingale-trained nurses established nursing services in Australia and Canada.

Lynaugh discusses the emergence of trained nurses in the United States. Nurses, under the supervision of ladies, visited people in their homes during the war of 1812 in the United States. An experienced Nightingale School graduate nurse, Alice Fisher, collaborated to enact hospital reform at the Philadelphia Hospital in 1885, selected trained assistants to work in the hospital, and started a nurses' training school; however, she did not use Nightingale's model of nurse teaching and hospital discipline. In 1893, Isabel Hampton, Lavina Dock, and Florence Nightingale presented papers at a conference, each arguing