

B O O K S

A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE ¹

This Bio-Bibliography compiled by the late W. J. Bishop, F.L.A. and completed by Sue Goldie, B.A. (Oxon), for the International Council of Nurses, is the result of seven years intensive research. With a preface by Miss Ellen Broe, under the auspices of the International Council of Nurses in association with the Florence Nightingale International Foundation, it includes references, complete with notes and comments, to the 200 books, pamphlets and articles, published and unpublished, and to some 12,000 letters written by Florence Nightingale. If she had become a legend in her own lifetime, a legend which is still being perpetuated of her nursing fame as the "Lady with the lamp", this material should do much to emphasize her still greater achievements and ideas in the fields of public health and hygiene, hospital construction and management, medical statistics, Indian and Colonial health and welfare.

The greatness of her work can be seen in the vast range of her interests. In an age when there was opposition to women taking any part in public life, even in 1858 it was considered "shocking" for a woman to enter a hospital as a nurse, she tenaciously expressed her views on such subjects as the treatment of the sick, poor and airless housing conditions, the lack of skilled nursing staff and the incompetence of hospital administration. Of patients she asked, "Do we care for the patients in hospital? Hospitals are made for patients—not patients for hospitals." Her *Notes on the health of the British Army*, a voluminous work of 830 pages, founded on her experiences during the Crimean War, have been considered to be one of the most valuable contributions ever made to hospital organization and administration in time of war.

Florence Nightingale also exposed conditions in India, bad water and drainage, filthy bazaars, want of ventilation and gross overcrowding. She urged the means of water transit and irrigation

¹ Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, 1962.

for the relief of the victims of famines in Bengal and Behar. She emphasized the need for encouraging villagers to participate actively in plans for sanitary improvements and suggested that Indian health missionaries should be trained to encourage health and cleanliness in their own country. She denounced the "crying evil" of Kaffir women being sold for cattle in Natal. She realized that as soon as the native habits and customs of aborigines and primitive tribes began to undergo changes under European influences, the work of destruction had begun. For instance, very few sick aborigines of Australia recovered their health when sent to hospital.

On the subject of hospital construction, she advocated more space, ventilation and light; she also examined the high mortality rates in maternity institutions and the training of midwives. She proposed a uniform plan for compiling hospital statistics in a paper sent to the delegates of the International Statistical Congress in 1860. In the field of sociology she touched life at many points, land tenure in Bengal, prostitution, poor relief, prison reform.

Florence Nightingale was fortunate in her personal associations with men in positions of responsibility, who gave her support against obscurantism and the appalling *vis inertiae* prevailing at the time. Of Lord Sydney Herbert she wrote . . . "He will be remembered chiefly as the first war minister who ever seriously set himself the task of saving life". . . On the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, she was closely associated with the founding of the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded, before that Society became the British Red Cross.

"If peace has its victories as well as war, it has also its unnecessary losses from disease and death . . . To endeavour to prevent this destruction of life is by no means to encourage war, no more than to attend on the sick and wounded in a field hospital is to encourage war." A hundred years have passed since Florence Nightingale wrote these words. Since then there has been much progress in the saving of lives: there has also been more destruction.

M.C.S.P.