

Published letters, prefaces. The letters here all come from published book and journal sources. They are arranged chronologically; in the case of publications with more than one letter, by the date of the earliest letter. At the end are the 14 letters of *Florence Nightingale's Indian Letters*.

Letters published in newspapers are in a separate file.

Italics indicates single underlining; small caps, double (or more) underlining; folio breaks are indicated with a \* bold square brackets indicates where published in the *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*

17 youthful letters to a friend. Henning Wieslander, "Florence Nightingale och Hennes Svenska Ungdomsväninna," in *Samfundet Örebro stads-och länsbiblioteks vänner*. Meddelande no. XII:12-75

[1] Undated

My dear Mrs Benedicks

Mama found yesterday too fatiguing to go out today at 10:30, but if you will accompany us to the *English* church at 12 o'clock, we shall be delighted, and the sleepy Mr Knapp does not preach today. I hope that you have slept well and are all recovered from your fatigues. With kind love to your sister believe me,

most truly yours

Florence Nightingale

[2] Postscript to a letter by Frances Nightingale

Hotel Royal

Venice

5 May [1838]

My dear Miss Marie-Louise Benedicks

I cannot tell you how much we have thought of you since we received the news of your grief. You have had a painful task in sending such news to your poor friends in Sweden and being so far from them. Since we saw you, we have known still more of death for this last month seems to have made much grief for those in whom we are interested. It is singular that our poor uncle who was one of the Member[s] of Parliament for Portsmouth and the wife of the other member (whose death we heard of the same day that we received your letter, my dear) should both have died within so short a time. I wish that we could give you some little comfort, that we could at least see you to kiss you again. We are looking forward to meeting you once more on your way home, for we cannot bear to think of seeing you never again. Give my best love to your dear sister. She has all our prayers that some peace may visit her in so great suffering, and I am sure that it will, she is so good. You will not refuse the warmest wishes of your most affectionate friend

Florence Nightingale...

My dear Miss Benedicks, I hope that your sister's cough does not continue. If it should, perhaps the following prescription may be of use to her. We have found it very beneficial to cough *not* attended with much heat or fever. Gale promised it to your servant who took the medicine with advantage. I have therefore copied it twice and perhaps you will tear it off and give it to him.

ever yours

F.N.

R. Syrup: Papav:

Acet: Scillae a a

A small tea spoonful to be taken in a cup full of warm Barley water (or of warm water) three times a day.

[3] pp 27-30

Geneva

11 September 1838

My dear Madame Benedicks

We have been very uneasy at not receiving the letter which we had hoped for from you and your sister--in--law here at Geneva. I hope that nothing has happened to delay your safe arrival at Stockholm. We have been waiting to hear of this before we wrote, but I must now accept your kind invitation to write to ask you how you have borne the journey. I hope that your tiresome long trajet is now over and that your health has not suffered from it and that you are now quietly settled among your own family whom you were longing to see so much. We were very triste the day we left you at Venice but we had a very pleasant journey to Milan, though I am afraid by the heat which we had that you must have suffered very much from it in your feverish state. We spent such a delightful fortnight after Milan on the lakes of Como and Maggiore; the thermometer, it is true, was 22 1/2° on the water, but when one is not traveling that is not too hot. I cannot describe the delights of Varenna, where the inn is an ancient villa with gaily painted ceilings, windows looking up both branches of the Lake of Como, and such a garden, six tiers of terraces covered with lemon and orange trees, with a flight of steps down into the water and a magnificent iron gate between two high pillars with aloes at the top.

We landed from the boat at this fine portal, which stands out on the promontory--the smell of the orange flowers wafted to us from afar off and the new moon seeming to go farther and farther from the black hill as she set, unwilling to leave the bright face of the lake. Then at night we sat in our dressing gowns on the balcony, listening to a Milanese family who were singing the Semiramide duet in the garden. The lake spread out before us under a sky of stars, one great planet like a beacon on the hill, and the fire flies glancing about among the black

cypresses and putting out the light of the new moon with the roar of a waterfall in the distance. One Sunday we went across the lake to visit the deserted villa of an old friend, the Count Porro, one of the Twelve who headed the revolution by which the Italians tried to free themselves from the Austrians in 1821. They were all hung in effigy in the streets of Milan. Ten escaped into England and Switzerland.

One Count Confalonieri found the window through which he was to have made his escape shut, and was taken in the presence of his wife and condemned to death. His wife set off for Vienna to ask for his pardon. After many interviews with the Empress, who befriended her, she (Teresa Confalonieri) heard one night that the courier with her husband's sentence of death had been just sent off. She started up and went immediately to the Empress, who was in bed, but consented to go once more to the Emperor. And then, and not till then, when they thought it was too late, was the grace granted to her. This grace was that the order for Confalonieri's execution should be changed into his imprisonment for life at Spielberg, in "carcere durissimo" as they call it, that is, hard labour, bread and water, chains and privation of all books, etc. Madame Confalonieri sent off her courier directly, who travelled faster than any courier was known to do before. The carriage of the government courier was broken on the road, which occasioned a delay of fourteen hours. This saved Confalonieri's life.

After his grace arrived, he was allowed however to make his will and take the last sacrament before the commutation was announced to him. This was done by the gratuitous cruelty of a Tyrolese, unauthorized by the government but which rewarded him by raising him afterwards to the post of President of a Tribunal, and whose card we saw on the table of the first lady in Milan. Confalonieri was afterwards exposed for three days chained to an iron ring, which you may have seen in the streets of Milan, and then sent to Spielberg. A cushion which he took with him, which his wife has worked for him, was afterwards taken away as "objet de luxe." She, poor thing, never gave up the hope of releasing him as long as she lived, and had always some new scheme in her head which gave her no peace. (A lady, whom we know, also went to Spielberg to bribe the jailer in hope to let him out.) She died brokenhearted three years before he came out of prison and his wife's death was the only news of his family which reached him during the fifteen years he was in Spielberg.

He came out about two years ago with his health quite broken, but his friend Porro escorted him at Marseilles & he is now at Paris where we shall see him. Porro escaped out of one door of his beautiful villa on Como as the gens d'armes came in at the other. We went to see it in a storm of thunder and lightning. It stands on a promontory stretching out into the lake

(almost an island) and, when the storms sweep down the lake, they shake the house to its foundations. We rowed into the little port with three statues of titular saints round it, for the villa once belonged to a cardinal, the correct was still on the iron gate and the initials CP still under it, but no one answered when our boat man whistled.

And it was some before the iron gate was opened and we went up the flight of steps to a grass lawn covered with jessamine growing wild. Parthe and I scrambled down to the water's edge and sat on the little wall, looking down the lake, the thunder echoing along the mountain, a nook in the rock just below perfect for a bathing place and a fig tree growing out of the rock and hanging into the water covered with green figs which there will be none to see ripen. Everything was flourishing in wild luxuriance.

From the loggia of three arches at the top of the house you can see both up and down the lake and it is difficult which view to choose. No wonder that poor Count Porro's youngest son always spoke to us of his early days as a sort of vision of glory, The father, when Mama talked to him of the sacrifice he made of such a paradise when he conspired for his country, said "*That was nothing-- it was the giving up the education of my motherless children to strangers. One of my daughters is married to a bad man and is very unhappy. If I had been at home, that might not have happened.*" The good woman, who had kept the house twenty-three years, took us over it in ecstasies of delight at finding someone who knew her old master and his children and showed us the geraniums which she nursed herself brighter than can grow anywhere else. And oh! the beautiful return to our citron terraces rising in a pyramid out of the lake, with the moon above.

Do you remember how we used to look at that moon on the Arno at beautiful Florence and, and at the lights glancing across the Ponte della Trinita and stand together on the terrace on those warm nights? It will be a very long while before that time will come again. Now we are in this "howling wilderness" and the wind is whistling round us and no boat has ventured out, not even the steamboats upon the lake today. And a woman can scarcely stand upon the bridge over the Rhone, for the spray drifts over the island. Winter has come upon us before summer is over in this worst of climates, Geneva, which chills and which scorches at the same time. We crossed the St Gotthard from Milan to Lucerne but of our subsequent two months tour in Switzerland, I can tell you nothing which will amuse you but the number of beds which I have slept in and of barley water which I have drunk, for I have been ill and have seen nothing and so must come at once to what we are doing here, while *they* are gone out and have left me at home.

We live among the Italians, one who like a Paul Veronese

stepped out of his frame and his wife, who writes beautiful poetry and sighs after her native land, another who is master of Italian here, because his father, who is of different opinions from himself, will not allow him any money in his exile; a third, who was put into a madhouse for twenty-five days before his exile, from the spite of the Minister of Police and without the shadow of reason, the Sismondis—he wrote an excellent history of Italian republics, our good Count Porro, who has just left us, and his sister-in-law, whom you saw with us at Venice and who received us in her country house on the Lago Maggiore for several days. They talk to us of beautiful Italy while we all here shrivel with the cold.

The Geneveses are very kind and hospitable too to us but they have but three things to talk about: the ascent of a French lady up the Mont Blanc, the first woman who has ever reached the top, who went up last Monday and came down on Wednesday, a mountain by the bye, which we *can* see from our window but rarely do see on account of the clouds--a dreadful accident which happened a few days ago in front of our window by which a young wife and her husband were drowned (leaving a baby a few months old) and five other young people with them. Only one was saved, one of the three brothers. Thirdly, there is this affair of Louis Bonaparte, whom Louis Philippe is tormenting these poor Swiss to eject from their country, and some cantons wish to resist and some are too weak.

I read everything in Galignani that relates to your Prince and Princess Royal, because you used to talk to us about them. I hope by this time that you are hearing your soft Swedish tongue again and that you are with your mother and sister. Pray give all our kind loves to Mlle Benedicks. We will write to her from Paris, if she will allow us, when we hope to have received news of you both. I shall then have something to tell her of our favourite subject, but La Scala at Milan was very bad when we were there and we have heard no music since.

My sister would have written in this letter, but she was out. I am afraid it will be little interesting to you, but I remember that you used to take a very kind interest in our Italian friends at Venice. Oh! where shall we see you again. Pray do not quite forget us, we long to hear how you are. Pray write to us a little word, to Poste Restante, Paris. And believe me, my dear Mme Benedicks, with all our best loves to you and yours,  
 ever your truly affectionate  
 Florence Nightingale

[4] pp 31-33

Place Vendôme  
 Paris

28 November [1838]

My dearest Selma [Benedicks] (since you will allow me to call you so, it will be the greatest pleasure you could give me) how kind of you to write me such a long letter, when you were still suffering and how delighted we all were to hear that you were safe with your own mother and better I cannot tell you. Do not be afraid about your English you write better English than many Englishwomen. Many, many thanks for your beautiful letter which I have been wishing to answer for many days past, How glad I am that your long tiresome journey is quite over. We were so afraid when we left you in Venice that it would make you ill. And you are now living quietly in the country, which will do you good.

We are living in a very nice apartment furnished a' la Louis Quatorze in the Place Vendôme, one of the finest parts of Paris. We have that splendid column, made of the cannons taken at Austerlitz, with the statue of Napoleon at the top, which I need not describe to you, for I think you know Paris. But I do not like Paris; it is so noisy and the smoky clouds never lift up off it. The Tuileries and the Louvre together are a splendid mass of building, and the Bourse and the Church of la Madeleine, those models of Grecian temples, are finer than anything there is in London. But Paris seems so uninteresting after beautiful Italy and the pictures in the Louvre are so bad in comparison and it is so cold. Do not you think the French very full of vanity when compared with the Italians? We know a great many people here, not many French, for some of our friends are not come into town yet, though this winter is a very bad one, but chiefly Italians and English. Several very very agreeable old French gentlemen come in very often and amuse us very much by their politics and good stories, for the French are so clever in conversation.

The Italians are chiefly exiles whom we know, for the treacherous amnesty instead of admitting all as it promised only opens a very narrow door to admit the petitions which may be afterwards granted or refused by the emperor. Our poor friends Ugoni and Porro (the master of the beautiful villa on the lake of Como) are already refused permission to re-enter, but with an intimation, said to be put in by the emperor himself, in German, that if they conduct themselves well they may be admitted at some future time. Conduct themselves well!

What a base lying amnesty this is! It is said to be all the doing of Metternich and of the authorities of Milan and that the emperor wished the amnesty to be applied in its full sense and was very earnest to make another to admit everybody. He is a kind man but under the rule of others completely. I had a letter from Countess Arrivabene a few days ago in which she says that her husband is enjoying his liberty but his brother, who is an exile, is not going to return, and Count Confalonieri, whom we know here (he who has been fifteen years in Spielberg and was then sent to America) is obliged to ask for the Austrian bourgeoisie before he

is allowed to reenter. Metternich seems to be trying to disgust and humiliate the exiles in their return to their country as much as possible. But I shall tire you with this subject. If you have not read Andryane's *Memoires d'un Prisonnier d'État*, you will find in it a great many very interesting particulars on Confalonieri and his fellow prisoners, which Confalonieri says are perfectly correct, though the style in which the book is written is very disagreeable from its conceit and vanity.

The greatest pleasure in Paris is, as you say, the Italian opera and we go there once a week, and I look forward to the day all the week before. They have a most splendid set of singers now: Grisi, whom you know, and whom we have heard twice in *Norma*, her chef d'oeuvre, and *Persani* whom I do not think you have heard and who is delightful. Her voice is much, more extensive than Grisi's and in the *Somnambula* I think I she is perfect, We have had *Don Giovanni* with all three prima donnas, Grisi, Persiani and Albertazzi, and with Tamburini (whose singing I had rather hear than anyone else's), Rubini and Lablache. Was not that a treat? We are going to hear the *Puritani*. How I wish you could go with us in our nice box "au premier," where there is a fourth place, which nobody would fill to our pleasure so much as you would.

Dear Selma, do not forget us. Write to us again whenever you can. I should have a great many more things to say but Parthe will not be pleased if I do not leave her some room. Pray give our kind love to your sister-in-law when you write to her. We shall leave Paris in the middle of January. If we may not hear from you before that, pray direct to us, 5 Blandford Sq., New Road, London, it will reach us wherever we are and we shall long to hear from you, for your letters are very pleasant to our ears. How I should like to know your mother, for I am sure she is like you, but I am afraid we shall never see either her or you again, for there is little chance of our being able to accept your kind invitation to Sweden. If ever we [page torn] through to dear Florence we shall think of you and we shall try [page torn] have the same rooms and the same balcony where we u[sed to stand].

Goodbye, dearest Selma, I hope you are happy.

ever your most [page torn]

Florence Nightingale

We were exceedingly sorry to hear of the troubles in Sweden, but the newspapers give so few particulars and I am so little au fait of Swedish politics that I shall be very glad to hear the result from you, when you are next so kind as to write. Since we knew you we have become interested in the affairs of Sweden and of everything that concerns you. Are you going to make a demenagement in the dynasty "as they make here in Paris every fifteen years" (as an old French friend of ours says)? I hope not, if it were only for your sake.

Your letters are so interesting to us, dear Selma, that even

when you have no news, pray do not let that prevent you from writing whenever you have time. We must not be too exigentes. Mama and Papa send their very kind remembrances to you and many kisses from your

Florence

[5] pp 34-37

Carlton Hotel  
Regent Street  
13 May [1839]

My dearest Selma [Benedicks], I hope you will not have thought me remiss in answering your kind letter. No one's letters give me so much pleasure as yours, but we were detained in Paris longer than we expected by the cold weather and we have been very restless since our return. The first three weeks we spent at our country place near Southampton, not at our house which is still full of workmen, but at a gamekeeper's lodge, miles of wood all round us and no society but the peacocks and the puppies--rather a contrast to Paris. We did not see any of our own family till some little time after our return, but there were plenty of kind faces to welcome us; the old women flocked about the door every morning and all our poor people came to see us. We are very much pleased with the alterations in our house, which is entirely re-made and would be almost too large for us if we did not hope that our dear friends will come and see us in it. You hint in your letter at the possibility of your coming abroad with your sister and her husband in the summer. Oh! could it be that you are coming to England and that you will come and stay with us, we shall be too happy. Pray think of this and I will tell you our plans for the summer.

Our poor aunt, who became a widow since we left England, came to see us soon after our return. She was much overcome to see us, but she bears up wonderfully. She is left with eight children, the three youngest of whom are so delicate that she seems scarcely likely to rear them. The youngest, who is only two years old, was born during his father's illness.

We spent two or three days with each of Mama's family after we had left our own place. I should like you to know one of my aunts and the atmosphere of love and gladness which reigns in her little house. Her four children are like our own, two of them we brought up ourselves till we went abroad. The two youngest, one a brunette and the other with long golden hair and blue eyes, like Raphael's cherubs, make the most beautiful group together. I think I showed you their hair at Florence. I wish I could show you themselves. We can hardly bear to leave them. They received us, dear souls, as if we had not been gone a day and we assisted at the eighth birthday of the boy as we used to do when they lived with us.



Now we are in all the bustle of London, which is as full as it can hold and in even greater excitement this season than usual. We are in the middle of it all, living, as we are, for a few weeks in a hotel in Regent St. for the sake of furnishing our new house, buying curtains and carpets, etc. The reason of all this excitement in London is the resignation of the Whig ministry and its re-establishment in the same half week. The Radicals turned against the Whigs and left them so small a majority in the house that they threw up the ministry. Two days afterwards they were in again and by whose doing seems almost incredible. It was the little Queen's entirely. She cried bitterly on accepting the resignation of her friends, dined upstairs that day, which she had never done before, with her mother, Baroness Lehzen and Lady Flora Hastings and then, when she was obliged to send for Sir Robert Peel to form a Tory administration, she took advantage of his mistakes so cleverly and managed the matter so that he found too many difficulties in his way and threw up the affair in disgust.

She seems to have managed this herself in the little *partie carrée* upstairs, and the consequence is that the Melbourne ministry is in office again with some small changes and that the Queen, who was growing very unpopular, was enthusiastically cheered on Saturday night at the opera, where she had been taken no notice of for months, and again yesterday coming from chapel. We hope to go on to the end of this session without a dissolution of Parliament. But enough of politics. Our little Queen looks pale and worn but is now perfectly idolized among our party for her firmness and spirit.

We went the other night to hear Pauline Garcia's debut at the Opera in *Otello*. She was excessively nervous but promises to be as fine a singer as her sister Malibran. Her acting is at times splendid. We shall leave London at the end of this month and spend June, July and August at our little place, Lea Hurst, near Matlock; in September we return to Embley. I think you know Matlock; it is a pretty spot. I need not say that could you but tempt your brother and sister there, we should welcome you from the bottom of our hearts and any of your family, for your sake, either at Embley or Lea Hurst. If there is the least chance of so great a pleasure for us, write to us a little before to Blandford Sq. in London, whence it will be forwarded to us, and we shall rejoice at seeing you for many days before.

My sister is not very strong and is staying a little out of London as we are in such a very noisy situation here. We are with some of our family and, as my cousin Marianne is as fond of music as I am, I hope to hear a great deal this season, which is a very good one for singers, Pauline Garcia, Grisi and Persiani (which last is a charming singer and I like her as well as any of them) are all in London. The Queen is so fond of music she only missed

going to the opera two nights all last season. She sings too herself very well. I am taking lessons on the piano of Schulz. I have quite lost my voice in that horrid Parisian climate which is a great misfortune to me. We amused ourselves exceedingly during our six months at Paris but we could not like it so much as Italy. I hope to find an opportunity to send this letter by Mr Parker, one of the Lords of the Treasury, whose family I think you know. My sister, if she were in town, would I am sure unite with me in praying you to prove that you do not forget us, by coming to stay some time with us this summer. May I not say au revoir? Mama and Papa are both equally anxious with us that you should come to stay a long while with us. Pray remember us to your sister-in-law Marie-Louise and believe me, my dearest Selma, ever your most truly affectionate and devoted  
 Florence Nightingale

[6] pp 37-39

Embley

27 September 1839

How sorry I am, my dearest Selma [Benedicks], not to have heard from you now for so long a time. My only resource is to read and reread over again your last letters, not for the sake of recalling the beautiful recollection you have left of yourself in our hearts, for that can never be forgotten, but just for the pleasure of seeing you again as you used to stand on the balcony at Florence. I am afraid that you have perhaps never received my last letter, which was to have been sent by means of the next Embassy letter bag to Sweden and in which we trusted that, should you accomplish the journey you spoke of with your sister and her husband, you might be persuaded to visit England again and to come and spend some time at our house with your sister and brother-in-law. Perhaps you have never received this letter, for I will not believe that you have forgotten us, you who have so tender a heart, and we shall hope that some day when you are not too much occupied to give us a little of your time, which may have been the case with you this summer. You will tell us how you are faring. Pray direct to Embley Park, Romsey, Hampshire.

We have been spending the summer in Derbyshire near Matlock and have had the whole family of our aunt, who lost her husband while we were at Florence, staying with us all the time. There are eight children, the two youngest who are babies so delicate that we are afraid they will hardly live. The railroads are now finished almost all over the country. We came by that one from Derby to London, which is most convenient for us (130 miles in six and a half hours) and then on here ten miles in two hours.

We are now at our place near Southampton for the winter, furnishing and refitting the house, which was altering and enlarging while we were abroad, and which is now quite finished.

We are very much pleased with the alterations, which are in the old Elizabethan style of Gothic. The drawing room with its oak ceiling is very handsome, but I will spare you the description, having just a vague hope (which however we *will* not give up) that you will come some day, my dearest friend, with as many of *your* family as will favour us and see how much spare room we have now to accommodate you with! Six new spare rooms! We are close to a seaport, Southampton, or if you ever visit London again, the railroad will bring you to his in a very few hours, so that we are very easy of access. And speaking English as you do, I can hardly believe that you will never bestow your presence again upon poor England.

Our little Queen continues very flourishing. One of her equerries, a friend of ours, told us that she reads all the newspapers and knows all the violent and disgraceful things which the party, *not* now in power, say against her and that she makes up her mind that a Queen must be abused. She is on very good terms with her mother now and very considerate and attentive to all her whims and fancies, though she herself, the Queen, has none and is not at all fond of etiquette as has been said. Lord Melbourne calls her favourite terrier dog "her Majesty's frightful little beast" and often contradicts her flatly to her face, all which she takes in good post and will not allow him to be waked when he goes to sleep after dinner in her drawing room, for he is quite an elderly man now. She is as devoted to music as ever and goes to the opera every opera night. All her household are exceedingly fond of her, she is so kind to them.

We have had such a deluge of rain this summer (hardly a day without it) that the crops have been greatly injured.

There have been serious disturbances all over the country and riots, particularly at Birmingham, by people calling themselves Chartists, who are trying to obtain [the] *universal* right of voting and equal *division* of property among *all* people. They have been burning houses and collecting *arms* but the government has shown so much moderation and temperate firmness that, though it was much blamed at first for not taking stronger measures against them, people are now satisfied that the riots are very much checked and the Chartists no longer to be cared.

Do you still interest yourself about poor England? My sister Parthe has been very unwell this summer and, as we found that she was losing strength instead of gaining it, as we had hoped, during a quiet summer, and getting thinner every day, we sent her to some mineral waters in the north of England with my aunt and the family of the Parkers whom I think you know. I wish we had spent another winter abroad for her sake--she was so well in Italy. Mr Parker is one of the Lords of the Treasury and it was through him that I sent my letter to you some months ago. We wished Parthe to be absent during the rough life that we are

leading in this empty and unfurnished house, sleeping as we can and living in rooms without carpets and almost without chairs and busy all day in moving and arranging furniture. It will be some time before we are comfortable and longer before we have dispossessed the rats which had taken possession of the empty house before us.

We have had the house full of *dead* partridges and *live* shooting gentlemen, for this is the season of shooting partridges now in England, and both sorts of *creatures* were obliged to be satisfied with much the same sort of accommodation in our unfinished state. The dahlias and fuchsias are all in flower now and looking very beautiful but oh! for the lake of Como, whence I wrote my first letter to you, and its villas and citron and orange terraces, smelling sweet far over the lake and the fireflies glancing about at night, putting out the light of the stars with their brilliancy. It is not beginning though yet to be cold here though the weather has been extraordinarily wet. We have had a great deal of music even in the provinces this year.

Thalberg, the great pianoforte player, has been giving concerts all over the country. I think you have heard him but he is wonderfully improved lately since he has been in Russia, and one can say nothing of him now but that he is Thalberg and that no one else can be a Thalberg but him. Pauline Garcia too, sister to Malibran, but not equal to her and Persiani, the most delightful singer I ever heard, have been in England this year.

Farewell, my dearest Selma, aimez-nous comme nous vous aimons. My sister would, I am sure, write if she were at home and would unite with Mama in their kindest love to you. Papa places his tender respects at your feet and I, I throw myself into your arms and entreat you to believe in the unalterable affection of your Florence, grateful for the love which you have given us and the *kind* remembrance you have kept of us in your heart and will, I trust, still keep. I wish that we had a prospect of visiting Sweden, but I am afraid it is but small.

ever, my dearest Selma  
your affectionate  
Florence Nightingale

[7] pp 40-41

Waverley

1 January 1840

I am sure that you will forgive me, my dearest Selma [Benedicks], for not telling you sooner how much we felt your kind interest in Parthe's health, when you hear the reason, which is, that we have lately lost one of our family under such horrid circumstances that we could hardly think of anything else. But on this day, I cannot help wishing you many, many happy new years and hoping that happier may yet be reserved to you than you have had. We

were so glad to hear of your winter in Stockholm for that reason and pray let us hear, if you are not too busy, how you enjoy it. We think Parthe much stronger, thanks for your enquiries, and are looking forward to the cold weather, which has not yet begun in England, with less anxiety for her. We are spending our new year at one of my aunt's, who had intended to have given a ball and a little comedy at this time of the year, when more than seventy people sometimes sleep under her hospitable roof.

But we have had a very different meeting from what we expected, for our poor cousin, who is dead, was our early playfellow and younger than myself. At seventeen years of age he set out to join an expedition of discovery in Australia. The party were shipwrecked and obliged to return on foot 300 miles to the point where they set out. The want of water under the tropical sun produced such exhaustion that the party separated, the strongest going forward by forced marches to send help to the rest. But it came just two days too late for our poor fellow who was the youngest of all. Six weeks after the shipwreck on the 14th of May his body was found on the shore in a perfectly solitary place, so wasted by famine that had he even been found two days before, when he was still alive, it was scarcely possible that he could have been saved, although he had walked to within seventy-six miles of the town where they were going. They buried him where he lay on the seashore by a large river which they named after his name. The native who had tracked him cried over his grave like a child. All the others were saved, though three of them, when found, were delirious from want of water. Forgive me this long history, my dearest Selma, I am afraid that our long experience of your interest (kept up at such a distance) apart from us) has made us trespass on your kindness. His poor father and mother, who had been expecting him to arrive in England every day when the news came of his death, have been bowed down by this blow for life, I am afraid.

We have just had the great pleasure of talking to some friends of ours who are returned from St. Petersburg and *Stockholm*. They describe *Stockholm* as the most beautiful place they had ever seen, with its woods and lakes all round it, and we have had the delight of talking to them of a place of which we must ever think with such affection. They were at *Stockholm* only a few days or we should have begged them to bring us some particular news of you. They were so delighted with the Swedish people, their good nature and simplicity and their beauty. They were struck with how well the Swedes speak English and with their resemblance to the English and with the magnificent situation of *Stockholm* and the country places round. How I envy them their having been there!

Our little Queen is to be married in February. The Liberal Party are exceedingly well satisfied with the marriage, though

they think her too young, for though a royal marriage, there is no doubt that it is one of her own choice. Prince Albert is a most simple unaffected man.

I am sorry to tell you about Lady Bulwer, whom you ask after, that she is not a woman of good character and separated from her husband, against whom that clever book is written, the character of the hero of the novel being drawn from him to the life and the adventures mostly from real life so that no one can mistake whom she is attacking, independently of her having written the names so *nearly* the same as those of the real people that they cannot be misunderstood.

I am very sorry to tell you so little news but my mind has been so full of my poor cousin that I must put off telling you of our future prince (who is to have no political power, not even the title of king) till my next letter. Pray let us hear from you of what you are doing, soon, dear Selma, for all that concerns you interest us and with Parthe's best love and Mama's and Papa's kindest regards believe me, my dearest Selma,

ever your truly affectionate

Florence Nightingale

This letter has been very full of ourselves and our own concerns and such as I could only have written to a *great* friend, but I hope that my next will be less so.

[8] pp 42-45

Waverley

6 October 1840

I cannot tell you what pleasure your last letter gave me, my dearest Selma [Benedicks], and your kind remembrance of us. I was alone at home when I received it, having the charge of two children, one of them the youngest brother of the poor fellow who was lost. His poor mother was glad to have him away for some time. I feel as if I had been very negligent in writing to you and I have been intending to do so for a long while, but the triple mourning we may be said to have been in--for a death never comes alone--and the very little time I have spent at home since I wrote to you last, have made me *not* forgetful of you, my dearest friend, but very silent. I have been staying three months with the poor mother of the one who died, taking charge of her family as she was near her confinement. *She* struggled through, and preserved herself for her other children, but the infant was dead. However we are thankful that she lives and is pretty well, though she has just had another severe trial in meeting the friend and commander of the expedition, who took out her poor son, and is just returned.

Our little Queen is most flourishing and so happy with her husband. It is delightful to see them together--this is the report of one of her ladies whom I have lately seen. I hope that

the wicked reports spread about her are not believed abroad. She is as popular as ever and is exceedingly well in health. In December we are expecting an heir to the throne and I am sure there are many prayers for her safety; she is so amiable and beloved.

My sister does not gain much strength, I am afraid. She would send you her best love, were I at home now, but I have just been making a little tour in the lakes of the north of England with my aunt. Beautiful as they are, I do not suppose they are to be compared with those of Stockholm. We have not heard anything of your family, whom you mentioned as coming to visit England. Any of your friends would be *always* most welcome for your sake, if they ever come to England. Would that you were likely to do so too. I wish I had your last letter here with me, but it is at home. Goodbye, my dearest Selma. If I tell you too much about ourselves, it is that you may not think us even tired or indifferent of hearing anything which concerns you. This must always interest us and particularly

your ever affectionate and devoted  
Florence

[9 pp 43-45

Lea Hurst  
Derbyshire

11 September 1842

How long it is, dearest Selma [Björkenstam], since there has been any communication passing between us, yet, I assure you, we have never forgotten you and never shall, long as it may be before we can meet again. We should like to hear something of you so very much, and were for some time in hopes that two cousins of ours, Mr Bonham Carter and Mr Nicholson, who are at this moment in Norway for the fishing and shooting, would end their tour at Stockholm, when perhaps you would allow them to see you for our sakes, but I have not heard of their movements for some weeks and am very much afraid they will come back to England and bring me no news of my dearest Selma. Should they, however, go into Sweden, and you be in Stockholm at the time, may they, by enquiring at Messrs Michaelson and Benedicks, hope to have the pleasure of knowing you or, at least, if you are not there, would Mlle Marie-Louise Benedicks have the goodness to introduce them to her parents, if she still keeps any remembrance of us.

I have been very ill this summer, or I should not have been so long without writing to you, but whether writing or not, you are so often present to our thoughts. I can see you, how you used to stand in our room at Venice--it seems as if you were present to my eyes. But when will that be? I never cease to look forward to it.

Our little Queen is gone to Scotland and is making a most

magnificent progress there among her enthusiastic Scottish subjects, but she will not be away long, for the children are left in England. She is a most affectionate mother and the Prince of Wales is a magnificent baby. She went by sea to Scotland to support her character as the Ocean-Queen, I suppose, the spirited little soul!

Sir Robert Peel, our new Conservative minister, does not seem to be in much better odour with the people than he is with his Queen. He has affronted all ranks by this odious inquisitorial and heavy *income tax*, which he has just now laid on. The *Chartists*, or rioters, have taken advantage of Parliament's breaking up to make disturbances in this part of the country. A body of them came into one of our villages and persuaded the poor women that "the times of Herod were coming again, for Parliament had just made a law to kill *every third child!!*" But I do not cite such ignorance as would believe this as existing in *many* villages in England. The riots are now put down, the harvest is very plentiful, which is in our favour, but we have some fears for the winter.

We have just been reading a most interesting book, *Laing's Norway*, which gives a very different picture of the thrifty, clever, well doing poor in Norway. Poor Miss Martineau, whose books you may have heard of and who is now dying of over exertion, made a story, *Feats on the Fiord*, from Laing's book, her last book but one, and though only meant for children, I think these last two little books are among her best. She is a great friend of my aunt's and we have been much interested in her graphic picture of Norwegian manners. How I should like to see Sweden and Norway!

This year, while we were in London, I was presented to our Queen and was so delighted with her. Nothing can be imagined more graceful, more charming than she is, and she must soon, I think, be as popular among the Tory ladies, who are now in power, as she was among her old Whig household. She did her duty so beautifully at a great ball, at which we were afterwards. I wish I had something interesting to tell you, more than about ourselves. Are you still in the same situation and thoughts as when we last heard from you, in beautiful Stockholm with its lakes and woods, or still in the country with your mother? I wish I could have one little peep at you. My sister has been much stronger lately, but I have been doing so little, since I have been ill, that I have nothing to tell you of but the books which I have read and the little cousins, whom we have been having with us to teach and to torment.

*Zanoni* is a most interesting and, I thought, most beautiful half novel, half allegory, just published by Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, husband of the lady, whom *Cheveley* is by. And, if you should wish to read a real story of daring adventures and danger,



I think Captain Grey's Expedition of Discovery in Australia, which he has just written, would please you, though not so interesting as to us, for it was that, in which my poor cousin, Frederic Smith, whom I think I have mentioned to you, died of hunger and exhaustion. He was found in a perfectly solitary place by the seashore. His poor mother is now slowly recovering some cheerfulness, having a sweet little girl, which was born last year, to comfort her.

What extraordinary discoveries have been making in the Isthmus of Mexico, of whole cities in ruins, the remains of a magnificent and powerful race in the highest degree of civilization and knowledge, with regard to sculpture and architecture, and now quite extinct, with subterranean passages and all sorts of wonders, discovered by one Stephens, an American. But I had much rather hear[d] of Stockholm and my Selma, and so still cling to the hope that our European explorers will not leave Norway without seeing you. But not for this uncertain chances must you deprive us of the pleasure of hearing of you. Pray write, dearest, not to the place I date from for we leave our house in the north in a few days for the old place in the south, Embley, Romsey, Hampshire. These railroads which are now established over every part of England make all journeys seem nothing more than drives of pleasure. And now, dearest Selma, must I wish you goodbye. I see I am come to the end of my sheet and yet I should like to talk longer to you. Mama and Parthe send you their kindest love and Papa his affectionate remembrances, but none more than your,

ever yours

Florence Nightingale

[10] pp 45-48

Embley Park

Romsey, Hampshire

2 April 1843

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], how many months it is since we have heard of you, and yet often I have pictured you to myself in your new happiness, and how much I like to think of you, now, as blessed and blessing as much as you deserve. And I have made some acquaintance with your country too, since I wrote last, your country which we shall always love because it is yours, through a Mr Bethune, who understands Swedish, and has translated *Fritiof's Saga* and more of Tegner's shorter poems too. I thought Tegner's *Fire* was the finest thing I ever read, our Milton might have been proud of such an idea and I do not think anything in Milton is grander, which you must understand is the highest compliment an Englishwoman can pay, for right or wrong, Milton is the god of our idolatry. But I read all the poems with peculiar interest from their being Swedish and he taught me too to pronounce your

new name, which is dearer still to our ears. How I wish we knew your husband, that you and he would come over to England. We must like the person already, who has made *you* happy, and how welcome you would both be.

Poor Tegner is gone mad, is he not? What a melancholy end to that glorious imagination! How I should like to know something more of him! His *Fritiof's Saga* has been translated many times before into English, but always very badly. These new translations of his poems are however beautifully done. When you next write, pray tell us anything about him.

I have lost all faith in the Post between this [country] and Sweden now, could you not tell me where to address myself, when you next write, to enquire after lost letters. I should so particularly like to recover that first letter announcing your marriage which you wrote to me, and grudge its wasting its sweetness on the dead-letter office. I shall try, when we go to London, for us to make an acquaintance with the Swedish Embassy, as there is many a little thing we should like so much to send you. I have not had the heart to write for the last few months, as I have been staying in London keeping a poor friend of ours company, who has just lost her sister, a sister who had been to her both sister and mother, a very dear friend to us and who died after eleven months marriage, leaving a baby, a sweet little thing, a little Hope, called so after its mother. I have been so taken up with attending on the poor sister, who is left very forlorn, that I had scarcely time for anything else.

Parthe is much better lately, thanks dearest Selma, and means to send you a drawing of the outside of our house, Embley, very soon. I wish I had the talents of Fredrika Bremer to give you the idea of our country life, which you ask for. You cannot think how popular her stories are becoming in England now; everybody is reading *The Home and the Neighbours*. But, to return to our country places: this one, Embley, is much larger than our mountain chalet in Derbyshire and is on flatter ground, near the large oak forest called the New Forest. Parthe was well enough to enjoy our gay Christmas party entirely, and we danced three nights, and had the house quite full, and other nights we played at games, each of us writing a story, or had music. We are seldom quite alone for several weeks together in the country, and these good natured railroads, which are making a web all over England, bring us plenty of people from London down here. Then I have a beautiful little Arab pony, which I ride with Papa. We have had a most mild winter this year. Some people say it is by reason of this new comet, which has made its appearance in the heavens, but if it turns out to be no comet at all, then where will their say be?

After Easter, people go to London and we amongst the number, but this year, the Queen's confinement, which is to be this

month, and the prorogation of Parliament, which, it is said, will be two months earlier than usual, owing to Sir R. Peel's, the ministerial, party being so strong that the other can make scarcely any opposition nor raise any debates. Owing to these things the season in London will be very short and very dull this year. Then in June we come down here again, always by the railroad (for travelling by *land*, I mean with horses, is almost disappearing in England) to see the American plants in flower, of which there is such a show here as scarcely in any other part of England, and I wish we could show them to you. We always bring a good many people down with us. This beautiful spring I shall be quite sorry to go away at all.

At the end of June the great Agricultural Society of England holds its annual meeting, which always collects a good many people, this year at Derby, so we go to our hilly home in Derbyshire, our little place wild and windy, for three months in time for that. How beautiful your Westeras must be, on those famous Swedish lakes as I see it is, which I always fancy to be the most beautiful in the world, as Stockholm the most picturesque of capitals. Pray remember us kindly to Mrs Barclay, when you write--we know some of the Scotch Barclays, and I dare say [we] shall hear something of her when we go to London. But in return, dearest Selma, you must tell us a little of your doings and your dear home, which must always interest us so much. Ours here is all surrounded with wood and there is so much of it about that at this time of year. Mama is constantly out in the garden superintending the cutting it down and thinning it, and Papa in the woods. Laurels and arbutus are so luxuriant here that we are obliged to be always thinning them and even making faggots of them. Parthe draws a great deal, and I have been making music and learning German. I believe there is some likeness between it and Swedish.

Such an interesting novel of Mone Pickler, *Frauenwürde*, I have been reading to Parthe. Dickens is the popular new author in England now, his American notes are very interesting, and he has always some periodical in hand, coming out every month, which is full of fun and, the great object of which is a very fine one: to show us more than we generally know of the poorest classes in London. I am come to the end of my paper, alas! Parthe and Mama send you a thousand loves. Papa too desires his kindest remembrances, and may we not join your husband now with yourself, dearest Selma, in our best and kindest regards. God bless you, my dear, dear Selma, a thousand times.

ever your own

Florence Nightingale

When we go to Lea Hurst, I shall look with fresh pleasure now on the walks near Willersley Castle, as having been your favourite. Farewell, once more, my dearest. Pray write to me and tell us all

about your life and your interests, as will again from Lea Hurst.  
 ever your own  
 Florence

[11] pp 48-51

Embley

Romsey, Hampshire

22 October 1843

When I saw your dear handwriting, dated from The Hague, I said to myself and to them all at breakfast, "She is coming to England!" And the end of your letter was indeed a disappointment, which told me that I should not see my dearest Selma [Björkenstam] this year. I have only, now that the summer is over, quite given up the hope that we might have taken a little tour this year, and then we should certainly have come to Ems for the sake of seeing your dear face again. But that is all over now, both Mama's brothers have been to Switzerland this year and we have had their youngest children to take care of, whom they could not take with them, and this has kept us at home, if there had been nothing else. But though your journey has thus brought us no good, let me hope that it has done you and yours all the good, which could be wished from it, and that you are now quite well and have had a happy re-meeting with M de Bjorkenstam, and are amongst all your own again and able to enjoy it without any cloud to trouble your sky. I shall be anxious to hear that it is all well with you, as I suppose you are by this time returned to Sweden. I wish I could tell you how very much my heart was touched with your writing by night during the fatigue of a journey and taking this trouble, that we might have the chance of seeing you again. Oh! when will that be? Perhaps even yet we may meet abroad, if you were to make another *échappe* another year, and how delightful that would be to us.

I read all Fredrika Bremer's books with more and more interest, though it is only in German, because they describe the country of my dear Selma, and because I always think it is more like being together, the interchange of the same thought and the knowing that you have already read and been charmed with the same passages, than anything else. Is she alive still?, and is she an old woman or does she still write, and what do her fellow countrymen think of her? There is a great similarity between her minute knowledge of character and that of a Miss Austen, who is dead now but who wrote *Mansfield Park*, *Pride and Prejudice* and many other novels, which are not striking, like Walter Scott's but of which one feels the truth to be like that of a Dutch picture so characteristically is it painted. We cannot appreciate Tegner in a translation, you are quite right, and I shall wait to understand him a little better till I have learnt Swedish, which I must do some day. But even the rough outline and profile (of

his "Sun," etc.) which is all we can catch in a translation, is grand in any language. What is he doing now? I was told he was mad and shut up. How melancholy the over-balancing of such a mind, if this is true!

London was very gay and pleasant this year, notwithstanding the Queen's confinement. You see how she had been disporting herself since, visiting her brothers sovereigns, and asserting her right to the title of "Ocean Queen."

London made a grand effort this year to rivalize with Munich in an attempt at *cartoons*. The government gave prizes and limited the subject to be taken from English history, or Shakespeare, Milton or Spenser and though there were fifty or sixty drawings bad enough for one to think they had been sent for a joke--and very many badly--chosen subjects, innumerable Adams and Eves, for instance, cast out of paradise, with lamentable angels (which indeed without the wings on their backs, one would not have known from very ugly human beings). Yet, on the whole, there I were many more real chef-d'oeuvres than one could have expected. The fact is, London is occupied in a great work, the rebuilding her Houses of Parliament on the most magnificent scale, and as there is a project of painting their interior wall in fresco, the government wished to know what talent the country was possessed of, to execute this design by English hands and with English historical subjects, of course.

But the sight which interested us most in London was one night which we spent in looking through a very large telescope at the moon and her mountains, and the planets with their moons, and some of the stars, the very smallest most remote stars, which we could see quite plain through the telescope to be double stars, sometimes even quadruple stars of different colours, which revolves round each other in some hundreds of years! And nebulae, little faint clouds as they appeared to be through a small telescope, resolved themselves in this one into myriads of distinct stars. Oh! it was so wonderful, this as it were supernatural penetrating into the unseen, and quite awful, like having the forbidden power of calling up spirits from an Invisible World one is forbidden to enter. But I am afraid you will think me very prosy, and if you have ever looked through a large telescope you will know these ideas well.

We spent the summer in Derbyshire, where your welcome letter found us just arrived as usual after two months in London and we made a little tour in Derbyshire this year with a Mr Parker, who knew M and Mme Benedicks, when they were in Sheffield. We went too to a great confirmation in Yorkshire, but those things are not so well managed in England, I think, as they are on the Continent. The girls looked conscious, I fancied, and the boys only stupid and there is something theatrical in the bishop's enormous frilled sleeves as he blesses them. We are just returned

to Embley, as the frost has already set in this year, and is sending the leaves quite green to an untimely grave, "with all their honours still thick upon them," before they have had time to fall into the sear and yellow leaf. We are going to have a large shooting party, as now is the time that shooting pheasants begins. I have a dear little Arabian-looking pony, which eats out of my pocket, which I ride with Papa. Parthe is not strong enough to ride much.

It seems very hard upon us that our whole family has been abroad this year, four brothers and sisters of Mama's with their families, and we, who should have had so much happiness in meeting you, are the only ones who stayed at home.

The disturbances in Ireland have created some uneasiness. We have much to make up for to this poor country, which we have tyrannized so long.

I am sure, dearest, you will be tired of my long gossip. But I hope you will give us in return some news of your health and your home which we shall be very anxious now to hear. Mama and Parthe send you their best love and Papa kisses your hands. How we should like to be able to send our affectionate regards to your husband! And with a kiss, dearest love, from the bottom of my heart, believe me

ever your true and loving

Florence

It is very good of you amid your new interests and your new joys not to forget us. How glad we were to have some idea of your present home. Parthe will send a drawing of Embley by an occasion, which she waits for, as you have the kindness to wish one of our home.

[12] pp 51-54

Embley

Romsey, Hampshire

5 February 1845

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], when I think that it is really six months that you must have thought me silent and forgetful of you, I can scarcely believe it. But it is not so, I have never forgotten my friend for a moment and when a young intimate of ours, who went to Stockholm this autumn, was obliged to return without seeing you, I meant to have written again directly. But a wave of sorrow and darkness has passed over my head since then, and though it has never made me forget you, it has made me almost unable to exert myself. Thanks, my dear Selma, and thanks a thousand that in the midst of all your anxieties and your great trial, a little time should have remained to you to think of me. I shall never forget so gentle a thought. And the reason of taking up a pen now, which has been so long without being in my hand, is to ask you to write, if it be only one line, to tell me

of your dear mother's state and your own. I should have loved your mother if I had known her--I look upon her as a friend whom I have lost. Dear friend, how much you have gone through. I hope, that we are put here for some object, that we have something really to do here, or life would not be worth the many tears. However it is never a blank--we have always behind a whole cypress-forest of sad memories waving within us, beautiful even in their sternness, and before us "death, pitying death," like a strong and shady gateway, from under which one can look out, and see the miseries of life seem less miserable.

That is the strong fortification of us all, from behind which no one can drive us, our look-out place, whence we can see the rest--a little patience and we "shall all meet there, all the dear ones, whom in life we could only weep for and never help." How often I think that Hagar did not hear the voice of the angel telling her where to find the water to save her child's life, till she went and sat her down over against him a good way off and wept. So we must withdraw ourselves from ourselves and judge all our sorrows as from a long way off, and tears are, often the best lens, through which we see all things loser and clearer.

My sister has been from home for some time, staying at an aunt's this winter, where they have been very gay in fancy balls and dancing of all kinds. She went as *Lady Jane Grey* and I hear her dress was very pretty. How curious it is the difference that time and place makes in us. It is sometimes almost difficult to find out which is the real life and which is the imaginary. I often feel as if I was walking in a dream. The night of their fancy ball was full moon. I have not seen such a one since the moonlight on the hills of Florence and our lighted lawn shone in its hushed brightness, like a child asleep, and there was no life stirring, but I and three hares, who were running after one another all night, and I could see myself at the same time with them dancing and standing with you on the balcony of Lung Arno and was not quite sure which was really I.

How much that old moon must have seen in her day. If she were to write Recollections of a Full Moon, how curious they would be--how long she must think it since men have lived and thought and felt and always, the old bores, the same thing in spite of all the different revolutions and religions and civilizations in the world. I thought of what she had looked down upon 1813 years ago in the garden of Gethsemane, of all the feelings and sufferings she has seen since then, which no one else has seen. I thought of the thousands of souls which at that moment were all pouring out and thronging up to her, while their bodies were sitting quite quietly somewhere telling their confidences to her, all together unconscious of one another's presence, and a whole division of them telling her the same thing, unknown to one another, as if no one had ever felt it

before and I could not help laughing to think of the strange tales she must have to tell that single star, that's on her side.

These moments seem to unite even the most distant friends, and Sweden and England to be no longer far apart. I am sorry to say I do not know your friends, the Edmund Phipps's personally but I hear of them from Miss Martineau. *He* has just been to see her and is quite convinced of the truth of the extraordinary things she, Miss Martineau, relates about mesmerism. You know perhaps that she has been recovered from a disease thought incurable (a most dreadful internal disease) as she believes entirely by mesmerism, and certain it is that she call now walk six miles a day and has left her home, where for five years she had been entirely a helpless invalid, supposed to be dying and confined to the sofa. And all this has been accomplished in two or three months. But this is not the most extraordinary. The lady who magnetized her has also magnetized her maid and Miss M. declares and Mr Phipps corroborates that talk to this ignorant girl in French, Italian, German, Dutch, Latin and Greek and, when in the mesmeric sleep, she will understand and answer them all. She has also foretold shipwrecks and prescribed for sick people.

If these things and others like them be true, the mind can disengage itself of its system of senses, by which it is usual to believe it acts, and *will itself out*, as it were, so as to receive *immediate* impressions and also communicate itself *immediately* and not by its usual system of relations. If I can hear anything of Mrs Phipps or the Hopes, I will let you know.

How you have been tried, my dear Selma! It is easy to bear one's own misfortunes but when one sees the dark ways open before those one loves, I am sure there is nothing for us but to lay one's whole soul in God's lap and have patience. Do not say that I cannot be so much interested in what concerns you as you are. Believe me, I never can feel less interested in every thing that belongs to you. I trust your trials are long since over. I hope you will be able to tell me so in your next letter, which must be very soon pray. But there are so many ways for a woman to suffer on earth, that I sometimes dare scarcely hope that you have at last escaped from them--a woman too never avoids suffering, never tries to evade it. Thoughtlessness is so much more painful to her than suffering, that she never asks herself whether this or that will entail it upon her or not, and like the penitent thief on the cross, who seems to have been the first to understand that the kingdom of Christ was to be entered upon through suffering, she seems to know intuitively that all her pleasures, of affection, usefulness, benevolence, are to be entered upon through suffering too. How many dark mysteries there are in life, moments when our Lord sits "as a refiner and purifier of silver" to try what stuff His creatures are made of, but he will sit, he will not leave them, he sits till he sees that the fire has done



enough, till he sees his own image reflected in the silver (which is, you know, the refiner's test) and watches the moment when he may say, Enough. You will be quite tired of me, my dearest Selma, but I have little news of any interest for you.

The Queen is just gone to London to open the Houses of Parliament, after having been in our county to visit the Duke of Wellington. He asked however scarcely any of the court to meet her, and the dullness was awful, "regnava il silenzio nella citta," il *terror*. I might say if it had been the Queen's corpse, instead of the Queen they had been carrying into dinner, the silence could not have been more deep and dreadful and in the evening it was still worse--everybody stood about the drawing room like soldiers on parade, and though the Queen did her very best and tried to talk and be amusing to everybody, she could not break the spell of dullness, not even a funeral note was heard. She is quite stanch to the Whigs, the progressive party, and will be very glad if one day they come into power again.

We live in London at 30 Burlington Street, and shall go there after Easter, when I hope to find an opportunity of sending you those drawings of Embley and Lea Hurst you were so good as to ask for. I hope you will tell me too whether you move to Upsala and all about you and yours. Is Tegner now quite well? I had great pleasure in reading Mlle Bremer's *Tagebuch* from the hope of finding in it a true sketch of Stockholm. I think it gives a most pleasant picture of the society there. Papa is gone to see his mother, or he would offer you his best regards. Mama is with me, and desires her best love. You write such beautiful English, dear Selma, that it can be no trouble to you to write me another letter, soon, very soon. I hope you will do so. This is a tiresome, wearisome scrawl I have given you. Forgive me, dearest friend, only believe in the grateful and affectionate homage of my heart to you, my dear kind indulgent Selma.

Florence Nightingale

My sister would send her best love, if she were at home. You must supply all the meaning to this letter, my dearest, and take the words merely as the expression of the warm and tender affection I shall always bear to you, my beloved.

[13] pp 54-58

London

15 June 15 [1846]

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], To think that some of my friends will perhaps see you now and that I cannot see you! The happy people to whom I am giving this letter to take to you are going to Stockholm for a week, and will, I trust, find you there. He is a Mr Bentham (son of Sir Samuel Bentham) and a great *natural* historian having been secretary to the Horticultural Society and a great authority in such matters. His wife is the daughter of

Sir Harford Brydges, the Persian Ambassador (who has written upon Persia and a very old friend of ours). I send you a book by them, which I hope you will read for my sake, and if you can do anything for them I know you will. It seems to me such years since I have heard anything of you, and yet I feel a confidence that you have not forgotten me, any more than I have you. I don't know anything of your circumstances, how your mother is, nor what you are doing, nor whether her precious life is still yours. And yet I feel as if there were no such thing as absence in love and that I could meet you now as if we had not been parted a day. One is often more absent where the body *is* present and more present where the body *is* absent.

Oh, that whirl of restless activity, which swims round and round under the glassy surface of our civilized life. We talk and we dine and we dress as if our hopes were not breeding in thousands and perishing in despair, as if the struggle between Fear, the Dweller of the Threshold and the Spirit of Light, with his sunbeam wing, were not going on fiercely, senselessly, as if the cup, which we have filled with the deep fountains of the soul, when, by strong convulsions rent apart, we feared that they would all run to waste, or be dried up, and so garnered them up in this cup as in a lachrymatory, were not often dashed to the ground and its waters lost, as if the deepest passions of our hearts were not roused in all of us and those hovering hopes and fears, which, though so intangible, are not unreal, for they make up our whole real life, were not struck by an arrow and fallen, as if we did not always feel standing on the edge of an abyss, so dark that we see not the bottom, and so deep that our head swims round, and we are afraid to speak or to move, for fear of the next step. How true that all seems unreal, and that all actors are now on the stage.

Everything reminds me of the Indian in the fable, who sitting in the tree, with Terror, under the shape of a tiger, climbing up, is only engaged in fighting with the fly (care) which is whizzing in his face. All is like a dream, yet, the world and the pink satin ghosts in it, and ourselves most of all. If we could always be true to ourselves, have a sacred trust in our intentions, we should need no other truth, but we lie to ourselves first; the lying to others follows of its itself.

That the sufferings of Christ's life were intense, who can doubt?, but the happiness must also have been intense. Only think of the happiness of working, and working successfully too, and with no doubt as his path, and with no alloy of vanity or love of display or of glory but with the ecstasy of single-heartedness, all that I do is always poisoned by the fear of not doing it in simplicity and singleness of heart. So much is false without being a lie.

But God is very gracious to us, dearest--our helplessness is

the same to the last. Unseconded by any efforts of ours, He helps us and leads us by a way which we have not known, by a way sometimes agonizing and crushing and afterwards sweet and consoling. What can David say in His praise, compared to what we can? All his psalms seem to me inexpressive of what is the greatest salvation of all, of what some of us might say, speaking of what He has done for us: I trusted not in Thee and Thou hast sought me; I thought not of Thee and Thou hast loved me, Yea, even the unuttered sighings of the heart towards Thee for deliverance, they were not mine. My eyes looked not for Thy salvation, nor to Thee. The days of darkness had come; the future was like that starless sky; there was neither storm nor dawn. The bird had been driven from bough to bough, there was none left for her to rest upon. On the last branch her pinions hung powerless--they could not wing their weary way to heaven. She trusted to the dark Angel to carry her, but he came not and would he have brought healing on his wings?

In the spirits' world, of which the Spirit must itself be the architect, the heart, which here does not find its rest, will it make it there? Oh it has not performed its duty and it will not find its rest. But lo! the stars shone forth again, they looked down full! Of meaning upon the children of men. Mercury spoke and said, Arise, is not the life of the mind thine? Is there not learning that thou shouldst rejoice in it and knowledge, that thou shouldst see that it is good? Venus sang, Love is life and love is the true knowledge; love doth make the soul resemble what it loves; in me ye shall be like God, for ye shall see him as He is--the life, which ends in power, must begin in beauty. And Mars, he drew his flaming sword and shouted his battle cry, Rise up and lay thy hand to its work, seek Thou knowledge by action, fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life, in the life of thy right hand will thou find wisdom.

Jupiter lifted up his voice and cried, In the light of His countenance, in the salvation of His presence, which is to thee as a burning and a shining lamp, oh child of the dust, find thou thy peace. (But the heart, which beat so stormily, was not yet still, the living chorus, cherubim of the sky, found yet no sacred voice in the stained and earthly soul.) Last of all the starry train came Saturn and he wept and said, The grave turfs reverted become a cradle, and the grave of every joy is the cradle of a new hope, under His chastening hand, in the day of thy sorrow, when I have taken from thee all thy earthly hopes. Then rejoice and be glad, O son of the earth, for thy redemption draweth nigh. So, in the flashing darkness, the stars, the sons of God, sang together and lo! the dews of night fell upon the eyes of the daughter of the dust. And as in the days when the Lord walked the earth, and he moistened the eyes of the blind man, and he received sight--behold her eyes were opened, and she

saw God. These things I write to you, my dearest Selma, not because they contain any facts worthy of your interest (our politics the newspaper will give you better than I can, and our literature the press), but because they seem to me the experience of each of us in life, in this life, which seems meant to bring us to that state when our Creator shall be able to say of *each* of us, in all his dealings with us, "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets."

Our little Queen is the happiest mother and wife, in spite of all that the world says against her. The Princess Royal is a little bit of a witch, and when desired by her governess, the Lady Lyttleton, the other day, not to call the apothecary, who comes to see them every morning, "*Thomson*," but "*Mr Thomson*," under pain being sent to bed, she marched into the room, "Good morning, *Thomson*," and then turning round and going out of the room of herself, "Her Royal Highness is going to bed," she said. The little Prince of Wales is too good to live, almost.

Miss Martineau is quite recovered, thanks, she says, to mesmerism. Sir Robert Peel is going out of office as fast as possible. Never was a minister who had such vast *influence* and so little *credit*, so much *power* and so little *reputation* for honesty. He has carried with unprincipled expedients the (by him hitherto deemed) inexpedient principles of free trade.

But you will be tired of my already too long letter and I shall have all English news to be told you by the Bentham's, if they are fortunate enough to see you. My father and mother and sister are well. You do not know the rest of my "*Umgebungen*" [surroundings] so I will not trouble you with details about them. My letters to you must therefore be written in parables almost, not in facts, they must contain my ideas, not my circumstances, But what does all life consist in but in ideas? Are not our imaginations the real world we live in, and what we are pleased to call "*real life*" only the shadows, which do but present to our spirits the things we know too certainly to be true. Therefore I feel that I am writing to you more reality, while not telling you a single fact, than to most people, to whom I write nothing but facts and yet do not convey a single idea of what I am really feeling.

Pray, write to me and tell me all about your mother, your present circumstances, your husband. I feel to your mother as to a friend whom I had lost.

Mama presents her affectionate love to you as do my father and my sister and, believe me, dearest Selma,

ever yours lovingly, truly  
Florence Nightingale

Matlock

8 July [1846]

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], I had just written to you by a friend of mine who was going to Stockholm when your letter arrived. Ah dearest, I had a sort of presentiment of your sorrow when I wrote and your letter only confirmed it. How I thank you for having written to me, but I do not agree with you that a death of a friend "removes us farther (in feeling) from God, because she is no longer here to pray for us." On the contrary. Do you think that one of the most blessed privileges and prerogative of friendship here on earth, which is to intercede for one another, will be removed from her in a better and happier world, and that it will not much rather be increased, so that with the nearer presence of God, there will be greater facility in interceding for our friends? Yes, as our Saviour said that it was necessary for him to depart from his disciples in order to be more united and nearer to them in his spirit, so I believe that we are much nearer to our friends *after* their death than we were before. *Before* we were separated from them, even if they went into the next room, a door--a partition--divided us, but what can separate two souls?

Often I fancy I can perceive the promptings of a good spirit in communicating thoughts to me, often I see them looking at me from the doorway. I know that they are not there in the body, but I think that God permits these visions in order to console us in our solitude. When our Lord warns us not to despise anyone, because that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of his Father, I fancy that these our angels are our beloved ones who are gone and who are now watching and praying for us.

Why should we think that there they would renounce the privilege which they had on earth? No, here amidst the conventionalities and frivolities of society, which are often all that reach our outward senses, we are sometimes baffled in seeing into the life which lies beneath, but between the soul which is free and our soul, what barrier, what restraint can there be? I cannot pretend to speak of death as a misfortune, for I cannot feel it so: the dead one was indeed necessary to our happiness of every moment, and makes an awful void in our life. Every room becomes a grave, and every book we read together a monument to the lost one, but death is the arch of triumph, under which the soul passes to live again in a purer and freer atmosphere. Those loved ones, whom on earth we could only weep for and never help, are safe, are gone home, or rather they are still more with us than they were before, for truly do I believe that these senses of ours are what *veil from us*, not discover to us the world around, which is sometimes revealed to us by faith.

Faith is the eye and ear of the soul. On a dark night, when the moon rises, she reveals to us, close at our feet, all the

objects around, of the presence of which we were not aware before we look out of our window, and we see the river sparkling in the moonbeams, and the tall shadows sleeping quietly in the grass, which were not there before. What shall we say, if one day the moon rises upon our spiritual world, and we see close at hand, ready to hold the most intimate communion, those spirits whom we had loved and mourned as lost to us. We are like the blind men by the wayside, who ought to sit and cry, Lord, that we may receive our sight, and when we do receive it, we shall perhaps find that we require no transporting into another world, to "become aware of the *immediate* presence of God and of those who are gone. What we require is sight not removal, I believe.

There is a certain sweetness in grief, able to consume small troubles. We look out from under it, as from behind a strong and shady gateway, where the smaller vocations of life cannot reach us. How often solitude, in suffering, in disappointment, the Jacob's ladder is built for us, which otherwise we never should raise, down which the Invisible Consoler descends to us and angels come and minister to us. Death to me does not breathe the spirit of the evening of the day which is done. I have seen the expression on the dead face, and like the light of the *dawn* (so different from the setting light of the day which is closed), an "Ahnung" [feeling] of all sorts of dawns, spiritual and natural. I cannot understand resignation, that is, walking on under the burden of your grief, to seize upon it, make it the footstool of the overcomer and mount upon it. Is not that the real task of the sorrowful? All that weight of bitterness, which must have accumulated in our Saviour's heart during those thirty years before he began his work, did not teach him resignation--he stood upon it and it lifted him up, till he rose upon that last highest cross, and so ascended, not into his rest, but into his victory. For to call death rest, no, it is an overcoming--the last and greatest. Sorrow, it seems to me, is a great thought, which is to bear us up on the wings of the eagle, as he did Ganymede, up to the feet of the God, there to do what work he has for us to do for him.

Would I were with you, instead of writing this long and stupid letter, for, as a Persian proverb says, the daughter of the voice is better than the Son of the ink, and Oh! how should I like to be with you on some of those mournful walks in your little park, but that would be too much pleasure. I gave a letter and a book for you to some friends of ours, Mr and Mrs Bentham, who were going to Stockholm, and kindly offered to take anything from me to you. How I envied them the pleasure of seeing you. But I gave them your old direction of Westeras as the address for the book, not having then received your letter. Will it reach you? Or would you write a line directed to Mrs Bentham, at the Poste Restante at Stockholm, telling her where you are? Do not trouble

yourself to see them, although they are very nice people, if you do not feel disposed after your great loss. Would that I were in their place, that I might have a chance of seeing you. If you happened to be at Stockholm, I am sure you would like them both.

The book that I sent is written in *old English*, and I think it will interest you. I hope this long letter, written from my heart to yours, will not have wearied you. I feel towards your mother as to a friend whom I had lost. Your account of her great soul made me think of the soul of a Prometheus, which brought down fire from heaven to warm and light the earth. My father and mother and Parthe send you their most loving remembrances and sincerest sympathy for your loss, and believe me, dearest Selma, ever and always,

yours overflowingly  
Florence

Thanks and thanks a thousand that, in the midst of your sorrow, you should have found time and inclination to write to me. I shall never forget so kind a thought. I shall think of your Guardian Angel as being still more your guardian now than she was before, and of you as being untouched by that most dreadful of all sufferings, remorse at having left one thing undone, which could minister to the lost one's happiness. It is indeed no slight blessing to be spared from that, to be assured that no stain dimmed ever one's earthly intercourse with one's friend.

Tell me your dear mother's name, when you write to me again and let not that be very long first. I shall think of her as sending her spirits to you as Christ did to his disciples. Once more, fare you well, my dearest.

[15] pp 61-67

Embley  
Romsey, Hampshire  
30 September 1846

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam]

Your letter touched me to the heart's core. I felt every word of it, but I do not agree with you, that the power of *thought* diminishes the power of *feeling*, and so saves us from suffering. The spiritual and intellectual natures are so different--they have nothing in common. We idealize, and none of it remains behind to comfort us, when our feelings are touched. We dream our intellectual dreams, they please us, but where will they be when we are gone? We think our thoughts open to us a world of wonder, but nothing of us lasts but the spiritual. Oh, do we not set much too high a value on intellectual development? "Show me thy glory," said Moses, and the answer was, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee." The glory of God is His goodness. Yesterday I was standing under this broad heaven, and the place wherever I stood seemed to me like the pass of

Thermopylae; a rainbow was spanning the whole vault of the sky. I looked closer and behold! a shadowy spirit lay in the folds of the rainbow, and I said, who art thou? And he said, I am Human Life. Seest thou not how I divide infinity on either hand, and yet am finite? Infinite is the expanse of God's universe on either side my bow. So Human Life has an eternity before and behind it. The endless stream of light is stopped for a moment by a drop of water. I come forth, and, though I am but a drop, eternity waits to see what I shall do. The pass, whereon thou standest, is the world, that defile, wherein thou must carry on a war to the death, where the brave swords keep the pass between heaven and hell. The form of the Rainbow was melting away. Stay, I cried, tell me what is Life? Answer me this one question and let me die. And he answered, I will cause all my forms to pass before thee. Ask them, and all the hues of the rainbow came floating by. And among them I saw childhood in its three stages, clad in blue robes. And the first had a pure amethyst on its brow and the second a sapphire and the third a turquoise, for they differed but by a paler tint, as thin heaven-born bliss faded away.

And Youth, in verdant hope with his emerald chaplet and Gulden Manhood, laden with his harvest of ripe (and still riper) corn. Last of all came Old Age, crowned with rubies (for he was ready to be of the seraphim, the burning ones) glowing with love made perfect in disinterestedness, which Age, kind, indulgent Old Age, alone can give. So the seven Spirits, the Sons of Time, came floating by each clothed in his hue of Light. And I fell on my face and cried, O ye radiant ones, tell me what is life? And the first three spirits answered and sang: Life is no holiday game that thou shouldst say, It amuseth me not. I find in it neither excitement nor variety sufficient for my thirst of them. And the Emerald spirit answered, Life is no book that thou shouldst say, I would gather instruction, scientific and intellectual, from it, that my mind may eat and be satisfied. And the Golden Spirit answered, Life is no school for thee to be intent upon working up all its materials into thy own improvement. Thinkest thou "His Kingdom come," meaneth, thy salvation come.

And the Last Spirit said, Life is no valley of tears that thou shouldst go through it, as through a desert, which thou must traverse, hearing and waiting whilst in the 'world there is evil; Life is none of these things. What is life then? I cried, and all the colours seemed to form themselves again into one white ray, and their voices to become one like the voice of the wind, and to say, Life is a fight, a hard struggle with the principle of evil (not *only* in thyself, nor *only* in the world, but in thyself treated as one of the world). It is a wrestling, hand to hand, foot to foot--every inch of thy way must thou dispute. The night is given thee to pray, to take breath, to drink deep at the



fountain of Power, the day to use the strength which has been given thee to go forth to work with it till the evening. Often wilt thou be worsted, often beaten down upon thy knees, but the good soldier, though sore wounded and half dead, though the hosts against him be many and strong, yet turneth him not to fly, for he is aware of the horsemen of the Lord, which fight at his right hand. The kingdom of God is coming, he cries: I fight for my country and my God. Fight on, brave heart, courageously, the salvation of thy country hangeth on thy sword. Yield not an inch, let fall not thy arm till the Kingdom is fought for the kingdom is won. So fights he, and so bleeds he (and the chariots and horsemen of fire are with him) till he sinks asleep on the turf of the valley.

The rainbow had vanished, the sun was setting, and I kneeled before it and said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, give me this day my work to do, no, not my work, but thine, and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

Forgive me all this dissertation, it was called forth by your dear letter. We have heard from the Benthams, who were delighted with their visit to you. They were full of praises of your great kindness, of your pretty place, and of you. Mrs Bentham, knowing that that was what would give me most pleasure, wrote me a long account of your house, and even of your own apartment, and every word she said was dear to me, for it enabled me to give a "local habitation and a name" to my idea of you. They were exceedingly grieved by their ignorance of Swedish that they could not have any conversation with your husband. Mrs Bentham gives me hopes that you may come to England. Oh, if it may be so, let the time go quickly between until I see your face. I think besides that a change would do you good. My dearest, you must believe all the kind things that the Benthams say of you, and that the opportunity of making such charming acquaintances has left on their minds the most agreeable remembrance of Swedish hospitality. I am to send for your views to London, Mr Bentham having had an opportunity of sending them there, and I am impatiently waiting for this remembrance of you.

You ask me for a sketch of our way of living. In the country we are seldom a fortnight without friends staying in the house. We have had an immense party for the last three weeks, in consequence of the British Scientific Association holding its annual meeting at Southampton, the town nearest to us. The Prince, our Queen's husband, was present at it, and a great many foreigners. And after the meeting, which lasted a week, they, the President, and the "savants," adjourned here. Professor von Middendorff, the Siberian traveller, came here with them. I noticed a Swede, Professor Svanberg, whose acquaintance I should so much have liked to have made, in order to make him talk of Sweden, but none of our friends knew him. I think these meetings

are more for the sake of sociability than learning, but still the[y] are very agreeable. The next is to be at Oxford, and in that beautiful town it will be magnificent. I have a dear old friend, Dr Fowler (now alas! past eighty), who, in his great kindness, has taken pleasure in educating me, and with whom I went about to the lectures at this meeting.

Later in the autumn country gentlemen shoot their partridges and pheasants, and then you have a *shooting* party. Then comes Christmas and a *dancing* party. Then comes spring and London. And the summer we spent in Derbyshire. I cannot say I have' much pleasure in society. I cannot care about people whom I do not care for. I mean that I feel only a sensation of joy when my most agreeable *acquaintance* drives away, unless it is a *friend*, I cannot care for their society. So both a house and a face are nothing to me, till, in the former, I can say of *this* noise--it is the cricket going to warm his feet at the kitchen fire, and of *that*, it is the beetle going for his supper to the larder, after the servants are in bed. And I must know all the lightest footfalls of the spirit, as they leave their almost imperceptible tracks, on the face I love, before that face is anything to me.

I spend many hours every day in my own room, a beautiful room, which my kind father and mother have given me and where I am much alone, excepting when a cousin, whom I call *my boy*, a lad of fifteen (whose education for the last six years I have been permitted to have a hand in) is with us. He is my joy, my life. All that I have is his, my mind and heart and soul and strength, my money, my time, my hopes and fears, all that is mine is his. To everything I could say, "Thy will be done," excepting to his turning out ill--rather his death than that--and the career of a young man, who is provided by inheritance with an ample fortune, is such a perilous one in England. He is now at school, and though I miss his dear arms round my neck, yet I am glad that he should be learning a little of real life.

But I have talked long enough about ourselves. You asked for a description, or I should not have troubled you with so long an one. What can I tell you about? Miss Martineau is quite recovered, and going to Egypt. Our Queen is living very quietly in the Isle of Wight, with her husband and children, of whom she is devotedly fond, I have been very much occupied lately with the marriage of my most intimate friend, a daughter of Lord Sherborne's, but when I think of what the disappointments of a woman are--her high-strung hopes and expectations make my heart tremble for her. Woman ends by gleaning here and there a small harvest of pleasures and pains, while there is no fortune so high, but that her desires are far higher. But, in the dark nights of our lives, God appears as a "bright light to lead us through the wilderness" (now, as of old to the Israelites) whereas, in the hard glaring sunshine of prosperity, He is to us

too often only as a cloud, a dim vague cloud we scarcely heed, or heed only as shadowing our fierce blaze of pleasure. True, it still shows us the way, but shows it like a cloud, threatening rain and storm, as we think and therefore unwelcome to us. We wish, ungrateful wanderers! it were not there. You say, dearest, that you have bought a sober happiness at the price of much disappointment. Woman puts so much into life that is not there and that it cannot contain, that I fear disappointment is the lot of everyone (that is, who *is* a woman and not a mere *dress-making machine*). But I believe that the end of all our discipline is to give us peace, by rooting out of us all personal feelings. We are often walled up in such a prison of personality, buried in such a tumult of hopes and fears, that the sweet soft feeling of an autumn morning after rain, when the drops are still glistening on the fuchsias, sometimes takes us quite by surprise; it seems so long since we observed it last, since our last leisure frame of mind, for when the soul has not leisure to *listen*, how can it *hear* the voice of joy, for real joy had always a still small voice. We must *look* to see and *listen* to hear or her low and solemn voice goes unheeded by us.

In early life, the stage of the present and the outward world is so filled with phantoms, the phantoms--not unreal though intangible--of vague remorse, fears, dwelling on the threshold of everything we undertake, dissatisfaction with what *is* and restless yearnings for what is *not*, cravings after a world of wonders which *is*, but is like the chariot and horses of fire, which Eliah's frightened servant could not see, till his eyes were opened. (Heaven is close above, beneath, around us, and were our eyes open, we should see it.) But love bays to sleep these phantoms, by assuring us of a love so high and great, that we may lay aside all care for our own happiness (not because it is of *no* consequence to us, whether we are happy or not) but because it is of *so much* consequence to Him. Thus love gives that leisure frame to our mind, which opens it at once to joy.

It seems to me that you and I, dearest Selma, are come by different roads to much the same place. Tell me, do you not feel this, do you not seem to yourself standing on a narrow strip between two eternal seas, little to look forward to, much to regret--but there is *peace*, deep and settled peace, for there is room on the little island for oneself and one's God, who is now as a light to one's paths though one seems to oneself as a traveller in the dark night on a blind road with a lantern which moves with him, and sheds just light enough for him to walk, just one patch of light before him--not enough to illuminate any distant range before or behind, any wide-reaching prospect. Any of the country to which he is coming, nothing but the bit of road he treads is light, and one strip of dawn just breaking on the horizon. But, thank God! it is on the eastern not the western

horizon, the dawn of the sun, which is rising, not the last setting light of the day which is done. There is peace, for I have nothing now which moves my heart to desire or hope.

My happiness no longer entirely depends on the tone or manner of the people about me. I have no personal feeling left and with me walks my God, and these are the elements of my peace. They are rather different, to be sure, from those of my friend's, the bride, on whom shines the broad daylight of love made perfect in return, who looks afar and sees a long prospect of a life spent with the husband of her choice. Time was when I could not have believed that I could have been satisfied without looking forward--we are such creatures of hope, such dwellers in the future--but the springs of sorrow and of joy God keeps in His own hands, and He unlocks them in circumstances which we least expected would promote either.

Your few words about your dear mother, to whom I feel as to a friend whom I had lost, interested me exceedingly. I am sure you can say of her, as a certain Duke of Osmonde, in English history, said of his son whom he had lost, "I had rather have my dead son than all the living sons in England." Nothing ever replaces those ties, where no vanity, no love of pleasing enter. And yet I cannot pretend to speak of death as a misfortune, for I do not think it so. I have sat by the beds of two friends lately, the one going to death, and the other to marriage, which of them to the better part God only knows. The common opinion gives it in favour of marriage. God decides. I never pray now about temporal things, not even for my boy, not knowing *what* to desire. Death is the gateway to the garden, where we shall no longer thirst and hunger after real satisfaction but shall have it--the archway under which we pass struggling with our own despondency and weakness, and come out born again, and gifted with strength, in a brighter clearer atmosphere. Marriage, on the contrary, is almost always a disappointment, I believe, to the *woman* for, to her, marriage is *the* thing, while to the husband it is only *one* of the things, which form his life. She often cannot reconcile herself to the absence of the daily proofs and words of love which are necessary to satisfy her imperious affections. Do you know those lines?

I slept and dreamed that Life was Beauty.

I woke and found that Life was Duty.

Was then thy dream a shadowy lie?

Toil on, sad heart, courageously,

And thou shalt find thy dream to be

A noonday light and truth to thee.

But I am really ashamed of the length of this letter, the only excuse for which is that it is the only intercourse vouchsafed me with you in this world. But I trust that it will not always be so, that we shall see you here. And now, *not* farewell, but God

bless you, my dearest friend, and, in the bosom of the Eternal Spirit, I take, not my leave of you, but meet you there.

My father and mother and Parthe desire their best love and kindest regards to Mr Bjorkenstam, if you will present them, and their great hope of seeing you here.

Florence

[16] pp 67-71

[postmarked] Romsey

18 October 1847

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], I do not know whether your last letter gave me most pain or pleasure, pain at having missed the opportunity of seeing one who could tell me so much of you--or pleasure at finding I still lived in your heart and thoughts so warmly. Pray, if your brother is still likely to return through England, write and tell him that he will be most welcome here, most joyfully received, wherever or whenever he can come. That we shall be here, i.e. *Embley, Romsey, Hampshire* (which, by the railroad, is not more than two hours from London) till the month of February, 1848--that we shall then be in London (where he can hear of us always at *6 Whitehall Chambers*) till Easter, and shall spend the summer at *Lea Hurst, Matlock, Derbyshire*, any or all of which places we shall be most glad to see him, or any of your dear family. I most exceedingly regret that I never withdrew (since my grandmother's death, who lived there) that direction (of Blandford Sq.) from you, which is now forsaken by our family. But the safest way always will be for him to write to this places, *Embley* (whence the letter will be always forwarded to us wherever we are), enclosing his address, and then there can be no possibility of missing him again.

Do you know I am thinking (wonderful to say, I who never left my own family for so long a time before) of going three months to Rome with a very dear friend of mine, Mrs Bracebridge and her husband. My mother urges it on account of my health, which has not been very good. The English take an eminent interest in the reformations of Pius IX which is another thing. I have never seen Rome, and my heart beats at the idea of touching the soil of my dear Italy again, which is like a friend to me. Though I am very unwilling to leave my own home, where one flatters oneself that one cannot be spared (whether truly or untruly) and that things will be the worse for one's absence. If I go, it will be next week, and in that case I fear I shall not see the messenger from your face, your brother. But my family will always be glad to receive him. I expect to return much more fitted for all my duties and strengthened by a winter at Rome. I shall have such great pleasure of being with my friend, Mrs Bracebridge, who has been my "Ithuriel," under whose lance all that is good starts up into shape and form and fair reality in

me, as well as all that is bad puts on its real ugly shape. Do you remember in Milton's *Paradise Lost* the angel *Ithuriel*, at the touch of whose spear the devil starts up unveiled in his own true shape?

We were in London in June, which makes me doubly sorry to have missed your brother, by my stupidity in not recalling that unlucky direction of Blandford Sq., which I once gave you. One great cause of my unwillingness to go abroad, even for three months, is, that I shall miss my boy's Christmas holidays, and that I think this such an important period of his life, when it is so necessary to lose none of the precious time and influence with him. He is now sixteen and a half. Soon he will be going to the university, then he will begin life, such a critical time for a boy of great imagination, deep affections, but easily influenced, easily led away as all such must be. And we all know how soon a woman's influence, especially that of a woman much older than himself, decays in a boy, at his first dazzling entrance into life. My boy too has riches, prospects, the snares of the world and I almost wish he had not. I fear his want of energy, of self-government.

You kindly ask who he is. He is the son of my father's sister, and came to us when he was four months old, in consequence of being thought at the point of death. He has since had nervous fevers, and many illnesses, but his parents then lived much in London, and though they are still both alive, he has spent most of his life with us, because London disagreed with him so much. I then took pains with Latin and Greek and mathematics, in order to qualify myself to be his tutor and, though he has now been many years at a school at Brighton by the seaside, yet he has always spent his holidays with us, and has sometimes been obliged to return home from illness, so that I have always had to resume my functions. From his peculiar character, which is a mixture of passion and shyness, of affection deep and reserve almost as deep, of vehemence and instability, he has been a source to me of the most intense anxiety, and at the same time of interest--the more as his mother tells me that I am the only person to whom his reserve relaxes and melts away. I feel so much my insufficiency for the task, my nothingness before the great responsibility of guiding an immortal spirit. He is so clever and so idle, so easily led away and yet so difficult to guide, that I cannot but feel that the path he will take in life depends almost upon an accident. And yet I know that this anxiety is faithless, nay, more that it is *impertinent* to our almighty Father. But even you will be weary of this subject.

But why do not you adopt a child? Do you know I believe it fills your heart quite as much as one of your own--and yours need not be of a character which will give you so much anxiety as

mine. "Sigh not for children Thou will love them much and care will follow love", says one of our poets. And truly I believe it. God forbid that I should ever wish for children. If it were God's will that I should ever be a mother, I hope I should fulfil my trust, but I could never *wish* for them. Life has been to me too serious and solemn a thing to desire *new* responsibilities.

How I wish that I could read your poets in their and yours language. Tegner is familiar to us in his German dress, which is better than his English one (except indeed some of his poems translated by Longfellow, which are worthily done). Dearest, I have never thanked you for your beautiful views of Stockholm, which I have only just received through the Benthams. The book is a treasure to me for your sake, but it would be also for its own, for what a beautiful city they represent. Oh that I could one day see it and you--I have not seen the Benthams, alas! since their return, though I had a very nice letter from her, but that is not like seeing and talking to her of you. They went to St Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Constantinople and home by Italy and Paris and rejoiced it all. They are now at their own place Pontrilas in Herefordshire, and we have seen her brother, who told us something of her. She wrote me a long account from St Petersburg of you, your kindness to her, your beautiful apartment, and the happy hours they had passed with you, and of all the beauties of Sweden. Her father died when they were still in Sicily. He was a very old man--their mother had been dead some time--but this son was with him to nurse him at the last.

I heard of your sister-in-law at Rome last winter from some cousins of ours who were there, and was glad to find that she still remembered us. Would I could hope, as there is so little chance, I fear, of seeing you here, that I could meet you this winter at Rome.

You ask me, dearest, what is my experience of life. I suspect, though it is not usually so said, that the storms which shake woman's life are quite as tempestuous as those of man's, that her spirit is quite as strong, requires quite as much subduing and must be uprooted, as with an earthquake, and blown, as with a hurricane, to heaven. It is generally thought that the will of man is the more iron and his character the harder to mould or break. It may be so. I do not know. Man records his own struggles, his own temptations, his strange battles, the profoundest writhings of his own heart. Woman does not hers, or, if she does, it is because she is a *manly*-minded woman, and therefore her testimony is not to the purpose being only that of one more man's. Perhaps this may be the reason why man's life is universally considered so much more stormy a one than that of woman: hers is left out of the story, except in the matter of love, which is generally thought the only *matter* that these can

be with her, her, the "falcon-hearted dove." Yet  
 "By the strong spirit's discipline  
 is woman won to heaven."

You ask me for books. You who know our language so well would like Macaulay's *Historical Essays*, which are in prose, and his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which are poetry. He is in our *Cabinet*, and one of the best talkers I know. Mrs Jameson's *Characteristics of Women*, which are criticisms on the female characters of Shakespeare, would delight you. And for novels, Lady Georgina Fullerton has been most admired lately. She has turned Catholic. Do you know her *Grantley Manor*? Mr Monckton Milnes's *Poems of Many Years* I think you would like. He is in the House of Commons and a great friend of ours. Kinglake's *Eothen*, which are travel in the East are very amusing. Of dead authors Charles Lamb's *Essays of Elia* are truly English. Ward's *Tremaine* is a religious novel and Miss Terrini's *Destiny*, also a novel, are interesting. All England reads the *Edinburgh Review*, a periodical, which comes out every three months, and Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, a story which appears every month.

And now, my dearest, farewell. Excuse this hasty letter as I have much to do, if I go abroad, and arrange matters for my absence. Long intervals occur in our correspondence, but between us two many words are not wanted. I trust that there is no silence in our sympathy for there being no words. Write to me soon--your letters are such a joy for me. All mine greet you and I am,

ever yours

Florence

My love to all whom you love.

[17] pp 71-74

Lea Hurst

Matlock, Derbyshire

5 July 1849

My dearest Selma [Björkenstam], I was so sorry to hear that you had been so ill, and so very, long ill. I only trust that Ems wilt completely restore you, and what I write for now is to suggest that a journey to England might help to finish the work of restoration. The complete change of air and scene might do much for you, after Ems has done what it can. And we should be so glad to receive you. I need not tell you what joy it would give us, if you would come and spend a few weeks with us here. You might be as quiet or as sociable as you liked, spend as much time in your own room, if you did not feel very strong, as you chose. And if you do not like to leave your little daughter for so long, make her meet you and bring her with you here. There is nothing in the world we are so fond of as a little child and anything of yours would be welcome. Will you offer our kindest regards to M



de Bjorkenstam, if he will accept them, and say how happy it would make us to make acquaintance and that we trust the answer to this letter will be that he has promoted your coming. We place ourselves in his hands. I need not tell him how welcome you and *all yours* will be.

I am just starting to see my dear boy, whom you so kindly inquire after, at Edinburgh, where he is pursuing his studies. He is entering upon a perilous period of life, and though he is so good at present, so affectionate, it causes me much anxiety.

My father and mother and sister are all well and send you all their heartfelt love. We shall be returned from Edinburgh long before you can arrive in England, if you come after Ems. We are now at our country house in Derbyshire. If you should come later in the year, in September or October, we shall be at our old direction, Embley, Romsey, Hampshire.

It was so very good of you to write when you were so weak and still so poorly, that I can not sufficiently thank you for it. Oh! if it were the precursor of a real visit from you, how I should bless that letter. Our air too here is reckoned remarkably good.

Since I wrote to you last I have been at Rome, not with my own people but with some friends, with whom I spent a winter there. I cannot tell you how I rejoice, now that all this misery has come upon the unfortunate city, to have seen it then. What strange novelty is this that republic shall rise against republic and, like cannibals, devour one another.

In England we continue in a state of the most profound tranquillity, scarcely varied by a debate in the House of Lords rejecting the admission of Jews to the Legislature, or an election in the city of her favourite Jew member, in spite of the House of Lords. The more Europe is convulsed, the more England seems to pride herself on giving the kiss of peace to everybody, except it would seem to her poor Ireland, which is more miserable than ever, where is every prospect of a good harvest, but before the harvest comes, thousands will die of famine. The Poor Law is in full operation, but Poor Law houses are too few to hold the destitute. In fine parishes, I know, alone [above] twelve thousand are under Poor Law roof and auxiliary houses are everywhere requisite (the Poor Law is for providing out of the rates for paupers). There has lately been evidence before the House of Lords, which English people should be ashamed to hear, that, not in Russia, not in countries we call semibarbarian, does such poverty exist as in Ireland. The Queen, it is said, is going there this year.

You will be full of German politics at Elms. They are so complicated now that they seem past understanding. Sir Robert Peel says that the greatest political blunder committed in his time is the King of Prussia's refusal of the imperial crown, and

as Peel, the leader of the late government is, as perhaps you know, a man with whom every thing is a question not of right or wrong, but of expediency and in expediency, such an opinion is worth something coming from him.

We hear from people coming from Paris that the cholera is still raging there, although the newspapers declare it past. The present government has been secured by Ledru Rollin's defeat for six months at least and the Guizots, who have been spending a good deal of time with us, are returning (not to Paris however, but to Normandy). I am sorry Guizot, do what he will, cannot help being the nucleus of a party wherever he goes, and he may be the cause of fresh divisions there. As for Louis Bonaparte he is ramping at the feet of the Legitimist Party to gain popularity with them. In England, all attention has been concentrated on Macaulay's new book, the *History of England*, which is as lively as a romance and calculated to do much good in these times, by endearing the constitution to the people.

I cannot write more today, but I was anxious to write now in order to catch you before you leave Ems. May I not say, Auf Wiedersehen!

Florence Nightingale  
May God restore you to health and to your little girl. God bless you, my dearest.

F.N.

If you return down the Rhine do so and see the Deaconesses Establishment at Kaiserwerth near Düsseldorf.

**1844** Source: Laura E. Richards and Maud Howe Elliott, assisted by Florence Howe Hall, *Julia Ward Howe 1819-1910*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1916 [1:112-13] Embley

26 December [1844]

I cannot pretend to express, my dear kind friends, how touched and pleased I was by such a remembrance of me as that of your child's name....If I could live to justify your opinion of me, it would have been enough to have lived for, and such thoughts, as that of your goodness, are great thoughts, "strong to consume small troubles" which should bear us up on the wings of the eagle, like Guido's Ganymede, up to the feet of the God, there to take what work he has for us to do for him. I shall hope to see my little Florence before long in this, world, but if not, I trust there is a tie formed between us which will continue in eternity--if she is like you I shall know her again there, without her body on, perhaps the better for not having known her here with it.

**1845** Source: Laura E. Richards, ed., "Letters of Florence Nightingale," *Yale Review* 24 (December 1934) 327-30

23 July 1845

And now may I tell you where I am? When we reached Lea Hurst we found a letter to say that Grandmamma had had a threatening of paralysis so Papa and I came on here, and he left me to stay on and most thankful am I that she will let me stay as I had a sort of terror of her being left alone. The solitude of this place, where we only send for our letters once a week, where we seldom see a newspaper, and ministries might go in and out without our being the wiser, is something I suspect you Boston people have no idea of--indeed I might be heard to answer, if asked what king at present sits the British throne, "Suppose, Sir, we say George III." That is the reason, you see, why all my news is a quarter of a century old. I have more time for thinking and for writing here--there is very little to be done--to set with her hand in mine, and to tell her stories about her Grandchildren is all I can do for her, and I take the first moments I have to write to you. I like walking in the valley of the shadow of death, as I do here, sometimes; there is something in the silence and solitude of it, which levels all earthly troubles--*on retrempe ses ailes* in the waters of that valley. A person who always lived in it, it seems to me, would be like a white swan on its cool, fresh blue lake, rocked to rest by its waves, instead of being dragged down into our busy chicken-yard of struggling, *scratting* life.

As life hurries along in its wild, headlong course (how it does hurry!) it is as much as I can do to run with it--my mind is out of breath, with its dawdling perceptions, and cannot connect any thing but that its days are past and its purposes broken off.... x x

I and my three books, which I brought with me, are settled down here so very like a very old spinster with her three cats, that you will not wonder if I can give you nothing but the heavy and the humdrum. A very turbulent dog completes the picture, who has always his hand on my arm--my only grievance, that he is not a dark dog, which does not shew the dirt--white dogs ought to wear a black surtout, like our "Teazer," who always grew a long black greatcoat over his white flannel petticoat. On Sundays I entertain very old ladies to dinner--for as one is deaf and the other has no teeth to speak distinctly, they need an interpreter--we talk about robberies and the negligence of the police. "Ah," says one, "where I lived about York, the police were very attentive, very indeed, in taking up *everybody that was round*, very attentive indeed and they would take *anybody* to the Station and examine him"--"and here they have not taken even me," say I. Grandmamma is very anxious they (the old ladies, I mean, not the police) should like me--so I hope they do. I open the front door for them on my knees, and walk round the garden with them on my face. Why did Providence invent old age? If we are to go up the hill again, why do we go down hill at all, in order to climb up the other side? I could have engineered it better .... x x

I do not know how to thank Dr Howe for his most interesting and welcome letter and illustrations of Mesmerism. Thanks and thanks a thousand that in the midst of his many occupations, and of the delights of his successes over that same dead and unpromising body in his pupils, a little time should have remained to him to think of me. I shall never forget so kind a thought. Could the excess of human charity and philanthropy induce him to write to me again, it would be giving me intense pleasure, when he has a little time, but you see I have nothing interesting to send him in return. You do not know how pleased I should be to see anything that you have written, dearest friend, nor how gratefully I should receive those poems of yours you promised me, when your friends come to England. Any friends of yours will be welcome at our house ever, but as a prognostic and fore-shower of the happy time which shall see *your* faces there again--coming events cast their shadows before them, I shall think whenever we may receive friends of yours. Ah would that I could accept your invitation and come to America, but that is too good to be true--if I *had* gone to, I could not have come here, so everything is for the best, and so we *shall* be able to say some day, I suppose, to everything, even to our own false steps. But I am afraid to look at the clock, for I *do* think it must be half past nine (we drink tea before 6) and the dog must have been chained to the foot of the stairs and every other soul and Christian dog asleep this hour--and you, my dear friend, I am sure must be asleep too, so only two words more to say what I could not say in many, many more, how truly and earnestly I am ever your gratefully overflowing and affectionate

Florence Nightingale

**1845** Source: Laura E. Richards, ed., "Letters of Florence Nightingale," *Yale Review* 24 (December 1934):330-36 [ellipses in published letter]

Embley Park

26 December 1845

My dear kind friends

Now what news shall I give you? Politics? no, for one John Russell in (or out of) the Treasury is too mystical and speculative a subject--and is besides as well understood in America as in England. I am glad he is not in--let the Tories do the dirty work a little longer--and then 'we' shall come in, more safely, more gloriously, more permanently. Peel would have been a forger, if he had been born Bob Peel, a butcher's boy--let him forge for our benefit another year--he will get no better fame for it from posterity and 'we' shall. He will go to a moral Botany Bay as a forger, sooner or later--while John Russell will have 'preserved dear honour' as bright and clear, as all the Russells from the time of Lord William.

That the Queen is going to add a *babby*, and Miss Martineau

a book, to the already too numerous swarm, will not interest you.... x x

Shall I inform you that the old year is almost at an end, a curious piece of information, usually conveyed in letters at this time. Poor old year! Has a '46 already his heel upon your head? I am not sorry, it brings at least this advantage, that one is less of a young lady every year, tho' it is but a negative one. I am glad to be growing old and, after 46's first month is over, shall be very well able to welcome him, but that flight of starlings going to settle, of alarms and embarrassments, called Christmas "rows," they are coming on with fearful haste. We are going to dance out the Old Year--surely we might with as much reason dance out a death--for with how much more security we can look forward, in many cases, to a happy fate for that dear lost one than we can to the happiness of the danced-in year for most of the dancers. And is it not almost as solemn a moment?

All the English world are becoming Catholics--perhaps I am writing to one now if America has the same fever. If so, would you had been with us the other day to see Sidney Herbert's new church near Salisbury, with plenty of room on the stage for the actors and very little for the spectators, so it seemed to me, when we mounted the stage, resplendent in mosaic and painting, we took our galoshes off our feet, not because the place whereon we stood was *holy ground*, but because it was *gorgeous ground*.

The Reviews, and those reviews of the Reviews (all that we ever read now), the newspapers, spend a great deal of good anxiety lest the German religious, or irreligious, movement and Eclectic Philosophy should spread here. There is no danger; Catholicism suits us better.... x x

My young people (meaning father, mother and sister) are just come back from a very pleasant visit, where they heard the widow lioness (the lion roaring in her own right besides) Mrs "Caroline Bowles" Southey, with great satisfaction....x x

The noise of mirth and jollity made meanwhile, at home, by my old great-aunt and me was inconceivable, over the pleasures of the devil and the world, that is, she the world, and I the devil, with the pleasing little cream pot set up between us as the flesh. Nature's "last best gift" after all is one's own fender and one's own room.

I have just been attending the death bed of our dear old nurse, one of that genus, now nearly extinct, of the Catherine Douglasses, who would hold their arm in the latch of the door, till it was broken, if thieves were getting in. She was our housekeeper and insisted on keeping the keys till the very moment of her death. She died a hero as she had lived, upright in her chair, her last words being, "Don't call the cook; Hannah, go to your work."

Though I held her hand I could not tell the exact moment

when her gallant spirit sped its way on its noiseless journey, except that the hand for the first time failed to press mine. She fought the fight out, till overpowered by the material world, like a good *man* and true, and I have no doubt her soul is gone to animate the body of a moral Napoleon. She had lived with Mama seven and twenty years, and never been seen with an uncheerful face. She was deformed and a dwarf, but her great soul made her like a Prometheus and she did bring down fire from heaven, which warmed and lighted our house. I cannot pretend to talk of death as a misfortune because one cannot feel it so, but we miss her every moment of our lives.

Since her death I have spent half my days on the Physiology of blue curtains and bad preserves, which have been my care and study as housekeeper. The hours I have spent in that cupboard! I can't think how people can eat preserves, now I see the time and trouble they give! If ever one finds its way into my mouth again--however my reign is now over--angels and ministers of grace defend me from another! Though I cannot but view my fifty-six pots with the proud satisfaction of an artist.... x x

But I have not thought of anything to tell you yet and it would be out of place if I had, for this letter is to be a mere letter of business, penned to convey to you the necessary information how much I want to see you and the little Florence and hear all about Dr Howe's plans, who seems full of activity and Lunatic Asylums. Ah! What a blessing to live, as he does, every day of his life! with others. *Young* people want experience and *old* people want energy, and so nothing is done, and when we see the exception to this law we cannot but call it genius, that unattainable gift of God.

I have failed in three beautiful plans this autumn and generally believe that man counts his years by their failures and not by their months, and that it is of his early miscarriages that are made up his own experience and his neighbour's amusement. Girls seem to me to be the least happy class of the community, and the misery is greatly increased by the feeling that it is a very wicked thing, in such a position, not to be very happy. Their friends always tell them that when they have a vocation, a family dependent upon them, they will find all come right. But I cannot believe that God has created a whole class merely to wait till they are something else. Oh the wasted energies that I see and the field there is for them; why cannot the two be brought together? Who would fear being an old maid if she had such a prospect before her, as to be the creature behind whom Providence hides himself--I do not mean only in broth or a load of coals or 2s. 6d.

I saw a poor woman die before my eyes this summer, whom her well-intentioned nurses had poisoned, as certainly as if they had given her Prussic Acid. She died of ignorant nursing--and such

things happen constantly--as well as all sorts (some from pure ignorance) of misery and profligacy, which good healthful intimacies among the poor people, made by the better educated, under the shelter of a rhubarb powder or a dressed leg, might go far to avert. People talk so much of the "Perfection of English Female Education in the higher orders," how early they rise, how late they marry, how well they beat their children. Would you not as soon thrust your girls into the Convent or the made-up marriage as into the shining-in-conversation life in England? Not that it is viciously frivolous shining at all, not coquetterie or such like. It is only that conversation, good, clear, sensible as it is, seems what young English women live for, and why are they so restless and uncomfortable nowadays but because this is the universal effort? A few of them succeed and the rest, who fail, are obliged to wait till chance supplies them with an object. How many excellent girls we know who would sacrifice a friend for a good story, and not a malicious story either, only a witty one. One would almost rather the conversation were less good.... x x

You will think I am going to propose a "Society" for ameliorating the condition of young ladies of fortune and education, with a Secretaryship for myself of 500 pounds a year. But I'm not, though one thinks all this activity without an aim very frightful, and one does not like the poets and the doctrines and remedies for uneasiness of the day. The spirit they breathe is sweet, but it is the spirit of the evening, of the long shadows on the grass, and of the repose which has been earned and may be given way to. It is not the spirit of the morning. I cannot understand resignation, i.e., walking on under the burden of your grief, to seize upon it, make it the footstool of the overcomer and mount it, is not that the real task of the Sorrowful?

All that weight of bitterness, which must have accumulated in our Saviour's heart during those thirty private years, did not teach him resignation; he stood upon it and it lifted him up, till he rose upon that last highest Cross, and so ascended, not into his rest, but into his victory. For should we ever call death a rest, is it not rather an overcoming, the last and greatest?.... x x

I wish the philosophers would once for all define peace. What is peace? According to all the definitions of all the poets, the essence, the ne plus ultra of peace, would be lying in bed, where is certainly the greatest meditation. Yet, methinks, the peace spoken of by one Matthew is more like *struggling* in every capacity of one's being, living with all one's might, in short, such peace as I have seen in Dr Howe. (How much truth there is in the superstition that you must dig for hidden treasure *in silence*, or you will not succeed. Your description of his benevolence coming out directly in deeds reminded me of it.)

Oh, if we could but live to see Protestant Sisterhoods of Charity without vows for women of education, but the difficulties of the first step are so great in England--I do not mean the physically revolting parts of a hospital but things about the surgeons and the nurses who are generally *most* unlike *Soeurs* which you may guess. Yet I know a young German Protestant lady, who studied in a hospital--and if women could have a career like this in England what would become of those much-dreaded much maligned latter years? Would they not be all *verklärt*, would not that terror of a life without love, an activity without an aim, be done away with? I am afraid everybody is not so fond of hospitals, but I wish you could tell me, whether in America pupil-nurses could be ever taken there merely to learn. It is so much easier and more *prévenant* to approach the poor people with medicine for their bodies, than in any other way, leaving it to Opportunity to make friends with them afterwards. But there wants some sort of establishment, which shall enable *young* women to do, what they *cannot* do now, and what when they are *old*, they *will* not do.

Goodbye, my dearest friend, which word I am sure I never say to you without its good old meaning. God be wi' you. You never can tell me enough about yourself, or about Dr Howe's Reforms.

I have no time to be ashamed of myself for writing you such a long and barren letter in return--I *would* write now, because from the day after Christmas Day, for a month, I shall not have a moment to myself, except the solemn minute of the procession in to dinner, when everybody knows that each person may have the full and exclusive possession of his or her thoughts to him or herself, till the dogs are fairly feeding.

If I could live to see anything like a Protestant Sisterhood of Charity in England, 'my eyes would indeed have seen His salvation,' but now I see nothing but a mist, and only hope, when the mist clears away, to see something else.

**1845** Source: Laura E. Richards, ed., "Letters of Florence Nightingale," *Yale Review* 24 (December 1934):330-36

26 December 1845

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Goodbye, my dearest friend, which word I am sure I never say to you without its good old meaning. God be wi' you. You never can tell me enough about yourself or about Dr Howe's reforms.

I have no time to be ashamed of myself for writing you such a long and barren letter in return. I *would* write now, because from the day after Christmas Day, for a month, I shall not have a moment to myself, except the solemn minute of the procession in to dinner, when everybody knows that each person may have the full and exclusive possession of his or her thoughts to him or herself, till the dogs are fairly feeding.

If I could live to see anything like a Protestant Sisterhood of Charity in England "my eyes would indeed have seen His salvation," but now I see nothing but a mist, and only hope, when the mist clears away, "to see something else."

**1845-46** Source: Harold Wellington Jones, "Some Unpublished Letters of Florence Nightingale" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8,9 (November 1940):1390, original, National Library of Medicine MS C1 [8:762-67] [1845 or 1846]  
My dear Maria [Otter]

The prisoner at the bar was asked whether she had anything to say for herself, but she could only recommend herself to mercy. I completely acknowledge my sins, but I do not mean to reform just yet. Now, however, that conscience in my absence has taken up the pen, it occurs to her that she has nothing to say. The thought comes too late however. She never sees her faults till after she has made them, which is certainly the way to see them, but not for your advantage nor for mine. You see I am writing sentiments on fancy dress at home, but whether in the character of Ecclesiastes the Preacher, or of my recollections as a chaperon, I am not quite clear. The reason of this is that all my young people are at Waverley, bless their merry hearts! I have been there this last month. I have had two fancy balls. I could not go. Well, well. "The mind is its own gown, and fancy dress and, as Rosalind says, 'Tis but one cast away and so death come death."<sup>1</sup> At all events, if Milton wrote his Morning Hymn in Paradise by the light of long sixes [candles], I can as well

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 4, scene 1.

write an account of my lost garden of Eden (of Waverley, I mean) by the side of my little black teapot on the hob.

Marianne as Mary Q. of Scots and Parthe as Lady Jane Grey, I hear, were "quite the thing." When I think upon my pink gown, there stirs even within my old breast still the pride of life, which St John says he had, and of black lace flounces which he doesn't, but which he would have had, if he had mine, but otherwise nobody ever will be so old as I am, don't expect it, for you will never will. And I shed a few tears on the fashion of this world which passes away, as you will think on some sentiments not quite so well-defined, of the fashion of fancy flounces which passes away as quickly. I expect my young people back with Miss Johnson, whose reputation may perhaps have reached your ears, as Guide and Counsel in Ordinary and Legal Adviser in Education to our family to the tenth generation. I expect them back, with her to keep them in order, some time in the course of the year. My youngest hope, W.E. Nightingale, has returned to me, but leaves me tomorrow for Derbyshire. The immediate cause however for my trembling hand's again assuming the pen, is to ask after Mrs Romilly, whose confinement I saw in the paper about forty days after date, during which time I rejoice to think she has *not* been making Lent in consequence of my not knowing of the event. And now, beloved, do I speak to a lady of *ton* and fashion? immersed in new polkas and the Derby dancing circles, or shall you and I sit down and we two will rail at our mistress the world and all our misery? If you will, I will, but I know you never rail, so no more will I, and instead of that, I will tell you about your mistress the queen at Strathfieldsaye, which was a most entire failure. The only people of *her* society asked were the Ashburtons, it was the most unaccountable thing his not asking the Palmerstons, quite like a personal offence, but they say the old duke cares now for nothing but flattery and asks nobody but master of hounds. On this occasion the duchess was deadly, *regnova il terror, nella citta!* Not a sound was heard, not a funeral note, as the queen's corse was carried in to dinner, and in the evening it was still worse, everybody stood at ease about the drawing room, and demanded themselves like soldiers on parade. The queen did her very best and died like a hero, but she was overpowered by numbers, gagged and her hands tied. The only amusement of the evening was seeing Albert taught to miss at billiards, but not a man, who disturbed the silence deep of the grave where our queen we were burying.

My dear, if I did know where this would find you, I would tell you some very very curious and valuable state secrets about the discoveries of the Opening-of-the-Letters, reaching back as far as Cardinal Wolsey, to me communicated by one of the committee, but as it may find you in the house of Edward Strutt, Esq. MP I think it more prudent not. Helen Richardson, I am happy

to inform you, was at the Waverley ball. An' you love me, my friend, do tell me what are we to do on the Martineau faith, I have fought the case straight through upon Paley's evidence, against all her enemies, but I have just had a communication which beats all faith. Oh Jane, Jane, would that thou wert at the ultimissima Thule. Perhaps, beloved, the magnanimity of your disposition, deriving strength from the circumstance, that my conduct toward you is what lambs could not forgive nor worms forget, now prompts you to enquire after my precious health. All extraordinary particulars, not furnished you by the public prints, about the last (not annus, but) *mentis mirabilis* of my life I am ready to give you, and are as follows: I have gone to bed early, and got up late, eaten my six meals a day regular (and reduced the amount of intellectual food supposed to be required by a reasonable creature to a magnitude, less than the least assignable quantity, that is, the quantity assigned by Solomon's mother to a virtuous woman. Ah, *mein kind*, I wish it was, *quo stupidior es melior* I should be in a fair way then, but as it is, don't you often feel as if you were in a dream. I am sure I did, the night of the Waverley ball. It was such a night, the night of the full moon. I have not seen such an one since the moonlight on the hills of Florence and the lighted town shone in its hushed brightness like a child asleep and there was no life stirring but I and three hares, who were running after one another all night, and at the same time, I could see myself in the dining room at Waverley, and was not quite sure, do you know, which was which. What is time and distance? It is so curious, what is the effect they have upon us, it is so difficult to find out, which is the real life and which the imaginary. Perhaps I really was not there, M dear, you will think I am Mrs Fleming, but I am still your industrious Flea. How much that old moon must have seen in her day and what a waste of opportunity it is for her not to publish her Recollections. Reminiscences of a Full Moon would write so well. But how tired she must be of all the confidences that have been made to her and how long she must think it since man has since lived and thought and felt, and always the old bores, the same things, in spite of all the different revolutions and religions and civilizations in the world. I never see a full moon without thinking what she looked down upon 1813 years ago, and all the sufferings and thoughts and feelings she has seen since, which no one else has seen.

How amazed she must be to see all the souls pouring out and theorizing up to her (and their bodies sitting somewhere quiet quietly) all meeting there together unconscious of one another's presence, and a whole division of them telling her the same thing, *unknowst* to one another, each as if nobody had ever felt it before. I could not help laughing to think of the strange tale she must have to tell that single star that's at her side. Well,

my dear, don't shoot me. I'm coming down. These reflections were suggested to me by the second question I have to ask you which is, We have a night cap of yours which I will either send you by the post, *free of expense*, or bring up to town with my own jewellery, when we come, *which* you please. Perhaps you are already in that dear native village of ours, gone to Parliament. If so, pray give my love to Mrs Strutt and all who may remember me, though that now belongs to the Geology of the Primary State. My internal structure is nearly defunct, and therefore my third question is can you send me any considerations on Lady Joceyln, *envisagee sous le point de vue* of Mental Philosophy. I have lately had an opportunity of studying that phenomenon during a visit at Broadlands, and you and I must work out that question together. As she sat and worked and worked and worked, and did not speak, she always reminded me of a saint. She does not interest for anything that all the world is pursuing after and always seems enough for herself I could see a white lily in her hand and a St Bertha crown upon her passionless forehead. And yet U suppose no one ever lived 4 four and twenty years of such excitement--half the young peerage has proposed to her--and it is not that now she has other interests. She never spoke to Lord Palmerston, and though she is very fond of her baby, she told me herself she did not care to play with it--her manner is just the same to Lord Jocelyn and to the shoemaker. What is the secret of this woman's content? She is so unlike this restless and uneasy generation. She is more like the idyllic ladies, or like Helena Walling in the contemplation of her own beauty. What a lovely creature she is, or (my dear, forgive me the profanity, but sometimes I fancied she was thinking of her confinement, which she is within a few days of), like the Behold! The handmaid of the Lord. One could almost call it great, this sublime placidity if hers, if greatness is, to be one with one's self, without change, without restlessness, after the life she has had. Monotonous as she is, I never saw any one who more excited my curiosity to know her secret. Perhaps you will say it is want of earnestness, but bless my heart! If earnestness breaks one's heart, who is fulfilling best the Creation's end, one who is breaking her heart or this woman "of herself is King," who has kept her serenity in the midst of excitement and her simplicity in the midst of her admiration? The signoria di me is such a blessing. It might have been one of the Beatitudes, Blessed is the man, who is a king complete within himself and he need have added no other blessing. On second thoughts however, my dear, I incline to think that our Saviour probably knew best and I was right after all in not substituting strong greater interest about the events which are to occupy one's dear life. Are you asleep my love or in the mesmeric state (according to H.M.), the most intelligent of all states, in which I ask, are you asleep? You

can answer in capital letters Y.E.S. Horror seizes me at what I gave done, but conscience when it takes up the open, is always prosy, you know, and I hereby faithfully promise never again to write more than three lines, and I will take care to count them. Do you know Lady Ashburton? She is at this moment the lady of my affections. I allow the diamond raspberry tart on her forehead is not inviting but I have a weakness for Americans and I had so much curious information to give *her* upon that country and its inhabitants! When we come upon Mesmerism and from Mesmerism to Vestige and we had just got up so high into the "law of Development in Organic Nature" that I could not get down again to say good night, but was obliged to go off as an angel. Oh do not put me down as one of the contrary species. *A Dieu*, my beloved, I hope you will not say *Au Diable*, if you do deserve it, but am still,

your contrite, affectionate, repentant  
more now for having written than for not  
overflowing

F.N.

**1848** Source: Laura E. Richards, ed., "Letters of Florence Nightingale," *Yale Review* 24 (December 1934):336-43 [7:315-19]

Lea Hurst, Matlock

Derbyshire

28 July [1848]

My dear, though perfidious, friend,

Although I have had no answer to the two heavy letters I wrote you from Rome (I reflect with pleasure on their weight, with an eye to the pressure upon your conscience) yet I must needs forgive you, seeing that indignation does not carry well across the Atlantic.... x x I am not going to begin over again all I thought and felt and did at Rome, nor how much pleasure I had from seeing your sister and talking about you, as that would be now a thrice-told tale, and European affairs have taken such a hold on men's imaginations that we can think of nothing else.

The strongest characteristic of the Revolutions of '48 (what a nice easy date for my Florence to teach her grandchildren) seems to me that they have all been the work not of great intellects but of numbers, not of a man, but of men. This is the age not of Heroes, but of Committees. The day of Monarchies is over and a hero, I suppose, is a kind of moral monarchy, and the day of Republics, moral and political, is come. Heroes are put into commission and intellect also. This is why the Jesuits have fallen, or rather have been sent to uncivilized nations where moral aristocrats are still wanted, and there is still room for trees spiritually overgrown, because all the ground is not cut up for corn.

I don't agree in the call for a man in France; he would only

be an abortion, as Cavaignac will show himself soon, as Lamartine has already done. Lamartine is extinct, but I think people are too hard upon him. He is a puppy, a "triple-fold puppy." He would have no objection to sell his soul and buy distinction, but he would not sell his soul to pay his debts, it would not be worth his while. He is an honest man eaten up with the Cancer of vanity, and what a punishment his has been. He did his very best to get himself shot in the days of June, needlessly exposing his life--and he could not have done better (than death) if he had but succeeded.

When 1848 began with its Revolutions, I thought the kingdom of heaven was come, a kingdom which never presents itself to my mind under any other form than that of a Republic--never under that of a Monarchy or Aristocracy. But alas! neither the French nor the German revolution have at all the air to me now of the kingdom of heaven, and we must have a much larger growth of angels slowly ripening upon earth, I fear, before our eyes shall see it. I have never been so disappointed as in this French revolution--it began so beautifully. When we passed through Paris on our return from Rome I thought there was a devotion to ideas, a Quixotism for what was believed theoretically right, which was quite touching. It is before the Idea of Perfect Wisdom and Goodness that angels veil their faces, and before this devotion to an abstract good shall not we bow down?

English people say when you talk about ideas What are they? Are ideas good to eat? And perhaps the Saxon race is right, at least the French seem likely to die of bankruptcy, as well as of barricades, before the kingdom comes. Nevertheless, let me raise up my voice like a sparrow on the house top and say that, as the idea of the enfranchisement of the Blacks has reigned, so that of the enfranchisement of the Whites was the altar at which many a French mother (the greatest sufferer) has cheerfully sacrificed her private advantage and happiness, and disinterestedly laid down fortune, comfort, children.

The falling spirits of France are typified by Béranger's emendation of the decree of February. "L'homme a le droit de vivre," it proudly said. "L'homme a le *devoir* de vivre, non le *droit*," is the low-spirited, sober story now. Still, who shall say despair, who shall say that France was wrong in ridding herself, at all events, of Louis Philippe, under whom she never could have improved? He is as entirely forgotten here as if he never had existed. And Guizot has at the least the credit of a wild singularity in being the only remaining Louis Philippiste in Europe.

England has little sympathy with France. In February she laughed; in June she veiled her triumph under a decent mourning and sighed, "Look what her famous Republic has brought her to! A military despotism!" She has little cause to laugh and her sighs

she wants for herself. "Look what my management of my own wretched sister Ireland has brought her to! A military despotism!" For what else is this suspension of the Habeas Corpus?

As for us, our Queen never was so popular; her life this summer has been a perpetual ovation, as if they wished to "dédommager" her for the insults to her brother kings. There is no sign of any approaching Revolution in England. *Why* it would be hard to say since England is certainly the country where luxury has reached its height and poverty its depth. Perhaps it is our Poor Law, perhaps a greater sympathy (which really exists) between the Rich and the Poor here than in France or elsewhere, perhaps the power of getting rich and great which every man has here, witness Hudson, etc. Perhaps more than all these three conservative causes, the power of our immense Middle Class. However that may be, in spite of a failing trade and an uncertain harvest, the House of Commons, which sits late in August this year, never gave greater satisfaction to the mass.

People are well content with its three measures: the Health of Towns Bill for England, the Encumbered Estates Bill for Ireland and the Bill for cutting off entails for Scotland.... x x Potatoes have given us a horrid fright, but I believe report exaggerates--the vegetable only did it to frighten us. The Chartists are heard no more of. (Your poor petitioner here is always called one, which it is but fair to tell you, that you may beware.) Lord Ashley received a deputation of them the other day, kept them to tea and talked with them for five hours. That a man should hold 20,000 acres of land is contrary to the Law of Nature said their leader and slapped his leg. Come with me tonight, said Lord Ashley, and I will show you people who will say to you, "That a man should go in broadcloth and wear a shirt pin" (pointing to the Chartist's dress) "is contrary to the Law of Nature." I never thought of that before, said the Chartist. And it was the only thing during our five hours argument which made the least impression upon them, says Lord Ashley.... x x

I have just seen an English officer lately returned from Italy who says that Radetzky has conducted the affair with an almost super human sagacity, that he has shown a statesman's as well as a soldier's talents, and that, under any other general, the Austrians must have been out of Italy in two months. Where does he get his supplies from? From his Infernal Majesty? I thought the dismemberment of Austria would have done us so much good, but those stupid Austrians seem to get on as well without a Government as with one. I am glad, for poor Italy's honour she has had to do with such an extraordinary man, and it is a comfort to think that the longer the Austrians stay *in* now the longer they will have to stay *out* hereafter, when the day of salvation comes for Italy, which must come and will not tarry.

And this I do tell with joy and gratitude, not one act of revenge (on the Italian side) has stained the glory of their cause and the greatness of their name, notwithstanding the horrible acts of cruelty of the Croats under Radetzky, and this goes far as consolation in all their misery and makes one sing, "Glory to God in the highest and good will towards men," though there is no "peace on earth" to make a keystone.... x x

I wonder Heaven does not interfere. There is nothing gives me such an idea of the greatness of God as the permission of Evil. Any being less far seeing than the "God of patience," (for patience can only be the companion of a sight to which a thousand years are but as a day) must have interfered long ago. But how necessary the lesson to the Italians of unity among themselves.

Amidst these colossal European events, to speak of our dwarf English affairs seems an April foolery. Do you want to know what we are doing in "books and art and healthful play"? I thought the Exhibitions never were so bad, an odd thing in England where Art (in all that concerns the material side of life) is carried to its highest point. Perhaps it arises from that very thing, the Spirit of the Age is to devote art, the most spiritual part of us, to the taking care of and purifying the material side of life, and leaves the spiritual to take care of itself from a feeling of reverence, I allow, which thinks that the spiritual can only be corrupted by being turned to and helped by earthly strains. But as long as man is composed of soul and body the soundness of the principle is doubtful. However that may be, principle or mistake, it has killed all real Art which must be devoted to worship of that which is Highest in us, to make anything of it.

Do you care about the Puseyite controversy? I think it is now more fierce and strong than ever, probably because our Reformation was a *political* question, and we have never fought out the *theological* question, as the Germans did, till this day. Much as I differ from the Puseyites--for my personal friends I like them best. I like their manners and their customs. They are a genial, cheerful people. And though there can be no intellectual intercourse with them, yet the every-day-life joining with them is much easier than with any other sect. They are so much more practical than any other that I know--and understand for that reason intercourse with poor people and children so much better. Instead of saying "Feel this!" they say, "Do it!" Their books are allegorical, their views something visible and tangible. They would, instead of advising, Love the Cross, say Kiss the Cross, and always go upon the principle, If any man will *know*, let him *do*. They would write a story about a Conceited Pig which gets into mischief, because it does not do what its mother tells it, where an Evangelical would write a dismal Exhortation to honour thy father and thy mother, etc.,



concluding with the authentic story of a Christian infant, which, in its second year, climbing up to a casement in defiance of the maternal tongue was struck dead by the righteous lightning, the just judgment of an offended Heaven.

\*

**[8:798-99]**

The books that people have discussed most have been Miss Martineau's "Eastern Life," which Murray would not publish because he said he never published anything against Christianity--dunce! "Jane Eyre," which I hope you have read, and Newman's "Loss and Gain," detailing the steps by which he reached Roman Catholicism. It is a clever cutting away of all other religions till by a sort of "reductio ad absurdum" he leaves nothing but the Roman. People say it's dangerous--I can't see it.... x x

I have been living a good deal among the High Tories and High Church lately. I like to live among so different a set from mine own and hear all that I most venerate laughed at, and all that I most admire abused; it is the best sieve there is, sifting, that is, what one venerates for *itself* from what one venerates because other men do.

"But have you read 'Jane Eyre'? There are some authors of fiction, like Shakespeare, who, like sculptors, set the human form before you, perfect in every part, behind, before, on either side, not a point of view is wanting--it needs but the colouring and breath of our own actual life. Others, like George Sand, set a magnificent picture before us, without a back; it has the colouring, the appearance of life, but we know that it is but a surface, and that but one side of it. Others again, like Walter Scott, only aspire to giving us an outline, a silhouette, or a lay figure, to hang fine clothes and events upon. Some, like Miss Austen, give a Dutch picture, every detail elaborated. While another class still, leading sculpture, painting, lithograph and all arts which represent the external form, present us with an analysis of thought and feeling, so far-searching, deep and minute, that we have no other idea of our hero or heroine than a metaphysical problem. Now Jane Eyre seems to me to be real life--we know her--we have lived with her, we shall meet her again. It has all the faults of real life--but real and living it is.

But I must stop, for if I am not weary, you are--and I am too. I was very poorly when I first came home, or I should have written before--and without this length--punish me by writing one equally long.... x x My own peculiar people are much in statu quo.... x x I have just returned from bridesmaiding.

Pray give my love to my little namesake and to all whom you love. My people desire their kindest regards, and believe me, ever, dearest friend,

yours till death us do *unite*

Florence Nightingale

**1852** Source: Laura E. Richards, ed., "Letters of Florence Nightingale," *Yale Review* 24 (December 1934) 343-47

Embley

10 June 1852

My dear Dr Howe,

It is so long since we have heard from you or yours that I feel a great desire to renew our intercourse. I take shame to myself for never having answered the kind letter I received from you more than a twelvemonth ago. But your kindness in writing it emboldens me to write again, especially as I have now some enquiries to make of you, an unwarrantable claim to make upon your time and goodness, which time has proved to me is the surest way to your ear.... x x

We have had the driest spring and the wettest summer that ever were known. The Protectionists are hoping for a bad harvest, but I believe they will be disappointed. Our Dissolution will take place in another fortnight, the Derby Ministry being quite incapable of managing the present House of Commons. It is supposed that the next will prove still more unmanageable, and that Lord Derby will speedily be forced to resign, and probably some coalition of Graham, Palmerston or Lord John Russell reign in his stead. The science of 'political histrionics' has been brought to its utmost perfection under D'Israeli who has played every part within the range of the most accomplished actor. But the last Italian play, in which we have come off worsted with our tail between our legs and the unfortunate British lion has had his head broke and only a miserable money reparation made (I mean in Tuscany) has disgusted people with the Derby and Dizzy administration and will hasten its downfall.

I trust you are not becoming celticized with the vast exportations we are sending you. It is a curious speculation whether you will Americanize and industrialize them, or whether they will de-nationalize you.... x x

As for us, it would be very difficult to give any idea of the real state of the country to a foreigner, who should ask the question. Slowly and unknown to our Church or Aristocracy, Theism and Atheism are creeping through our manufacturing towns, and the best and most moral of our Operatives are invariably the Theists. About three percent attend any place of worship whether Church of England, Wesleyan or other--I have heard this average given by so many Operatives of the most different opinions. Roman Catholic, Methodist, Atheist, that I can hardly disbelieved it. Science is increasing so rapidly among the workmen that all scientific lectures in London are thronged by them. The best botanists and entomologists in England are among the Manchester Operatives--and there is a perfect rush to Chemistry. The Northern manufacturing towns are those where the best class of operatives is found, Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford. In London and Liverpool are the

very worst. The Roman Catholic Church is the only one that maintains the slightest head against the tide of educated infidelity among the artisans.... x x

As long as our Operative classes were uneducated (and even now they are far, far from being educated in the way yours are) Wesleyans and Methodists could make them believe what they chose (the Church of England never had any hold upon them) but now when these men have all the arguments of Locke and Mirabeau, and Tom Paine and Voltaire at their fingers' ends, a 'Home Missionary' can make no head against them.

Meanwhile, the National Church, as she calls herself, all unconscious of the state of the nation, is giving away her livings to Bennett and such as Bennett, to discuss whether you should turn to the East or the West, or put on a black or a white surplice. Mr Horsman brings it up in the House of Commons--and is told there is no remedy but impeaching a poor old man, the Bishop, who, long before his sentence, will be beyond the reach of earthly trials--and so he, Horsman, lets it drop.

I cannot help thinking that a country whose great heart (her Operative blood) is in this state must ere long shew symptoms of decay. We send over our people to you to make their temporal bread. If you would send over to us a preacher who would preach to the manufacturing people, a God whose attributes did not revolt their reason and their feeling, a Perfect Being whom they could recognize as Perfect, you would be giving to us that bread without which England may very soon starve. When the moral feelings of a people have advanced beyond their old Mythology, scepticism follows and no proof, no 'Evidence' can make the old religion, the old Divinity credible again. it is a disagreeable fact that Egypt fell, that Rome fell, when they had ceased to believe in their old Mythology and were incapable of discovering another. ... x x

Meanwhile our Government is doing what they can to hinder Education, absorbing the revenues intended for it for the profit of the church.

I went for three months to an Institution of Protestant Deaconesses in Germany last year, at Kaiserswerth--perhaps you may know it. It is first-rate. I wish the system could be introduced in England, where thousands of women have nothing to do and where hospitals are ill nursed by a class of women not fit to be household servants.

I think it might interest you to know how much our Operatives are interested about your slaves. Here is a little plan which an Operative Engineer, a friend of mine, put into my hand the other day, viz., that one of them should be empowered to take the tour of the slave states and purchase half a dozen slaves (the money being raised by an association among themselves) and transmit them to England, giving them facilities

here to become scientific men. Perhaps, he says, a Newton or a Davy might be found among them. The slaves would not choose to be slaves, if they knew what was in them. Then, he says, the moral power placed in the hands of the Northern States would accomplish more than all the Treaties.

Our population is actually leaving us for Australia and America. In Kent and Lincolnshire there is an actual want of Labourers to get in the harvest. In Ireland the population is thinned. The Irish go principally to you--the English to Australia. I heard a man say the other day that he would buy one of the Encumbered Irish Estates and colonize it with Chinese! Meanwhile it seems quite doubtful whether her gold fields will not ruin Australia. The magnificent sheep farms are going to destruction for want of shearers or even people to melt down the sheep into tallow. If you did not know all these things by the papers, I could tell instances innumerable.... x x

In England trade was never better than now, nor bread lower. The Protectionists have been obliged to cry 'Free Trade' in town, however much they adhere to their old tricks in the Counties. Dizzy they call 'Profreetectratidone' in consequence of his overdoing this chameleon propensity.... x x

The news from Paris is as bad as bad can be, I hear from private hands that the tyranny is insupportable, that it is feared it will be ended by the murder of the animal Louis Nap., and that he is now threatening the Reporters to the English Newspapers with exportation, if they speak the truth.

If you see, within the next ten years, not a constitutional Government left in Europe except our own, if you see Europe returning to the dark ages, and waiting for such a Revolution as the world has not seen since '93 in France, will you take us all in? In your new countries?

Pray give my love to my little namesake.

**1855** Source: C. Humble and Peter Hansell. *Westminster Hospital 1716-1974*. London: Pitman Medical Publishing 89-90,

Scutari August 13/55

Sir

Miss Mary Tattersall,  
now a Nurse under  
my charge at Scutari,  
who passed through  
an apprenticeship at  
your Hospital, desires  
now to forward to you  
Five Pounds for the  
Westminster Hospital,  
being, as she says,  
the first money she

\*

ever earned, which she  
earnestly wishes to  
devote to the place  
where she received  
so much kindness  
when learning there-

I remain Sir  
your obedt servt  
Florence Nightingale

**1855** Source: Harold Wellington Jones, "Some Unpublished Letters of Florence Nightingale." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8,9 (November 1940):1395 (25 October 1855 to Mrs Rotch)

My dear Madam

Your letter was forwarded to me at this place where my hospital duties at present require me. I have desired that enquiry should be made of Dr Blackwood concerning his attendance on your son; he remembers perfectly well, having called in to him in the middle of the night, but when he reached him, he was quite unconscious. He remembers, however, hearing that he had been seen previously, earnestly in prayer. He also recollects hearing how much he was valued and beloved.

I fear that it is impossible now to recover any of the articles which were sold as I have already made enquiries of the Purveyor to that effect.

I will open the Bale you speak of upon my return to Scutari and let you know of its contents.

I trust that we shall not have the sufferings to deplore this winter which we all witnessed last year. I beg to remain, dear Madam, with true sympathy for your great loss,

yours faithfully  
Florence Nightingale

**1855** Source: (Copy of an incomplete letter to Mary Stanley), J.O. Baylen, "The Florence Nightingale/Mary Stanley Controversy: Some Unpublished Letters." *Medical History*. 18 (1974):186-93.

Scutari

July 1855

My own effigies and praises which you sent me by the last mail were less welcome. I do not affect indifference towards *real* sympathy, but I have felt painfully, the more painfully since I have had time to hear of it, the *éclat* which has been given to this adventure of mine on *Every* day one in another church. The small, still beginning, the simple hardship, the silent and *gradual* struggle upwards, these are the climate in which an Enterprise really thrives and grows. Time has not altered our Saviour's Lesson on that point which has been learnt successively

by all reformers from their own experience.

The vanity and frivolity which the éclat thrown upon this affair has called forth has done us unmitigated harm and mischief on perhaps the most promising enterprise that ever set sail for England. Our own old party which began its work in hardship, toil, struggle and obscurity has done better than any other and I, like a Tory, am not trying to get back to all my old regulations.

**1855** Source: Marjorie Penney, "The Naval 'Miss Nightingale' in the Crimea," *Nursing Mirror* (16 December 1960):iii and xvi also in "Light before Dawn" 25

Scutari

5 July 1855

My dear Mrs Mackenzie

I have sent the things Miss Erskine asked for.

I found Mrs Bracebridge, though suffering from sore throat, quite without fever. But [as] we have had some cholera in the hospital it is as well that I should be at home.

It is very much hotter here than at Therapia. But I became so much better while under your kind care and in your beautiful air, that I hope I shall do without another holiday. I enjoyed my time with you so much. A thousand thanks for all your kindness.

With my best love and thanks to all you and yours, and hoping you are better than when I left you.

Believe me,

ever yours

Florence Nightingale

I hope your patients go on satisfactorily. We received 200 sick last night from the Crimea. But the cholera there is on the decrease.

**1855** Source: Andrew Smith, *Précis of Letters Written and Received by the Director General of the Army Medical Department in Reference to the Medical Arrangements Required at the Commencement of and during The War with Russia in 1854-55-56*. 2 vols. London: War Office 1858, 2:570 **[14:240]**

Scutari Barrack Hospital, October 7 1855

My dear Sir [Robertson]

May I crave leave to mention that the winter hospital clothing in store is likely to prove insufficient, that in our divisional linen store our requisitions have been refused for the blue hospital trousers, and also, though much more infrequently, for the jackets, that the flannel shirts are thin, and that there are few or no drawers.

As the winter will soon be upon us, I thought it desirable to mention these things in time.

Believe me, &c

Florence Nightingale

**1856** Source: Alexis Soyer, *Soyer's Culinary Campaign: Being Historical Reminiscences of the Late War*. London: G. Routledge 1857, 417

Scutari  
Barrack Hospital  
28 July 1856

I have great pleasure in bering my testimony to the very essential usefulness of Monsieur Soyer, who, first in the general hospitals of Scutari, and afterwards in the camp hospitals of the Crimea, both general and regimental, restored order where all was unavoidable confusion, as far as he was individually able--took the soldier's rations and patients' diets as they were, and converted them into wholesome and agreeable food.

I have tried his stoves in the Crimean hospitals where I have been employed and found them answer every purpose of economy and efficiency.

**1856** Source: Harold Wellington Jones, "Some Unpublished Letters of Florence Nightingale." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8,9. 9 November 1940:1396, original, National Library of Medicine MS C1

General Hospital  
Balaclava  
25 April 1856

My dear Miss Tibbutt

In reply to yours of 19 April as I am not in *immediate* want of Taintor and Wilsdon up here, I would undoubtedly think it better for you that you should wait till you hear whether Mr and Mrs Paget will come for you or not as there is no good to be gained by your coming up here excepting amusement (and very little of what without Mr and Mrs Paget) and you do not wish to go home till you are no farther needed for the work and as you feel that you have never taken such a journey without some one to take care of you.

I hope the singing will fall through. But I should be very sorry to make any change in your arrangements as it would excite attention. I am very glad you refused that the nurses should lead the singing. I have no more faith in Howell than I have in Dawson and should think it hardly right to have Cator up without a positive necessity leaving Howell in her place, especially without yourself.

As we send down three ships full of sick to Scutari next week, so I hear from Headquarters, I should be afraid of dismantling Scutari hastily. Believe, me,

ever yours  
F. Nightingale

**1856** Source: Letter, Harold Wellington Jones, "Some Unpublished

Letters of Florence Nightingale." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8,9. (November 1940):1395, original, National Library of Medicine

Scutari

Barrack Hospital

18 January 1856

Madame

In reply to your letter of 4 January I am very happy to be able to inform you that Edward Austen, 2nd Drag. Gds. (Scotch Greys) went home to England 11 December 1855. I therefore return to you his wife's letters and trust that ere this her heart is lightened of its troubles.

I remain

your obedient servant

Florence Nightingale

**1856** Source: "Letter of Miss Nightingale to the Mother of a Late Hull Ragged School Boy." Claydon Bundle 383 read out at the meeting of the Hull Ragged and Industrial Schools to the late scholars now in situations, Claydon bundle 383

Lea Hurst

Matlock

26 October 1856

Madam

I perfectly recollect the case of your son, George Watts. From bathing imprudently while hot he contracted inflammation of the lungs, for which he was admitted into the general hospital at Balaclava. In spite of unremitting attention and care, his disease unfortunately became consumption of the lungs. When our sick and our sisters and nurses left Balaclava, he was embarked on board the *Ottawa*. I attended him myself till we reached Scutari, where I was obliged to land to attend to our affairs, and he was then nursed by our "sisters" till about a week before they reached England, when it pleased Almighty God to take him to Himself.

He was a very good boy and told me he had been brought up in a ragged school. The captain of the *Lion* was very kind to him and came to me more than once to the hospital to see him, and to see me about him. It was his own desire to go home, but he appeared to have suffered much from his short transit on board ship. He, however, rallied, and asked for oranges, which we gave him. He lay near the centre of the ship and spoke gratefully and cheerfully and with perfect resignation to the will of God. You may rest assured that everything was done for him that could be done.

At Malta I know that he bought some clothes. These were all taken in charge by the sergeant of the *Ottawa*, to be handed over to the captain of the *Lion* for your poor son's family. I fear



that he has not received them, as I know that he was reminded in August to see after them, and intended doing so. I will immediately write to the proper authorities and endeavour to procure them for you.

I am certain that he thought much of you during his last illness, that he desired much to see you once again before he left this world, although he was cheerful and resigned. And I trust that the feeling how anxious he was about you will enable you to bear your great loss, as he would have wished, till God calls upon you to meet him again.

I remain, with sincere sympathy  
truly yours  
Florence Nightingale

**1856** Source: Zachary Cope, *A Hundred Years of Nursing at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington*. London: Heinemann 1955 40 [13:102-03]

Embley, Romsey  
20 December 1856

Sir, It has been with the utmost gratification that I have received the announcements of the honour conferred upon me by the governors of St Mary's Hospital in electing me an honorary member of their body. No expression of their sympathy could have been so congenial to my feelings as the permission thus conveyed to follow up in your institution the study of hospital management which has engaged my deepest interest.

I am at this time necessarily absent from London and occupied with objects connected with my late employment in the East. But I shall with the greatest pleasure avail myself of the privilege conferred upon me of visiting St Mary's Hospital as soon as it shall be in my power.

In the meantime, may I beg you to convey the expression of my heartfelt thanks to the body of gentlemen to whom I am indebted for this much valued mark of their confidence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
your most obliged and obedient servant  
Florence Nightingale

Robt. J. Newman, Esq.  
Secretary

**1858** Source: Edwin Hodder, "Miss Florence Nightingale to Lord Shaftesbury," *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, K.G. Cassell 1887:505 [14:983]

30 Old Burlington Street  
16 October 1858

Dear Lord Shaftesbury

I venture to send you with this a copy of my report to the War Office upon Army sanitary matters. It is, as you will see,

strictly confidential, and has not been presented to the House of Commons. But as Lord Shaftesbury has, for so many years, been our leader in sanitary matters (as in so many other wise and benevolent things, it seemed to me but right to send him a report which contains so much of what was done by himself, viz., the work of the Sanitary Commission in the East, although I can scarcely expect that he will read it.

I am, dear Lord Shaftesbury,  
your very faithfully,  
F. Nightingale

**1858** Source: "An Unpublished Letter of Florence Nightingale." *St Thomas's Hospital Gazette* 27,8 (February 1920) 247-48 [16:517-18]

30 Old Burlington Street  
London, W.

November 22, 1858

Dear Sir

I have ventured to send you a copy of a "confidential" report of mine to the War Office, in spite of its being an old story now, and I will tell you why.

I know no one except yourself, Mr Whitfield of St Thomas' Hospital here, the officers of the Middlesex Hospital, and the Army Sanitary Commission who have at all taken up the question of hospitals on the large sanitary ground. Your two pamphlets were ready by us all with the greatest interest.

(I differ with you upon the nursing system. But of that anon.)

It is only inasfar as the Crimean question bears upon the sanitary problem generally that I think my report will interest you. I must ask you to consider it as quite "confidential," i.e., it is not to be read by anyone else--for the war secretary has never laid it on the table of the House of Commons, and therefore it is in no sense a public document.

As to the nursing question, my experience is this--and I ought perhaps to add that I have lived and served in almost every nursing system of Europe. I deprecate equally the system when nurses, whether male or female, are under the command of the authorities of the hospital solely--in which case the arrangements as to hours, proprieties, sanitary things, etc., generally strike me as all but crazy.

And the system where the nurses, whether religious or secular, whether their head is male or female, whether they be Protestant or Roman Catholic are in entire command of the hospital, the arrangements are generally equally crazy as in the first case.

In the first case the nurses are destroyed bodily and morally. The patients are (generally, not always) well nursed. In the second case it is the spiritual good of the nurses and not

the care of the sick which is obtained (generally not always). But the care of the patients is the object of hospitals.

The collision (often disagreeable) between the secular administration and the nursing staff (whether nurses or nuns), as in the hospitals of London and Paris, is always salutary for the care of the patients. The mutual impertinences even between doctor and nurses (or nuns), equally observable in London and Paris, is far better for the interests of the sick than where authority is solely vested, as it generally is in Germany, either in the male authorities of the hospital, which is the case in their great general hospitals, or in the spiritual head of the nursing establishment, which is the case in both their Catholic and Protestant hospitals nursed (?) By orders. Take the nuns, brothers or deaconesses out of their parent institutions and set them to work on a great secular hospital in daily contact with the exigencies of doctor and governor, and they will work admirably.

I do not like to print this, because I have lived on so intimate a footing with *all* these orders that it seems almost like treachery. But having seen the expression of a contrary opinion in your last pamphlet, and considering you as our greatest hospital authority, and being myself little likely ever to be able to work in hospital again, I have wished to trouble you with a record of my opinion.

Believe me to be, dear Sir,  
yours very faithfully  
Florence Nightingale

**1860** Source: William Henry Goss, *The Life and Death of Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A., etc. With Fragmentary Memoirs of Some of His Famous Literary and Artistic Friends, Especially of Samuel Carter Hall, F.S.A., Etc.* London: Henry Gray 1889, 263

30 Old Burlington St., W. June 11th, 1860

My dear Sir, I have no doubt that Mr Clough, the acting secretary for the 'Nightingale Fund,' has communicated with you as to the practicable measure which have been taken upon '*Training Nurses.*' But I cannot bear that you, who have done so much for us, should not hear from me about it--although I am unable to write to anyone else.

I enclose, for Mrs Hall, some copies of the Rules and Forms of 'Entrance Certificate' for the Probationers.

Is there any list of Subscribers to the 'Fund' which you could send me? I am aware that on the subject of the 'Local Committees' you have been communicated with. But I thought it might be satisfactory if I were to send these 'rules' to subscribers, especially country ladies. They might send us women to train.

I dare say you are aware that this is only a partial and

tentative experiment, not employing the whole income of that 'Fund.' The "Council" reserves to itself the opportunity of either extending this or, which I think is more probable, making to itself other centres of action.

With kindest regards to Mrs Hall, believe me to be,  
my dear Sir,  
ever sincerely and gratefully yours  
Florence Nightingale

**1860** Source: R.A.L. Agnew, "Sir John Forbes (1787-1861) and Miss Florence Nightingale (1820-1910): An Unlikely Association?" *Vesalius* VII,1 (2001):36-41, original West Sussex Add Mss 2545 [41], also in Agnew, Robin A.L. *The Life of Sir John Forbes (1787-1861)*. Bernard Durnford 2002 letter 65-68.

30 Old Burlington St.

London W.

Feb 23/60

My dear Sir

Nothing has given me half so much pleasure as a note from you about my little Nursing book, That you, to whom the world is so much indebted in the matter of its health, should endorse it with your *imprimatur* is a very great satisfaction to me.

All I can say for the book is that there is not one word of theory in it. Every sentence of it is the fruit of bitter experience. That your experience as a Physician should coincide with mine as a nurse gives it value.

The great object I had in view was to recall the art of observation which has, I think, deteriorated, even in my day, under the load of supposed science. People have eyes "and they see not".

My conclusions were arrived at by looking at disease simply from the practical side. If people who have Science too (which I wish I had) would do the same, how much might not be done for the World's health!

I know your book "Nature & Art in the cure of Disease" well. But should it not be a trouble to you to send me a copy, as you so kindly offer, I should consider it a great honor to have one from you.

I should have answered your kind note before, had it not been for illness.

Believe me I remain, dear Sir John  
faithfully & gratefully yours

Florence Nightingale PTO

P.S. You encourage me by your kindness to send you another little book of my Hospital experience."

**1861** Source: Joseph Fayrer, *Inspector-General Sir James Ranald Martin* 170-71 [9:112-13] 7 October 1861

I have to thank you first for a volume of the "completed oral evidence" of the Indian sanitary commission (as Mr Baker call it), and which I find I owe to your suggestion.

I understand you are to have a meeting on the 11th (of the commission). So I write to hope that you do not consider the oral evidence "complete" and that you will not let Lord Stanley think so.

1. We have hardly any evidence about the native troops and I hope that you will name some witnesses on this subject.

In all the books of replies which have yet arrived from India, I have been struck with this, viz., that we make "caste" an excuse for doing next to nothing for the native troops in the way of cleansing, or bathing, or hutting, or feeding, or cooking for, or teaching, or amusing them, or nursing them in hospital. Some of the returns say that it is quite impossible to do anything on account of "caste"; others show that a great deal has been done in some places; and others say that government, if roused, could do almost anything. (I allude especially to sanitary measures for the native lines and bazaars.)

Could you not call some practical witnesses, especially on this matter of "caste," to say how much of this is inevitable, how much only an excuse for our laziness or want of judgment? x x

We are entirely without engineering evidence as to what can be done in the way of water supply, in the way of sanitary arrangements, etc., while the replies show that our state in India is far behind that of 2000 years ago in these respects. In fact, we are drinking dirty water carried by bheesties as Abraham did, to this moment.

3. I hope you will insist on Dr Farr being examined on the statistics, and on Dr Sutherland being further examined on these "replies," of which he has by no means given all the juice in his former examination. (Dr Sutherland does not return from the Mediterranean till the end of the month, where he is inspecting our stations—one of the last official acts of my dear master.)

4. I hope that you will carry with Lord Stanley the printing of the abstracts of all the remaining Indian "replies," not yet come in, which are not many. How can one station serve as a "specimen" for another? we must have all. Also the lithographing of all the plans and maps which were sent to be done (by Dr Sutherland) some months ago, as illustrations of the digest which is to be made of all the books of "replies."

If your meeting on the 11th carries this (viz., the maps and abstracts) it will be a very opportune meeting. But I rather hope both that you will have several more meetings and that you will not have them till November. For there are many things to bring before you which must stand over till Dr Sutherland returns.... P.S. We must hang together now my dear master is gone. He was a leader we shall not find again. And I appeal to you, and shall

appeal to you to carry some very important points before the commission, as you *have* always permitted me to do so.

**1861** Source: (Letter to chair of Liverpool Training School for Nurses), Lori Williamson, ed., *Florence Nightingale and the Birth of Professional Nursing* in Lori Williamson, 4:25-26, also in *Liverpool Royal Infirmary Nurses Training School* 10 [13:713-14] and [13:256-57]

30 November 1861

Sir, In reply to your request for my opinion, I can only say that your plans for a school and home for nurses in Liverpool have deeply interested me from the very first: they appeared to me so well considered and laid out--they appeared to me so much needed, not only in Liverpool but in all the earth.

Sickness is everywhere. Death is everywhere. But hardly anywhere is the training necessary to teach women to relieve sickness, to delay death. We consider a long education and discipline absolutely necessary to train our medical man; we consider hardly any training at all necessary for your nurse: although how often does not our medical man himself tell us, "I can do nothing for you unless your nurse will carry out what I say.

I trust, then, that all, rich and poor, will at least study your Prospectus. All, rich and poor, have sickness among themselves at one time or another of their lives. It is singular that this necessity which perhaps no one son of Adam has ever escaped, for himself or his belongings, is the only one we never provide for.

Your plans are not only practicable but promise extensive and invaluable good--good which will spread to every town and district in the kingdom, if wisely inaugurated in Liverpool. Your district nursing scheme especially deserves interest. I suppose everyone will agree with me that every sick man (or woman) is better at home, *if* only he (or she) could have the same medical treatment and nursing there he (or she) would have in hospital. But not having this, of how many a rich patient I have said, "Would that I could send him (or her) into hospital."

Few know, except medical men in the largest practice, how many rich lives, as well as poor ones, are lost for want of nursing, even among those who can command every want under the sun that money can purchase.

this want you propose to supply by training nurses for all descriptions of people, as I understand. God bless you, and be with you in the effort, for it is one which meets one of our greatest national wants. Nearly every nation is before England in this, viz., in providing for nursing the sick at *home*. And one of the chief uses of a hospital (though almost entirely neglected up to the present time) is this: to train nurses for nursing the

sick at home."

I therefore most earnestly wish you success, and remain  
yours in good hope  
Florence Nightingale

**1861** Source: "Proposed Plan for the Training and Employment of Women by Hospital, District and Private Nursing": Letter from Miss Nightingale to the chairman of the Liverpool Training School for Nurses, in Lori Williamson, ed., 4:25-26

London  
30 November 1861

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yours, in good hope  
Florence Nightingale

**1861** Source: Edwin Pratt, *Pioneer Women in Victoria's Reign, Being Short Histories of Great Movements*. London: George Newnes 1897, 133-34

30 November 1861

They appear to me so much needed, not only in Liverpool, but in all the earth....God bless you, and be with you in the effort, for it is one which meets one of our greatest national wants. Nearly every nation is before England in this, viz., in providing for nursing the sick at home, and one of the chief uses of a hospital (though almost entirely neglected up to the present time) is this: to train nurses for nursing the sick at home."

**1861** "Miss Nightingale on the Volunteer Movement," *Evening Standard*. 12 October 1861. Dated 8 and 9 October. [newspaper]  
My dear Sir Harry:

I like to hear of your volunteers; I wish I could be with you but my heart is with you all. At the beginning of this year we had 150,000 volunteers. Already we hear from the best military authorities that they are capable of manoeuvring and executing movements with regular troops. To those who know the stuff of which the Anglo-Saxon is made (no man knows him better than I do), this is not surprising.

These volunteers are of the same race with that handful of men who defended their trenches at Sebastopol, as the Greeks held the position of Thermopylae, and who, when dying of slow torture in hospitals, drew their blankets over their heads and died without a word, like the heroes of old. Thank God our volunteers have not to undergo these slow agonies in the defence of their country. But I for one (and I speak notwithstanding an experience of the horrors of war which no man has had) was not at all sorry to see the spirit of war brought home to our people's lives in the glorious rising of the volunteers. A country needs retempering sometimes. England, from her grand mercantile and commercial successes, has been called sordid. God knows she is not! The simple courage, the enduring patience, the good sense, the strength to suffer in silence, what nation shows more of this in war than is shown by her commonest soldier?

I have seen men dying of dysentery but scorning to report themselves sick, lest they should thereby throw more labour on



their comrades, go down to the trenches and make the trenches their death bed. There is nothing in history to compare with it. Other nations may do it for glory, but we for duty, as the Duke of Wellington said. I say no one has seen the horrors of war as I have, yet I was glad to see the spirit of war arising in our volunteers. If both English and French statesmen have recorded upon their own observations that the most intelligent, the most well doing, the most respectable in the best sense of the word, in any French village or district, are always those returned from serving out their time on conscription. If this is the case with those who have given a compulsory service for a government which we English cannot respecting, what ought not the men to become who give a free service for a free country, like our volunteers?

Say what men will, there is something more truly Christian in the man who gives his time, his strength, his life if need be, for something not himself, whether he call it his Queen, his country or his colours, than in all the asceticism, the fasts, the humiliations and confessions that have ever been made. This spirit of giving one's life, without calling it a sacrifice, is found nowhere so truly as in England. This is a spirit which animates our armies and our volunteers. But there must be more drill, more discipline in the sense of teaching how orders are to be obeyed, more acting in concert, to make our volunteers perfect. Our volunteers mean to be quite perfect. It is wonderful how much they have done already in precision.

On the saddest night of all my life, two months ago, when my dear chief Sidney Herbert lay dying, and I knew that with him died much of the welfare of the British army, he was, too, so proud, so justly proud, of his volunteers--on that night I lay listening to the bands of the volunteers as they came marching in successively--it had been a review day--and I said to myself, "The nation can never go back which is capable of such a movement as this, not the spirit of an hour; these are men which have all something to give up, all men whose time is valuable for money, which is not their god, as other nations sometimes say of us."

One of the best appointments my dear chief made was Colonel McMurdo, the inspector general of volunteer. I knew him in the Crimea, where he executed the most difficult service, that of organizing the land transport corps, with the utmost success. No doubt the volunteers have full confidence in him. It was whispered to me, in Sidney Herbert's time, that Buckinghamshire had been behindhand in her tribute of volunteers. Is that the case now? I hope not. But if so, it makes those who have volunteered all the more worthy. If I might venture to do so, I would gladly ask you to offer them from me a pair of colours. Probably, however, they have them. If so I can only offer them from the bottom of my heart the best wishes of one who has "fought the good fight" for the army, seven years this very

month, without the intermission of one single waking hour.  
Florence Nightingale

9 October

I should have thought it a presumption to write to the volunteers if not desired by you. My point, if there was one, was to tell them that one who has seen more than any man what a horrible thing war is, yet feels more than any man that the military spirit in a good cause, that of one's country, is the finest leaven which exists for the national spirit. I have known intimately the Sardinian soldier, the French soldier, the British soldier. The Sardinian was much better appointed than we were. The French were both more numerous and more accustomed to war than we were, yet I have no hesitation in saying that we had the better military spirit, the true volunteer spirit, to endure hardship for our country's sake.

I remember a sergeant who was on picket, the rest of the picket killed, and himself battered about the head, stumbled back to camp, and on his way picked up a wounded man and brought him in on his shoulders to the lines, where he fell down insensible. When, after many hours, he recovered his senses, I believe after trepanning, his first words were to ask after his comrade, "Is he alive?" "Comrade indeed! Yes, he's alive, it is the general." At that moment the general, though badly wounded, appeared at the bedside. "Oh, general, it's you is it I brought in, I'm so glad. I didn't know your honour, but if I'd known it was you I'd have saved you all the same." This is the true soldier's spirit. Lastly, I would impress on the volunteers the necessity of drill practice, exercise, brigade movements. Garibaldi's volunteers did excellently in guerilla movements; they failed before a fourth-rate regular army. We trust that our volunteers will never know what real war is. But they must make themselves a reputation to be feared by the enemy in order not to see that enemy ever at their own hearthstones.

Florence Nightingale

**1861** Source: Elsie M. Lawler, "Letter From Florence Nightingale." *Johns Hopkins Nursing Historical Collection* May 1930, 29,2 pp. 50-52

30 October 1861

Private

My dear Mrs Fowler

I have known Miss Jones, the Lady superintendent of St John's House, for 7 years-and have been very intimate with her for the last 4-I consider that she has done the greatest work (in charity) which has ever been done in England, by bringing together a religious Society (St. John's Ho-) in joint management with a Secular Institution (King's Coll. Hosp.) the first time you will observe this has ever been done in this country. I

consider her as far as possible therefore from those Religious Societies instituted for their own salvation. At Paris you continually see the large secular Hospitals nursed by Religious Orders. King's Coll. Hosp., as far as I am aware, is the only one in London.

As for her "Sisters," they have plagued no one so much as herself, (with wanting to go to confession to this clergyman and that). These have all left now-The best of her "Sisters" is far inferior to the worst of the London Hosp. Sisters in knowledge of Ward nursing. But they keep good order. And there is no "Praying or preaching." The nurses are very good.

(None of the "Sisters" will have anything to do with our midwifery Probationers-except taking them occasionally to a lying-in case at its own home. The head of our Ward is an experienced Midwife).

I can answer with great certainty from the evidence of poor "Patients" (of my own), after leaving King's Coll: Hosp: and comparing it with the great London Hosp.ls, (where they had also been,) that they "praised: the nursing of K.C.H. immensely more than that of the other Hosp.ls.

I consider Miss Jones the best Christian trainer of Nurses I have ever known in any country; and certainly one of the most "upright" persons I know.

I do not see however how it would be possible, with any *Matron* whatever, not to vest "the power of instant dismissal" with her alone. If the nurse can appeal to anyone else, there is an end of all discipline. It is a power I have contended for always for all Hospital Matrons and given it to the Military Supt. of Nurses.

As to "vows," Miss Jones' laxity is all the other way. I never would be bothered as she allows herself to be, with "Sisters" coming in for 3 months and going away for 9. Two of her "sisters" married-no great proof of "vows."

As for Miss Jones being a "puseyite," I cannot conceive where that notion originated. She is staunch Church of England. But the farthest possible from those religious Societies who have made the fatal mistake of thinking they could do good by separating themselves from "the world."

There is to be a religious service on entrance, of which I myself obtained the materials for her, from Flidner and other, and which the Bp. of London will sanction. This which has nothing to do with our nurses, and which is not yet begun, - is nothing whatever like a "vow."

Both she and I are earnestly desirous of some new arrangement by which her nurses can be raised to be "Sisters," if they wish it. But neither the funds nor the statutes of St. John's Ho; (not made by her) allow of this at present.

You will say that all this rests upon my assertion. But,

after all, if my life has not proved to the world that I prefer a system involving collision, however painful, with secular authorities, to ruling supreme over a "Puseyite" Religious Society, and that I would not hastily form an alliance with any Supt. without knowing her as myself and knowing that she has proved herself of the same mind as this, I don't know what I can prove.

Ever yours

(sgd) FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

I am bound to add that both K.C. Hospt and St. John's Ho: have behaved with the utmost liberality to us--that they lose by their bargain with us--whereas rich St. Thomas' gained immensely by this bargain--with us--and that at this moment almost the greatest wish I have is to increase the funds of St. John's Ho: which is very *poor*, in order to enable it to set up a Convalescent Hospital at Hampstead.

**1863** Source: Edwin Hodder, *Life and Work of the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury*. London: Cassell 1887:561-62

Hampstead, N.W.  
15 August 1863

Dear Lord Shaftesbury

Always remembering that to you first we owe the giving of sanitary hope to our poor Army, I should have ventured to solicit your acceptance of a copy of the complete report and evidence of our "Indian Army Sanitary Commission." It was, however, understood by us that it was to be *of course* presented to Parliament.

"By mistake," Sir C. Wood presented (so he writes) a paltry 8vo [volume] containing only the report and a précis of evidence, simply ludicrous from its incompleteness. "By mistake," the type of the *two folio blue books* is broken up. "By mistake," it is not to be sold at the Parliamentary depots. "By mistake," it is not to be published--not to be had--not to be distributed to Parliament.

A small number, however (fifty only to the House of Lords, and 100 to the House of Commons), have been sent to Parliament, to be given to those members only who apply for them. Would you apply for the *two folio blue books* for a copy for yourself? We want immediate pressure made to obtain the working commissions: three in India, one for each Presidency, and one at home attached to the India and War Offices (to advise), which have been recommended in the report.

I should be proud indeed to be called upon at any time for information by you.

your faithful servant  
Florence Nightingale

**1863** Source: Joseph Fayrer, *Inspector-General Sir James Ranald Martin*: 173 [9:129] 20 May 1863

After the Saturday's discussion, I certainly did feel very deeply on the subject of the home and presidency commissions proposed in the Indian reports. They are the very central points, I believe, of the vast reform which your report will initiate. This is the dawn of a new day for India--not only for our army there, but for the poor natives--a day when the representations of men such as you will at length be carried out. Had I been able to see you, as I much desired, I believe that you and I could have agreed entirely and found an explanation that we had the same view. Now that the question is settled, I feel as if the first lease of joy had come to me since Sidney Herbert's death.

**1863** Source: (undated letter to Sir John Lawrence), Reginald Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* 2:394-95 [9:197]

[1863]

Among the multitude of affairs and congratulations [for his appointment as viceroy], which will be pouring in upon you, there is no more fervent joy, there are no stronger good wishes, than those of one of the humblest of your servants. For there is no greater position for usefulness under heaven than that of governing the vast empire you saved for us. And you are the only man to fill it. So thought a statesman with whom I worked not daily, but hourly, for five years, Sidney Herbert, when the last appointment was made. In the midst of your pressure pray think of us and of our sanitary things on which such millions of lives and health depend.

**1863** Source: (letter to Lord Lawrence) R.B. Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* 2:394-95 [1863]

Among the multitude of affairs and congratulations [for his appointment as viceroy], which will be pouring in upon you, there is no more fervent joy, there are no stronger good wishes, than those of one of the humblest of your servants. For there is no greater position for usefulness under heaven than that of governing the vast empire you saved for us. And you are the only man to fill it. So thought a statesman with whom I worked not daily, but hourly, for five years, Sidney Herbert, when the last appointment was made. In the midst of your pressure pray think of us and of our sanitary things on which such millions of lives and health depend.

**1863** Source: R.E. Barnsley, "Miss Nightingale and the College." *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* 111 (1965):67-73

70: September 26th/63

It is essentially necessary that something be done. You will see that Mr Paget argues the question of supply and shews that the

Government has very formidable rivals in the field ready to snap up every competent man who passed the colleges. You must dwell strongly on this point and shew that additional pay will not meet the case. What is wanted is Military Status and gentlemanly treatment."

**1864** Source: *News Review of British Red Cross Society* (April 1959):58 [15:587]

Hampstead  
31 August 1864

My dear Sir [Professor Thomas Longmore]

I have to thank you very much for taking the trouble to send me M. Dunant's pamphlet. The War Office sent me the manuscript copy of the printed article with other papers furnished by you. I agree with you that it will be quite harmless for our government to sign the convention as it now stands. It amounts to nothing more than the declaration that humanity to the wounded is a good thing. It is like an opera chorus, and if the principal European characters sing "We never will be cruel more," I am sure if England likes to sing too "I never will be cruel more," I see no objection. But it is like vows. People who keep a vow would do the same without the vow, and if people will not do it *without* the vow, they will not do it with. England and France will not be more humane to the enemy's wounded for having signed the convention, and the convention will not keep semi-barbarous nations like Russia from being *inhuman*. Besides which though I do not reckon myself an inhuman person I can conceive of circumstances of *force majeure* in war when the more people are killed, the better.

I was asked my opinion by the War Office when they sent me your manuscript or I should hardly have thought my opinion worth stating. The question appears to me really one for Lord Palmerston [then prime minister] to settle.

ever yours sincerely  
Florence Nightingale

**1865** Source: "The Correspondence Between Dr Ogle and Florence Nightingale." V.M. Leveaux, *History of the Derbyshire General Infirmary*. Cromford: Scarthin 1999:54-55 [16:711-12]

10 November 1865

*Private*. I have to thank you for your three notes of 2, 6 November, etc.

In the first place I will observe that I completely agree with you that, if the question were asked me whether to extend the old hospital or build a new one, I should certainly answer the latter. But the question has not been asked me. As you see, like a ghost, I can only speak when I am spoken to

The Fever Wing is a next of holes and corners--equally

destructive to health and nursing. Nothing can be done with it but sweep it from end to end, in a way of improvement.

2. I have read your letters with the plans before me. The architect, it is evident, knows his business and the later additions proposed are very good. I have made a good many suggestions. But I have also said that to make the building what it should be, it should have two wings (the proposed new one, and the fever one rebuilt) and the old centre block should be used merely for administration, etc.

Everything now depends on the course the committee decide to take. If they adopt the latter course I have suggested, and hope they will send me a pencil sketch, when I will go minutely into the details of accommodation for a nursing staff, etc. It is of not use my doing so until they have made up their minds.

I return to you the enclosed, as you desire. And I should be obliged to you to re-return it to me, when the committee have decided. I will then go over in minute detail all these things. And we can then decide whether it will be of any use to your cause your using my remarks on the report. But at present it would perhaps be better to leave the whole matter in the hands of the committee.

I have no doubt that we shall have plenty of battles to fight afterwards. I was very much obliged to you for sending me my notes and for your information.

It would be necessary, if I am further consulted, to tell me the average number of operations in the year--men, women, of medical cases, men, women, etc. It is impossible to arrange the wards and the nursing without knowing these and an infinity of other details. Oddly enough, sex was not given in the summary sent me of the proposed wards.

Your pneumonia case undoubtedly was killed by want of nursing just as much as if he had been killed by an accident. Such cases, neglected in such a way, are all but certain to prove fatal, unless the head nurse's eye is never off them and the nurses. If the fever wing had been built expressly to provide for the neglect of such cases, it could not have succeeded better.

I would most gladly have seen you as you so kindly suggest. But I am completely disabled by illness from any such pleasure, howsoever much I might desire it.

I write in haste, because I had no time to write to you on the same day I wrote to Mr Wright. And I would not have you think that I have neglected your letters.

Pray believe me,  
most faithfully yours  
Florence Nightingale

**1865** Source: "A Letter from Florence Nightingale to R.G. Whitfield: A New Discovery." *International History of Nursing*

*Journal* 7,3 (Spring 2003):98

34 South Street

Park Lane

London

June 21/65

Dear Mr Whitfield

At the General Registers Office tomorrow (Thursday) at 2 p.m. a party consisting of Dr Farr, Dr Sutherland, the Registrar Genl., Capt. Galton, Dr Hardwick (of the Social Science Gp) meets to go down to the Herbert Hospital.

They would be most happy to have your company, if you could join them.

Capt. Galton was a little annoyed that you took no notice of his invitation, conveyed thro' me, as he had prepared everything for you.

ever yours sincerely

Florence Nightingale

**1867** Source: John Martineau, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of the Rt Hon Sir Bartle Frere* 2:39-40 [9:607]

25 October 1867

I think, if you will allow me to say so, that it is very important for us now to begin well--to fix the points of what the organization proposed has to do--and then to call upon Sir J. Lawrence to fix the best methods of doing it.

We might never have such a favourable conjunction of the larger planets again: You, who are willing and most able to organize the machinery here; Sir John Lawrence, who is able and willing, provided only he knew what to do; and a secretary of state, who is willing and in earnest.

And I believe nothing would bring them to their senses in India more than an annual report of what they have done, with your comments upon it, laid before Parliament.

**1867** Source: John Martineau, ed., *Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere*. vol 2:39 [9:596]

21 August 1867

Sir Stafford Northcote came here to see me on Tuesday of his own accord, which I think I owe to your kindness. We had a long conversation, much more satisfactory to my hopes than I expected. I think you have imbued him with your views on Indian administration more than you know. We went as fully into the whole subject as was possible in an hour, seeing that India is rather a big place. But what I write now more particularly about is this: he proposes to have a committee in the India Office expressly for this (sanitary) work. I told him that we want the executive machinery to do it (in India) and the controlling machinery (at the India Office) to know that it is being done. If



he will do this our fortunes will be made. He proposes yourself as president.

**1868** Source: John Martineau, ed., *Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere*, 2:41 [9:611]

[after 20 March 1868]

I find nothing to add or to take away in the memorandum (sanitary) [memorandum/despatch for governor-general]. It appears to me quite perfect in itself, that is, it is quite as much as the enemy will bear, meaning by the enemy-not at all the Government of India in India, still less the Government of India at home but-that careless and ignorant person called the Devil, who is always walking about taking knowledge out of people's heads, who said that he was coming to give us the knowledge of good and evil, and who has done just the contrary.

It is a noble paper, an admirable paper-and what a present to make to a government! You have included in it all the great principles-sanitary and administrative-which the country requires. And now you must work, work these points until they are embodied in local works in India. This will not be in our time, for it takes more than a few years to fill a continent with civilization. But I never despair that in God's good time every man of us will reap the common benefit of obeying all the laws which He has given us for our well-being.

I shall give myself the pleasure of writing to you again about these papers. But I write this note merely to say that I don't think this memorandum requires any addition.

God bless you for it! I think it is a great work.

**1868** Source: (letter to Lemuel Moss), *The Queen*, 21 November 1868 [8:68-70], also in "Letter from Miss Nightingale," *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions* 3,10 (1869):150-51, *New York Times* London

13 September 1868

My Dear Sir, I could not do what you asked me to do in your kind letter of 12 July, viz., give you information about my own life, though if I could it would be to show you how a woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God--by strange and unaccustomed paths--to do in His service what He did in hers. And if I could tell you all, you would see how God has done all, and I nothing. I have worked hard, very hard--that is all--and I have never refused God anything, though, being naturally a very shy person, most of my life has been distasteful to me. I have no peculiar gifts. And I can honestly assure any young lady, if she will but try to walk, she will soon be able to run the "appointed course." But then she must first learn to walk, and so when she runs she must run with patience. (Most people don't even try to walk).

1. But I would also say to all young ladies who are called

to any particular vocation, qualify yourselves for it as a man does for his work. Don't think you can undertake it otherwise. No one should attempt to teach the Greek language until he is master of the language, and this he can become by only hard study. And

2. If you are called to man's work, do not exact a woman's privileges--the privilege of inaccuracy, of weakness--ye muddleheads. Submit yourselves to the rules of business as men do, by which alone you can make God's business succeed, for He has never said that He will give His success and His blessing to inefficiency, to sketching and unfinished work.

3. It has happened to me more than once to be told by women (your countrywomen), "Yes, but you had personal freedom?" Nothing can be well further from the truth. I question whether God has ever brought anyone through more difficulties and contradictions than I have had. But I imagine these exist less among you than among us, so I will say no more.

4. But to all women I would say, look upon your work, whether it be an accustomed or an unaccustomed work, as upon a trust confided to you. This will keep you alike from discouragement and presumption, from idleness and from overtaxing yourself. Where God leads the way, He has bound Himself to help you to go the way. I have been nine years confined a prisoner to my room from illness, and overwhelmed with business. (Had I more faith--more of the faith which I profess--I should not say "overwhelmed," for it is all business sent me by God. And I am really thankful to Him, though my sorrows have been though my sorrows have been deep and many, that He still makes me to do His business). This must be my excuse for not having answered your questions before. Nothing with the approval of my own judgement has been made public, or I would send it. I have a strong objection to sending my own likeness for the same reason. Some of the most valuable works the world has ever seen we know not who is the author of; we only know that God is the author of all. I do not urge this example upon others, but it is a deep-seated religious scruple in myself. I do not wish my name to remain, nor my likeness. That God alone should be remembered I wish. If I could really give the lessons of my life to my countrywomen and yours (indeed, I fain look upon us as all one nation) the lessons of my mistakes as well as of the rest--I would, but for this there is no time. I would only say work--work in silence at first, in silence for years--it will not be time wasted. Perhaps in all your life it will be the time you will afterwards find to have been best spent, and it is very certain that without it you will be no worker. You will not produce one "perfect work," but only a botch in the service of God. Pray believe me, my dear Sir, with great truth,

ever your faithful servant

Florence Nightingale

Have you ever read Baker's *Sources of the Nile*, where he says he was more like a donkey than an explorer? That is much my case and I believe is that of all who have to do any unusual work. And I would especially guard young ladies from fancying themselves like lady superiors, with an obsequious following of disciples, if they undertake any great work.//

The first thought that strikes most people on perusing such a letter as this is, that it does not tell us what was asked for--anything about the exterior life of the woman--the second is, that it informs us of what is much more important, the inner life and the governing principles of the writer. We see a woman who, with her mind steadily fixed on the object of doing what would make her useful in her day, could work for years in patient obscurity, prepared to set her hand to some great work when the time came, or ready to go on to the end unrecognised, but always learning and helpful. She thinks no detail too minute, no labour too hard, if the knowing or doing it may assist in perfecting her work. We see a woman who never puts herself forward, but does everything for her work's sake, and from the highest religious motive; one who spends and is spent without stint, and to whom long years of suffering are no excuse for idleness, but to whom the enforced seclusion of illness is but an additional reason and opportunity for doing work that shall benefit others.

The lesson to women conveyed both in the words of the letter and in the example is one which needs much enforcement in these demonstrative days. Quietness, patience, a settled object and hard work, these are things not followed after by "girls of the period," or by the women who imagine that the desire to have an occupation which will interest them is sufficient to endow them with a fitness for pursuing it. Women have been so long told that they are creatures, not of reason, but of impulse and instinct; they have been so much accustomed to the idea that it is derogatory to the dignity of women to be trained for any business in life; and have heard so frequently the distinction between ladies and women who work, insisted on; that it will take long years of education and reiterated repetition, to make women in general understand that, if they are to do work they must be trained for it, that imperfect work cannot be accepted as good because it is done by women, and that before they can govern they must learn to serve. Such words as those of this letter are good to be spread abroad as widely as possible. They show what one of our most eminent working women thinks on the matter, and they let us into the secret of the preparation which she was willing to undergo to fit herself for useful labour.

Source: Florence Nightingale, Letter to the Council of the Bengal Social Science Association, *Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association*. Calcutta 1870, 4:xiv-xv [10:233-34]

London

25 May 1870

Gentlemen, Pray accept my warmest thanks and tender them for me to the Bengal Social Science Association for the honour you have done me in electing me an honorary member. Believe me, it touches me the more deeply the less I am able to express it. For I am a poor woman, overwhelmed with business and illness.

For eleven years past, what little I could do for India, for the conditions on which the Eternal has made to depend the lives and healths and social happiness of men, as well native as European, has been the constant object of my thoughts by day and my thoughts by night. These efforts on my part have been humble indeed, but if the Almighty has blessed them in some measure and if they are recognized by you who have done so much more in the same cause--and we in England also recognize with admiration and shame that the native gentlemen of India have sometimes surpassed ourselves in progress in this matter--it is a source of the deepest thankfulness. May increasing success be granted!

The task before India is truly gigantic. But men have done greater things than these. What would you say, for instance, to draining and cultivating the great endemic area of cholera from the sea-board to the Himalaya where the waters of the Brahmaputra, the Ganges and the Mahanuddy flow out, and from which endemic district the great epidemics of cholera rush forth to afflict the world? As well, you will say, try to put a girdle round the world! But a girdle has been put round the world by the electric cable<sup>2</sup> and the day may come when you will have brought the waters of this great area under some control, when you will have drained its marshes, cultivated its rich provinces, exchanged its desolating malaria for useful production and possibly extinguished cholera as a scourge for mankind as well as for India. If the work is a work for heroes, it is the more worthy of your ambition.

I beg to acknowledge a copy of the society's *Transactions*. I may perhaps be permitted to offer the society a few books and, as my small contribution for a membership I so much prize, shall beg to enclose 100 rupees to your order. Pray believe me, gentlemen,  
ever your faithful servant

Florence Nightingale

P.S. Encouraged by your kindness, I may perhaps venture to write to you again in more detail but will not delay sending my poor thanks by this mail.

Source: "From Florence Nightingale," *Transactions of the National Congress on Penitentiary and Reformatory Discipline*. Cincinnati Ohio  
London

12 November 1870

Sir [Rev. E.C. Wines, D.D.]

I am deeply indebted to your kind remembrance. Alas! how frightful has been the war interruption to our correspondence!

You will well believe that the present most terrible struggle of all the struggles in this world's history intensifies and trebles my preceding occupations and illness, and prevents my writing more than a bare acknowledgment of the great importance of your objects.

The point on which you did me the honour of asking my opinion is one which I trust your able association will not let drop, viz. the total inefficiency of our present laws and punishments for repressing theft, and the expediency of making thieves pay for what they steal. I open the day's paper and see the following taken quite at random: "A woman has for thirteen

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<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the invention of the telegraph and its spread around the world.

years, 1857 to 1870, obtained 'goods under false pretences' in various places, and considerable amounts, besides committing other robberies."

What have been the means taken for arresting this career of plunder of honest folk? These have been to support her in prison during those years (at the expense of honest folk) where, according to her own statement, she "was more comfortable than anywhere else." One is not surprised, therefore, at finding that she further states that, "for seven years" she had never been "more than one week" "out of prison." Had our laws been destined expressly for the encouragement of theft, could they have been more successful?

Pray believe me, sir (with many apologies for this hurried note, so unworthy of your great subject),  
 ever your faithful servant  
 Florence Nightingale

**1872** Source: "Florence Nightingale and Sir William MacCormac," *St Thomas's Hospital Gazette* 4 (1947):134-35

21 June 1871

Pray accept my warmest thanks for your kindness in remembering me, and in sending me those valuable *Notes and Ambulance Recollections*, by one, of whose brave doings I have, you may be sure, already heard so much during the war. I need hardly say that I shall read your *Recollections* (which are also the recollections of so many whom you have benefited) with the most eager interest. And perhaps when I have done so I may trouble you with another note.

Excuse this brief acknowledgment. I am so overdone with business and illness as to have some difficulty in writing.

**1873** Source: "A Florence Nightingale Letter," *Celebrate the Century 1898-1998*. Toronto Western Hospital 101-02, typed copy 45803 f63. To Lucy Leighton (1840-74), died at sea en route to India **[9:976-77]**

35 S. St.

2 May 1873

My dear Miss Leighton

I am sure that you well know the interest I feel in the career and prospects of success or failure, in the highest as well as the ordinary sense, of every one of our flock--and will not doubt that any delay in answering yours has only arisen from the always almost overwhelming pressure of business and illness upon me--and also--must I say it?--from the great difficulty of saying anything which will be at once true to experience and to god--and not what will seem cold to you--and the almost impossibility of giving you advice personally, as you ask--because, while these Indian missions are almost one of the

highest interests I have--I cannot think but that the Female Medical Missions will prove a failure, if undertaken as they are now proposed.

Let me say at once, as you seem to wish it, that I do not think you break any engagement to us. I quite understood that on Dr Peacock's report we not only considered you free to but wished you to seek other employment better suited to your health. As far as we are concerned therefore you are under no obligation.

Any obligation you are under to the hospital must depend solely on the terms of your engagement. It would seem that you ought either to have declined the place of "sister" on 25 March, or to have declined entertaining any other offer of employment. But I can see no use in (I feel very adverse to) discussing this now.

And you will be sure--how sincerely I pray that your proposed employment in India may be good for both body and soul--and also that I am very glad things are so arranged that you may leave St Thomas' immediately, as the time will be all too short for you to prepare yourself by even the most elementary training for India "by October." Indeed I was most anxious that you should be set free immediately.

I will say nothing about the absolute self-abnegation, the sever mental training, the acquiring the languages of Hindustan. (I have been now working for India for fourteen years and know something of these things-- though my work has been principally in sanitary administration) that are required for the work you propose. But I will limit myself to the learning and qualifying yourself in midwifery, diseases of women and children, dispensing, which, I understand from your note, you expect to do "by October." I should think *two years* all too short for a training in these things.

We had, as you are perhaps aware, a training school for women in midwifery for some years. We gave a *six months'* training--much more complete both in length of time under instruction, in scientific and practical training than any midwifery instruction which could then be had in London. Yet we would not allow our women to be certified as midwives or as other than midwifery *nurses*--i.e., qualified to conduct normal lying-in and to detect when anything abnormal was going on, so as to call in a doctor.

I have know a much shorter and incomplete training in London obtain a woman the certificate of "midwife," "accoucheuse" and even "physician accoucheuse."

Over and over again we have been asked to admit ladies going out as you are to India (to practise as "*physician accoucheuses*") for one month, three months, six months' training and have always steadily declined.

if we would not do this for England, where a midwife can

always have a doctor at hand or within reach, how could we do this for India, when this is so far from being the case that at the very circumstances that it is not is made the reason for having lady doctors--and a very good reason too.

but I will not detain you, my dear Miss Leighton, with these considerations, which probably will not commend themselves to you now, if they have not already. I will only commend you to our Father who will work out all things for good--if only we go to Him, humbly, sincerely and lovingly--as I am sure you do.

And praying for His blessing on your goings out and your comings in, will you believe me,  
ever yours most sincerely

Florence Nightingale

May I send you a copy of a little book of mine on "Lying-in Institutions" for your kind acceptance? You will find some remarks in the appendix on "physician-accoucheuses."

F.N.

**1874** Source: "Florence Nightingale to Agnes Livingstone, 18 February 1874," Felix Pryor, ed., *Faber Book of Letters: Letters written in the English language 1578-1939*. London: Faber & Faber 1988 180-82, from William Garden Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*. London: John Murray 1880 458-60 [5:538-39]

London

18 February 1874

Dear Miss Livingstone

I am only one of all England which is feeling with you and for you at this moment. But Sir Bartle Frere encourages me to write to you. We cannot help still yearning to hear of some hope that our great father may be still alive.

God knows, and in knowing that He knows, who is all wisdom, goodness and power, we must find our rest. He has taken away, if at last it be as we fear, the greatest man of his generation, for Dr Livingstone stood alone.

There are few enough, but a few statesmen. There are few enough, but a few great in medicine, or in art, or in poetry. There are a few great travellers. But Dr Livingstone stood alone as the great missionary traveller, the bringer-in of civilization, or rather the pioneer of civilization--he that cometh before--to races lying in darkness. I always think of him as what John the Baptist, had he been living in the nineteenth century, would have been.

Dr Livingstone's fame was so world-wide that there were other nations who understood him even better than we did. Learned philologists from Germany, not at all orthodox in their opinions, have yet told me that Dr Livingstone was the only man who understood races, and how to deal with them for good--that he was the one true missionary. We cannot console ourselves for our



loss. He is irreplaceable.

It is not sad that he should have died out there. Perhaps it was the thing, much as he yearned for home, that was the fitting end for him. He may have felt it so himself. But would that he could have completed that which he offered his life to God to do! If God took him, however, it was that his life was completed, in God's sight, his work finished: the most glorious work of our generation. He has opened those countries for God to enter in. He struck the first blow to abolish a hideous slave trade. He, like Stephen, was the first martyr:

He climbed the steep ascent of heaven  
Through peril, toil and pain;  
O God! to us may grace be given  
To follow in his train!

To us it is very dreary not to have seen him again, that he should have had none of us by him at the last, no last word or message. I feel this with regard to my dear father, and one who was more than mother tome, Mrs Bracebridge, who went with me to the Crimean War, both of whom were taken from me last month. How much more must we feel it with regard to our great discoverer and hero, dying so far off! But does he regret it? How much he must know now! how much he must have enjoyed! Though how much we would give to know *his* thoughts, *alone with God* during the latter days of his life.

May we not say, with old [Richard] Baxter (something altered from that verse)?

My knowledge of that life is small,  
The eye of faith is dim;  
But 'tis enough that *Christ knows all*.

And he will be with *Him*.

Let us think only of him and of his present happiness, his eternal happiness, and may God say to us: "Let not your heart be troubled." Let us exchange a "God bless you" and fetch a real blessing from God in saying so.

Florence Nightingale

**1875** Source: Edwin W. Kopf, "Florence Nightingale as Statistician." *Publications of the American Statistical Association* 15 (1916-17):395 [black-edged]

London Jany 30 1875

Sir:

I request that you shall be  
good enough to thank the  
American Statistical Association  
in my name

for the honor which they  
have done me in electing  
me an Honorary Member

& to assure them that I am  
ever their faithful servant

Florence Nightingale

I trust that I may be allowed to  
send a Blue Book, being the last  
"Annual Sanitary Report" of the  
India Office & a pamphlet "Life  
or Death in India" by myself: as  
a small contribution to their Library.

F.N.

To the  
Corresponding Secy.

**1875** Source: (to Mother Mary Aloysius Booker), Mary Sullivan,  
ed., *The Friendship of Florence Nightingale and Mary Clare Moore*.  
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania 1999 178-79 [8:1013]

5 January 1875

I don't know if I should have the heart to wish you a blessed New  
Year, but that I have a duty to fulfil. My aunt, Mrs Smith, whom  
you may remember at Bermondsey, and who was with dear Rev Mother  
at Scutari, has written to me sending £5, which she wishes me to  
lay out in any manner that would be most satisfactory to dear Rev  
Mother. I thought of it as a contribution to her monument at  
Kensal Green. Then I thought her heart was very full of the  
children at Eltham, and that a contribution to them would be most  
satisfactory to her. I don't think she cared about monuments--you  
are all her monuments. But you will know best--please tell me.

May "God bless you all," as she said.

yours ever in Him

F. Nightingale

**1875** Source: Alice M. Bunford, *Ninety Years a Mission 1857-1947*.  
London: Ranyard Mission 1948, 10-11.

"A small gift for the Biblewomen Nurses with Florence  
Nightingale's deepest sympathy for the noble attempt to provide  
nursing and cleanliness for the very poor; with gratitude to God  
and fervent prayer for its extension and progress. And if she  
might hint a wish it would be that this little sum should be  
expended in waterproof cloaks or washing gowns for summer and  
washing linen sleeves to take on and off, and washing aprons or  
washing money for two or three of the nurses in the very poorest  
district, where there is no local lady to look after these 11:  
things for the nurses.'

**1876** Source: Dorothy Anderson, *Miss Irby and Her Friends*. London:  
Hutchinson 1966, 124, from a letter read at public meeting 6  
August 1876 under presidency of Earl of Harrowby: [5:270-71]

reprinted in 31 October 1876 p. 6 *Sydney Morning Herald* "Miss Nightingale and the War in the East"

Good cheer to your efforts to help the sick and wounded of both sides, and bring them hospital and medical necessaries and comforts too, I hope, in this heartrending war--a war for a cause as intensely interesting as the cause of most wars is uninteresting--a war which will, please God, at last, at last bring freedom, the safety and blessings of home, of industry, of progress--all that Englishmen and Englishwomen and English children most prize.

And let every English child give its mite to what are now the Valleys of the Shadow of Death. But for this to "execute righteousness and judgment for all the oppressed" we must help "righteously" the sufferers on all sides. So God speed the "eastern War Sick and Wounded Relief Fund" [with all her might from her sick bed]

With £10 10s, and I wish it were 100 times as much.

**1876** Source: (Facsimile) H.E. MacDermot. *History of the School of Nursing at the Montreal General Hospital*. Montreal; Alumnae Association 1940 27. 1961 reprint:27

April 11/76

Sir

I regret indeed very deeply to have this opportunity of making your acquaintance of having news from your own lips of the future prospects of Montreal General Hospital in which I am so much interested & of my dear friend Miss Machin

But alas for me! It is not possible my state of illeg bodily weakness as a time of year when the over fatigue of business & particularly heavy to see you at such short notice on the day you offer me.

but I did not lose a moment after receiving yours in sending to my cousin Hy Bonham carter, the Secretary of the Training Schools: & Miss Machin's friend who has doubtless written to you before this & she is as anxious as I am for Montreal

\*

news.

Excuse my pencil writing

I trust that this trip to England will entirely set up your health: & am only sorry not to be able to

profit by your presence  
on this side the water  
as I should so have wished  
myself.

Pray believe me,  
dear Sir  
yours most faithfully  
Florence Nightingale  
Dr Campbell

**1876** Source: Harriet Martineau. *Autobiography, with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman*. London: Smith, Elder 1877:479-81

29 September 1876

Dear Madam [Maria Weston Chapman]

I was glad when I heard that you were to complete Harriet Martineau's book. Who could better understand her? She was born to be a destroyer of slavery, in whatever form, in whatever place, all over the world, wherever she saw or thought she saw it.

The thought actually inspired her: whether in the degraded offspring of former English Poor-law, of English serfdom forty years ago--in any shape, whether in the fruits of any abuse, social legislative, or administrative--or in actually slavery, or be it in Contagious Diseases Acts, or no matter what, she rose to the occasion.

I think, contradictory as it may seem, she had the truest and deepest religious feeling I have ever known. How this comes out, with her finest expression, in *Deerbrook*, in *The Hour and the Man*, which one can scarce refrain from thinking the greatest of historical romances, the central figure so sustained in the highest spirit, from first to last--for example, Toussaint's escape from the Spanish camp and the shower of white amaryllis cast over him by his own Negroes as he rides away--all concerning his prison and death (chapters "Almost Free" and "Free"), that grand conception of the last thoughts of a dying deliverer reaching its highest flight.

Then in her *Eastern Life*, and in many parts of her *Illustrations of Political Economy*, for example, the death of a poor drinking woman, "Mrs Kay"--what higher religious feeling (or one should rather say instinct) could there be? To the last her religious feeling--in the sense of good working out of evil, into a supreme wisdom penetrating and moulding the whole universe--into the natural subordination of intellect and intellectual purposes and of intellectual self to purposes of good, even were these merely the small purposes of social or domestic life.

All this, which supposes something *without* ourselves, higher and deeper and better than ourselves and more permanent, that is, eternal, was so strong in her--so strong that one could scarcely

explaining her (apparently only) losing sight of that supreme Wisdom and Goodness in her later years.

But through the other strong spring of her life, her abhorrence of any kind of bondage, did she not misinterpret the frequent (undoubted) servitude imposed by so-called religion on so many noble souls as something essential to it, instead of finding the only source of real freedom in a truer religion?

Was it not her chivalry which led her to say what she knew would bring obloquy, because she thought no one else would say it? But why say this to *you*--you who knew her so well!

O, how she must be unfolding now in the presence of that supreme Goodness and Wisdom before which she is not "ashamed" and who must welcome her one of His truest servants!

I thought I had not a moment of time when I began to answer your letter, and now I must ask your pardon for this hasty answer to your desire, to which I can only say that I do not remember what I wrote to Miss Jane Martineau. Whatever it was, I am sure it fell miserably short of the subject.

I have a great dislike to private letters being published; at the same time I must leave it to your judgment, and I would never let my poor little dislikes interfere with anything you judged likely, though in the least degree, to contribute towards throwing light on the character of our noble friend (or the hour of a great life's ending) in whose name I am proud to be,

yours most sincerely  
Florence Nightingale

**1877** Source: Sarah Robinson, *"My Book" A Personal Narrative.*

London: Partridge 1914, 159, published 21 June 1877 *The Times* 8  
[before 19 June 1877]

May I from my sickbed cry for help from England for her soldiers and their institute at Portsmouth, the great port for embarking and disembarking.

If you knew as I do (or once did) the difference between our soldiers cared for, in body, mind and morals, and our soldiers uncared for--the last, "*Hell's carnival*" (the words are not my own), the first, the finest fellows of God's making! If we knew how troops, immediately on landing, are beset with invitations to *bad* of all kinds, we should hasten to supply them with invitations to, and means for, *good* of all kinds--remembering that the soldier is, of all men, the man whose life is made for him, by the necessities of the service; he cannot go seeking better places and proper recreation for himself, still less for his wife and family.

If we realized what were the only places open to our men out of barracks--places not of recreation but of drink and of vice--to the intense misery and degradation of men, women and children! If we knew, as officers know, the difference to the service of

these men and of those! (*Turn out the saints, for Havelock never blunders and his men are never drunk.*") We may not hope to make saints of all, but we can make men of them instead of brutes. If you knew these things as I do, you would forgive me for asking you (if my poor name may still be that of the soldier's ever-faithful servant) to support Miss Robinson's work, in making men of them at Portsmouth, the place of all others of temptation to be brutes.

Florence Nightingale

**1877** Source: (copy of FN letter to Julia Ward Howe, Add Mss 45804 f205), in Laura E. Richards, *Samuel Gridley Howe*. New York: D. Appleton-Century 1935:146-47 [8:799]

London

7 June 1877

Dear Mrs Howe

It is like a breath from heaven to one's overworked and well nigh overwhelmed mind, your *Memoir* of one of the best and greatest men of our age, and your remembrance. You have shown his many-sided life as known to few. You have shown in him a rarer and more fruitful man than even we, who had known and loved him for so long, knew.

What has been a revealing to us of him will be even more so for the crowd of your readers who knew him but by the dramatic Greek life, and by his work among the blind, deaf mutes and idiots. No one will know him quite till after you have been read. That is the privilege of your community with him--with his unconsciously heroic life.

A great duty has been fulfilled in making known his sympathy for ever kind of misfortune, his love of helping humanity, so to speak, ancient and modern--his generous and persevering devotion to right, his noble horror of helpless pity, his indomitable faith in progress, thanks to you. And how little he thought of reputation! That was the noblest thing of all.

The pressure of ever increasing illness and business--how little I thought to survive him--makes it difficult to me to write one unnecessary lie. Our common friends, Mr and Mrs Bracebridge, Dr Fowler and how many others, are all gone before us. In their names and in his name I bid with all my heart,

fare you very well

Florence Nightingale

Source: "Preface to Ninth Edition," Ellice Hopkins, *Work in Brighton; or, Woman's Mission to Women*. London: Hatchards 1877:iii-iv [8:492]

London

October 1877

From my own experience in long past years I am quite sure that the way, as indicated in *Work in Brighton*, is the only true way,

and I would entreat the women of England to read the little book, and then judge, each for herself, how best to use that influence, never to be forgotten, lost or set aside, of every pure woman in the cause--an influence which must one day tell for or against, whether she will or no. She cannot be neutral.

This is the cause, one would think, of every Englishwoman, for to every Englishwoman home and family, here imperilled, with or without her knowledge, have a sacred name; the cause of every wife and mother, for the happy wife and mother (as was truly said by one of these) has the strongest reason to do something to help those who have no home and no happiness; the cause of God, who is the Father of the poor outcasts as well as of the happy homes.

In these holy names I beg you to look at this work. What is character given us for, but to help those who have none? I bid the work "Godspeed" with all my heart and soul and strength.

**1878** Source: Alfred E. Gathorne-Hardy, ed., *Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook: A Memoir with Extracts from his Diary and Correspondence*. London: Longmans, Green 1910 2:79-80 [10:486-87]

[1878]

Dear Lord Cranbrook

Very meekly I venture to send you a poor little article of mine on the people of India, in the *Nineteenth Century*. I hope if you read it you will not call it a shriek (I am astonished at my own moderation). I am not so troublesome as to expect that you can find time to read it, but the India Office has untold treasures (which it does not know itself) in reports on these subjects, which will engage your busy time, and especially the recent Deccan Ryots Commission Report, on the relation of the ryots and the extortionate money lenders in the Bombay Deccan, will I am sure call for your attention. Can there be any private enterprise in trade or commerce, in manufactures, or in new interests, where to money lending are guaranteed by our own courts profits, enormous and easy profits, which no enterprise of the kind that India most wants can rival? What are the practicable remedies for extortionate usury in India, and principally in the Bombay Deccan? The bill now before the Legislative Council at Simla does not seem to promise much. Does it? The whole subject is, I know, before you.

Pray believe me (with wonders at my own audacity),  
ever your faithful and grateful servant  
Florence Nightingale

**1879** Source: Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire*. London: Hutchinson 1983 95 [13:443]

My dear Nurse Lyons

I feel very much interested in your going to New Zealand, very sorry that you have determined on leaving England, but

sympathizing in your desire to go to the new country and hoping and trusting that you will, in God's strength, humbly and steadfastly turn them to account.

Remember what Bunyan says: "Captain Experience" was a man very successful in his undertakings. May God Almighty, the Father of good nursing as of all good works, be with us all....[ellipse in printed letter]

Tell me if there is any medical or surgical book that you would like, and I would gladly send it to you before you leave. My note is short but my wishes and prayers for you are not short. I have been thinking of you all night, but I have so many cares and overworking cares just now that I cannot write more except to say,

God bless you, dear Nurse Lyons  
Florence Nightingale

**1879** Source: Margaret Lesser, *Clarkey: A Portrait in Letters of Mary Clarke Mohl (1793-1883)* 207 (collection of Lisel-Charlotte von Siemans) 22 February 1879

...How horrible are these Afghan and Zulu Wars, especially Sir Bartle Frere's Zulu War, not because our bravest soldiers and officers have bit the dust, not because we have now another costly and great "little war" upon our hands, but because we shall have Zululand and the Transvaal to annex and administer, besides Natal and God knows what besides. Have we managed India so very well as to wish to manage South Africa besides?....

**1880** Source: T. Wemyss Reid, ed., *The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes First Lord Houghton*. 2 vols. London: Cassell 1890 2:389-91, original at Trinity College Cambridge London

18 May 1880

My dear friend [Richard Monckton Milnes]

I *will* give you joy, I *do* give you joy, and I condole with you too as you desire on your boy's marriage. Such promise--not only promise--such proof of so much being in him, it seems a pity that he should not have served his apprenticeship to hard work, which not alone but generally forms the best foundation for the future edifice if there is plenty of stuff. For that he will do something great for his country--and what times are these?--we do not allow ourselves to doubt for one moment. On the other hand, there is something very inspiring in the faithful love, the early and the late, when two always say "we." I remember when I was a girl, Mme Hoche in Paris, widow of General Hoche, after the first year of marriage (far away be the omen!) To her dying day always said "nous"; she never called him to her only child "ton père." I think one has known such instances of two in one through a long life together--God in both and both in one; but then the wife



must help the husband in work, not prevent him. May such a life be given to our young pair; may all the true blessings be theirs, and may it be theirs to be a blessing to many in these the most stirring times of this or any day! And after these are over may it be given them "world beyond world to visit and to bless" together. Can one wish them more?

What worlds there are even in this world? There is India, which a century of statesmanship and a wilderness of statesmen would not be too much to set even on the first step. What have we done for the people of India? There is a country farther away from us than India. In one end of London there are whole lands unvisited and unblessed by us in England. There is Ireland; there is Liverpool and the big towns; there is education; there is pauperism. Suppose this Whitsuntide were a really new Whitsuntide to the world, a new intellectual and moral inspiration, a new creation? How we need it! How we might have it if we chose! Is there any reason but our own fault why we should not have apostles of agriculture now for India, out of whose soil we take twenty millions a year and give nothing back, or to save a thousand a year here or even a hundred there take back the little we have given? Why there not be a political and an administrative Holy Spirit with a new birth in all these vast vital interests?

I agree and I do not agree in what you say about the real education young men get in the society of married women. I think I see creeping over, not only women but men, a forsaking of solid practical administrative things for glittering politics, a belief in substituting a vague general (so-called) "influence" for real practical acquaintance with the ways the world's business is managed, and the ways it might be managed. It is so easy, so attractive, talking and declaiming politics like a German newspaper. It is so difficult, so unattractive, to know really and to administer, whether public or private things, so as to bring about effectively a high end. People actually talk now as if they thought that a good wife would enable a Viceroy of India to reform the crying land tenures, and there is something of the breath of magazing in everything, in which the inkbottles, guileless of all accurate knowledge of all but "good motives," gracefully write of what they know nothing about.

But this is a strange "Wedding March." Believe that I would, if I could, contribute the sweetest music to inspire the footsteps of the beautiful marriage pair. My love, please, to your two daughters from the bottom of my heart.

You kindly ask after me. After twenty-three years of overwork and illness, of which the last six have been without one day's rest of body or mind, I am quite broken down, more than I knew myself, and have had to go away twice for a little silence. Alas, how work halts! I think I am "done" as to work. Fare you very well, and believe me

ever yours very truly  
Florence Nightingale

**1880** "Woman Slavery in Natal," *Transactions of the Aborigines' Protection Society*. No. 7 (new series) (April 1880):222-23. Photocopy. Bodleian Rhodes House Library. We feel sure that the following extract of a letter, written by Miss Nightingale to Mr James Heywood will be read with great interest and sympathy by the members of the society:

[15:1020]

10 South Street, Park Lane

22 November 1879

My dear Sir, Do you kindly remember the part which you and the Aborigines' Protection Society took last year in this crying evil of Kaffir women being sold for cattle in Natal, a slavery recognized and enforced by English courts there? X x

The two things most immediately wanted are:

(1) That the children of "exempted" men and women (exempted, that is, from native law at their own request) should, whether born at the time of "exemption" or after, be under "the ordinary laws of the colony." It seems the grossest anomaly that the children of Christian Kaffirs can be forced back into immorality by native law, administered by English judges, after having been brought up under Christian morality. It seems unlike any other law or custom that exists.

(2) The second is that a simple law of naturalization should be passed.

These two things the colonial minister could do, I suppose, with a stroke of his pen, and if these two things were done, the greatest stumbling blocks would be removed in the way of Kaffir progress gradually to civilization.

You will observe that there is no "forcing" civilization upon them in either of these two measures.

It is simply not making it impossible to those who wish to pass under our law with their families. In Lord Carnarvon's own words, it is desired to "provide a simple machinery by which natives could relieve themselves from the operation of their barbarous law." But the machinery provided would have been difficult for an educated European to comply with, and is so framed as to make it almost impossible that a native should be able to avail himself of its avowed benefits.

I am purposely succinct in my statements, because you were on the deputation which went to Sir M. Hicks Beach last year, you may possibly be glad not to be troubled again with the facts now before me.

Believe me, etc.

(signed) Florence Nightingale

\*

223: FN's view entirely in accord with those of the committee.

Signs of progress in Natal. A petition from 17 "exempted" natives, praying to be relieved from certain disabilities wh they still suffer has attracted attention. No logical answer to their demand to be placed on a footing of equality with their European fellow subjects. Mr Escombe has proposed the est of a Native Council in Natal and we are also gratified to find that in Natal the govt are now taking a first real step towards educating the enormous native pop by introducing into the Leg Council bills wh provide for el instr of native boys and girls and for ind tr of native youths, modelled on system at Lovedale.

**1880** Source: Macalister, Charles J. *The Origin and History of the Liverpool Royal Southern Hospital*. Liverpool: W.B. Jones 1936.  
Telegram: God speed the Nurses' home, to be opened today, and all its dear nurses and probationer and matron and house sister; and God bless their quiet, steady and loving progress towards the best, year after year; and God guide their good president and committee and officers is the fervent prayer of  
Florence Nightingale  
London

**1881** Source: Report of a Conference held at the Board Room of the St Marylebone Infirmary to consider the question of Trained Nursing in Workhouse Infirmarys. London: Association for Promoting Trained Nursing in Workhouse Infirmarys. Conference 8 December 1881

My dear Madam [Louisa Twining, Hon Secretary]

Pray let me thank you for, and heartily rejoice at, the information which you so kindly give me respecting the proposed conference on the subject of trained nurses in workhouse infirmarys.

I am sadly afraid that it is not possible to me to answer your appeal as I should wish, to any good purpose. Your association and your efforts have--I need hardly say how much--my warmest and deepest sympathy in the aim they have set before them, to introduce trained nursing into these immense homes for the sick poor. Much good will, I am sure, arise from your practical work in providing nurses--but yet more by your having induced inquiry and discussion on this vital and mortal subject (for it is a subject of life and death, of recovery to work or pauperism for life in many cases) and by the more living interest which you have thereby aroused on the part of many who have hitherto been ignorant both of the evils existing and the remedies required.

All of us who have the work at heart must be deeply and truly grateful to the Guardians of Marylebone for the enlightened example which they have set in the organization of the nursing staff of this noble infirmary (said by those of the Americans who

had been over the two worlds in search of the best model , who were at the International Medical Congress las August, to be the first in the world).

It is not merely that they have employed solely paid nurses, but that they have acted on the sound, because common sense principle, first, that a nurse's duties can only be learned by a thorough and systematic training, and can only be efficiently performed by good, trustworthy women, and secondly, that no staff of women can either be properly chosen or, when chosen, can properly be superintended, that is kept at the best standard of nursing, unless the head of the staff herself possesses the qualifications of a first-rate nurse in addition to the requisite administrative capacity.

Our great want now is a *training school* for infirmary nurses. Would that the Marylebone board under its present most able administration could see their way to supplementing their good work by the addition to the infirmary of such a training school. Good speed to the work is the unceasing fervent wish of your and its ever faithful servant,

Florence Nightingale

## 1882

January 1882. Source: "Hints and Suggestions," *Thrift*, p. 5  
I am deeply interested in the whole national thrift movement, and all its kindred topics, in furthering which, every man, woman and child ought to be enlisted, and I would mention a few very homely ways of helping on the cause. Not to give Christmas boxes or gratuities in money, but to give the Post Office Bank form with postage stamps instead of coin, which would probably go straight to the public house. This will sometimes be received with a surly laugh, but oftener than might be expected, the answer will be: "I have a little lad at home that puts in to the Post Office Savings Bank. He shall have this." In a penny bank in a large elementary school, the children's weekly payments often amount, in the aggregate, to a considerable sum, some putting in as much as a shilling a week. But alas! the bank and coffee room do not successfully rival the public house, and catch not the drunkards, but the respectable, so the school savings bank has given another means of thrift to the thrifty, not a "saving" hand to the thriftless. The educated, and especially educated *ladies* must attend the institute, and themselves must hunt up the people to do these things. In some counties of the manufacturing districts, the average of a family's wages is often far beyond the salary of a London government clerk, who is expected to appear like gentleman. But their money goes in eating and drinking, and in dress, and never, or hardly ever, in healthy dwellings, or even decent bedrooms. Three or four generations, plus lodgers, may be mixed up in tow or three small bedrooms, and brothers and sisters

up into the teens may sleep in the same bed. And this even in families professing religion! What wonder if ill health and immorality are rampant? The women, as a rule, can neither make nor mend. All the needlework, even sometimes the washing, is put out. The making of government grants to elementary schools should depend much more on good needlework for the girls than the do. None but those who have practically entered into the matter know what the temptation is--owing to the conditions of the government grants--to cut down the needlework to six, five or even fewer hours a week, instead of the good old-fashioned ten, or even to substitute such subjects as geography for needlework. Next year sewing will cease to be an *optional* subject, which it never should have been, and we may hope that this essential matter, which for women certainly ranks in importance with the "three Rs," will practically become so. It was justly said the French women, especially the peasant women--earned and paid the enormous fine which France had to pay to Germany after the war of 1870-71. Every French countrywoman can make, mend, cook and save at home. She is the foundation of French thrift. The Frenchwoman saves more to her family and to the state by managing at home; the Englishwoman wastes more to her family and to the state by earning abroad, than is dreamt of in our political economy. One subject more: parish relief inculcates *thriftlessness* as it is managed in most places. If a man or woman has saved anything, or if his or her relatives assist him or her as they ought, the parish relief is cut down. It is, now was, the fashion to rail at convents (not unjustly once) for encouraging dependence and thriftlessness. "The parish" has succeeded the convent in England. What in a different way has the parish done?

Source: T. Wemyss Reid, ed., *The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes First Lord Houghton*. 2 vols. London: Cassell 1890 2:389-91, original, Trinity College Cambridge, 2:418  
London

[9 April] Easter Day 1882

We have been very anxious about you, dear friend, and have followed you every step of your way with our most fervent wishes. May God bless you and raise you up again, as He *has* done this Easter-tide! Ah, how much we all stand in need of being raised up again every day! The sweet savour of your Egyptian saint abides with me always. Give a wedding blessing to your other daughter from her old namesake; but it is hard for you to have to part with her too, and to Ireland, and I do not know how to give you job. May all success attend her with a good soldier of professional enthusiasm, which is the right thing. The woes of Ireland almost surpass those of India with which I am always occupied.

Fare you very well, dear friend

Florence Nightingale

**1883** Source: Ellen von Siemens-Helmholtz, ed., *Anna von Helmholtz: ein Lebensbild in Briefen*. 2 vols. Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik 1929 microfiche UWO.  
10 South St.  
Park Lane, W.  
25 May 1883

My very dear Anna!

I believe you do know how much I leave in that apartment, full of the strenuous life and genius which for so many years made it a world--an Eastern and a Western world. Theirs were not just two lives: each was a Columbus. It is possible that you should still make a pied-à-terre in that sacred home, so that it might still be an altar to their memories?

Of "Him" I cannot speak. All this has brought him up again so fresh--he seems again to vivify the world: he always reminds one of the lines where Columbus rises from the dead: "transcendent happiness--world after world to visit and to bless." (Oh, that such a lot might one day be mine, but I am not worthy.)

Of "Her" I believe that people scarcely knew what a high ideal she had. She was so natural, so sympathetic, so outspoken, always saying the thought that arose at the moment--so clever--so literary--that people did not imagine she had a considered object in life, which was, I believe, to do for the rich what in England is done for the poor: to raise them--to give real high interests to their lives--to banish from conversation all triviality and gossip, to "overcome evil with good" in the daily spirit of our minds. She used to say, "You do all for the poor in England and leave your own class to vanity," and "I don't care if a child is clever--I ask, has he been attentive?" "It is attention to the higher interests that puts out the lower vices and follies." Yes, truly, she had a very high ideal. but words are so poor I cannot talk of them--you do not need my words. I think of you and Ida in your sad employment in the dear old home, how brilliant it was when we first knew it in 1838.

Take care of yourself. You have a great future before you. God bless you both.

**1884** Source: "Practical Advice in View of the Rapid Spread of Cholera: 'Scavenge, Scavenge, Scavenge,'" *The Sanitarian*, ed. Agrippa Nelson Bell, vol 13 114-15

Paris, July 18 1884

In reply to an inquiry, Miss Florence Nightingale, the Crimean heroine, kindly sends the following to the *New York Herald*:

Sir I beg to reply to your note asking for 'practical advice in view of the rapid spread of cholera.'

That our whole experience in India, where cholera is never

wholly absent, tends to prove--nay, actually does prove--that cholera is not communicable from person to person.

That the disease cannot be ascribed to 'somebody else,' that is, that the sick do not manufacture a 'special poison' which causes the disease.

That cholera is a local disease--an epidemic affecting localities, and there depending on pollution of earth, air and water and buildings.

That the isolation of the sick cannot stop the disease, nor quarantine, nor cordons, nor the like. These, indeed, may tend fatally to aggravate the disease, directly and indirectly, by turning away our attention from the only measures which can stop it.

That the only preventive is to put the earth, air and water and buildings into a healthy state by scavenging, limewashing and every kind of sanitary work, and, if cholera does come, to move the people from the places where the disease has broken out and then to cleanse.

Persons about cholera patients do not 'catch' the disease from the sick any more than cases of poisoning 'infect' others. If a number of persons have been poisoned, say by arsenic put by mistake into food, it is because they have each swallowed the arsenic. It is not because they have taken 'it,' the 'mysterious influence' of one another.

In looking sadly at Egypt--Egypt where cholera did not begin anywhere along the route from India to Europe, but at Dametta, where no ship and no passenger ever stops, and where the dreadful unsanitary condition of the place fully accounts for any outbreak of cholera--in sorrowfully looking at Egypt and at Europe now, one might almost say that it is this doctrine of a special poison emanating from the sick man which it is thought can be carried in a package, that has (mentally) 'poisoned' us. People will soon believe that you can take cholera by taking railway ticket. They speak as if the only reason against enforcing quarantine were, not that it is an impossibility and an absurdity to stop disease in this way, but that it is impossible to enforce quarantine. 'If only we could,' they say, 'all would be well.'

Vigorously enforce sanitary measures, but with judgment, e.g., scavenge, scavenge, scavenge; wash, cleanse and limewash; remove all putrid human refuse from privies and cesspits and cesspools and dustbins; look to stables and cowsheds and pigsties; look to common lodginghouses and crowded places, dirty houses and yards. 'Set your house in order' in all ways sanitary and hygienic, according to the conditions of the place, and 'all will be well.'

I beg to send you the best thing that has been written upon the subject--where also what can be said about quarantine is fully stated in the best manner--the lecture by Dr Cunningham,

sanitary commissioner with the Government of India, on the 'Sanitary Lessons of Indian Epidemics,' at the beginning of the *Medical Times*, which I enclose.

The real danger to be feared is in blaming somebody else and not our own selves for such an epidemic visitation. As a matter of fact, if the disease attacks our neighbors we ourselves are already liable to it. To trust for protection to stopping intercourse would be just as rational as to try to sweep back an incoming flood instead of getting out of its way.

With the most earnest wish that America, as well as England, may 'set her house in order,' and so defy cholera and turn its appearance elsewhere into a blessing, pray, believe me

ever her and your faithful servant  
Florence Nightingale

**1886** Source: "Miss Florence Nightingale to the Electors of Holborn," in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*. 1st ed. Madras: G.A. Natesan 206-07. Xerox [5:364-65]

London

23 June 1886

My dear Sir [Dadabhai Naoroji]

My warmest good wishes are yours in the approaching election for Holborn, and this not only for your sake, but yet more for that of India and of England, so important is it that the millions of India should in the British Parliament here be represented by one who, like yourself, has devoted his life to them in such a high fashion--to the difficult and delicate task of unravelling and explaining what stands at the bottom of India's poverty, what are India's rights, and what is the right for India: rights so compatible with, indeed so dependent on loyalty to the British Crown, rights which we are all seeking after for those great multitudes, developing not every day like foliage in May, but slowly and surely.

The last five or eight years have made a difference in India's cultivated classes which has astonished statesmen--in education, the seeds of which were so sedulously sown by the British government, in power, of returning to the management of their own local affairs, which they had from time immemorial, that is, in the powers and responsibilities of local self-government, their right use of which would be equally advantageous to the Government of India and to India (notwithstanding some blunders), and a noble because careful beginning has been made in giving them this power.

Therefore do I hail you and yearn after your return to this Parliament, to continue the work you have so well begun in enlightening England and India on Indian affairs. I wish I could attend your first public meeting, to which you kindly invite me tomorrow, but alas for me, who for so many years have been unable from illness to do anything out of my rooms.



your most ardent well wisher  
Florence Nightingale

**1886** Source: (undated letter for General Evatt\_, Annie Matheson, *Florence Nightingale*. London: Thomas Nelson 1913:325

Strenuously desiring, as we all of us must, that *administration* as well as politics, should be well represented in Parliament, and that vital matters of social, sanitary and general interest should find their voice, we could desire no better representative and advocate of these essential matters--matters of life and death--than a man who, like yourself, unites with almost exhaustless energy and public spirit, sympathy with the wronged and enthusiasm for the right, a persevering acuteness in unravelling the causes of the evil and the good, large and varied experience, and practical power, limited only by the nature of the objects for which it is exerted.

It is important beyond measure that such a man's thoughtful and well-considered opinions and energetic voice should be heard in the House of Commons. [more here in Boston]

You have my warmest sympathy in your candidature for Woolwich, my best wishes that you should succeed, even less for your own sake than for that of administration and of England. Pray believe me,

ever your faithful servant  
Florence Nightingale

**1887** Source: William Henry Goss, *The Life and Death of Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A., etc. With Fragmentary Memoirs of Some of His Famous Literary and Artistic Friends, Especially of Samuel Carter Hall, F.S.A., Etc.* London: Henry Gray 1889, p. 264

10, South Street, Park Lane, W. January 26th 1887

I have only heard, my dear Sir, from my sister, Lady Verney, of your request to me, and I make haste to comply with it. Xx x May peace and even joy attend you, for I know that you live constantly with the presence of her who is made perfect, as we trust we all shall be. God bless you and her. I hope that you are pretty well. May every blessing from the Almighty Loving Father attend you. I hope that you will excuse my writing so briefly, and in pencil. I am always under the severe pressure of work and illness. And how much work you have done for the world and for God.

I venture to enclose an article of mine on the 'Training of Nurses,' -- not for your reading, for it is too technical--but as one of the fruits of your work, for now the training of nurses has extended to nearly every considerable hospital in the country.

Again, God bless you.  
Ever faithfully yours

Florence Nightingale  
S.C. Hall Esq.

**1888** Source: The Queen Victoria Nurses' Institute, Scottish Branch. Letter from Florence Nightingale. Cup.503.p.27

London  
14 December 1888

Dear Lady Rosebery

You have asked me to say a few words on a subject which interests me so deeply that, if my words would be of any use, too many would come--namely, the work of the Scottish Branch of the Queen's Jubilee Institute for Nurses to nurse the sick poor at home. May the highest success attend the Queen Victoria Nurses. And to ensure the highest success the highest training must be theirs. To nurse the sick poor at *home* is the highest branch of nursing, for the district nurse has no hospital helps, or but few.

1. She must be thoroughly trained as a hospital nurse, but the district nurse must be able to do without the hospital appurtenances. She must know how to extemporize hospital appliances. She must know how to take notes of cases for the doctor's visit--very different from taking notes in hospital, where the doctor is always at hand.

Farther, the hospital is supposed to be a place where the sick and maimed can recover. But the district nurse must *make* poor sick room a place where the sick poor at home *can* recover. She must first be a nurse, but she must also *nurse the room*--in cleanliness, in ventilation, in removing every sort of foulness. That is an essential part of her duties.

She must have a skilful tact and kindest to induce, to teach the patient's friend show to do this. If she has the love and gentleness, and the practical knowledge necessary, they will be ready and wiling enough Besides a nurse, she must be a sanitary missionary, not an almsgiver, for where doles are given, nursing flies out a the window, or rather remains outside the door. But she must know what sanitary authorities to have recourse to, in what respects the necessary offices of a dwelling are deficient or neglected. She must also know to what charitable agencies to have recourse, when there is real want of food clothing, bedding, but especially of medical comforts. She is not herself to form another pauperizing agency, but to *de-pauperize*. There is no need to say that she is never to be a religious proselytizer, but may she not say the little word in season without doctrine? Her acts of kindness and trained skill, however will be her best doctrine.

2. For all this she must be trained *after* she has received her hospital training. She must receive the very best instruction in those district nursing homes, where these methods have longest been practised, and if the district nurses must be highly

trained, what must a district nursing superintendent be? Hers must be the highest raining of all, for she must literally lead her nurses, who are to live in a common district home with her, in everything. She must initiate; hers must be the *current* supervision of the work. And to lead she must have responsibility, the responsibility of choice, of judgment, of engaging, of dismissing.

but while describing this, am I not describing what the Scottish Committee have done? They have fully acted on this principle. Only let me add, choose your superintendent well and trust her well; this is the advice of an old nurse.

The home must be--not a lodging--but a home, where the district nurses have everything needful provided for them, where they have not to "fend" for themselves, but have all their strength and health and wits set free for their most responsible charge among the poor; in short, where they have all the helps of a home. But all these things cost money. Will not money be given?

All existing institutes are working up to this higher standard, and will doubtless join hands in helping each other to reach it, so as to be worthy of the poor, of the sick, of the queen, the mother of us all. May the highest blessing rest upon the endeavours, which must be guided by thoroughness and wisdom--practical wisdom, not like that "practical man's" whose wisdom consisted in "practising the blunders of his predecessors," but all working up--not down--to the common aim, and recollecting that the meeker wisdom is the most practical.

3. Were I to attempt to say anything about the good done to the poor, I should not know where to stop--the breadwinners restored to health, the homes saved, the whole standard of cleanly ad sober living raised, the family started again on a new and better footing of independence and energy, and knowledge how to care for their children.

for some thirteen years I have personally known these things, seen the work going on and growing, and known how great are the benefits, and how large the fruit and the gratitude draw n forth.

Let me send a "Jubilate" to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Nurses--a "Jubilate" to them and to all their helpers, whether the help be given in wisdom or in money.

Pray believe me  
ever your faithful servant  
Florence Nightingale  
The Countess of Rosebery

**1890** Source: Note, *90th Anniversary of Tsuda College*, 1990

I am myself always a prisoner from illness & overwork, but all the more I wish you Godspeed

Florence Nightingale

with pressed violets

**1891** Source: (Telegram from Nightingale on the opening of the Nurses' Home, Grafton St, Liverpool), Charles J. Macalister, *Origin and History of the Liverpool Royal Southern Hospital*, 86 God speed the Nurses' Home, to be opened today, and all its dear nurses and probationer and matron and house sister; and God bless their quiet, steady and loving progress towards the best, year after year; and God guide their good president and committee and officers is the fervent prayer of

Florence Nightingale  
London

**1892** Source: George Wentworth Higginson, *Seventy-one Years of a Guardsman's Life*. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1916 p 385 **[13:245]**  
10, South Street, Park Lane

16 January 1892

x x Would I could help you in what you so truly say is the immense difficulty of the choice among 97 candidates for the headship of the Gordon Boys' Home x x Encouraged by your kindness, may I venture to suggest that the first step to facilitate your decision would be to eliminate from the 97 candidates all those who have not had a successful experience in training boys of this class, and thus proved themselves competent to head the Gordon Boys' Home.

Pray believe me,  
ever faithfully yours  
Florence Nightingale

**1892** Source: "From Miss Nightingale," Francis Henry Skrine, *Life of Sir William Wilson Hunter*. London: Longmans, Green 1901, 419  
April 18, 1892

We cannot thank you enough for your invaluable study of Indian administration. Oh, that we could have a similar description of each of the great princes of India from your own hand! and not of India alone. How greatly would this country benefit if we secured records of her condition and progress from such a philosopher as you. Quetelet and Sir John Herschel have both said truly that we British plunge impulsively into legislation without any regard for the past. They said that we should always place on record what we expect to accomplish by our Acts of Parliament so that every new measure should not be an experiment, but an experience.

**1893** Source: "Nova et Vetera: Florence Nightingale and Nursing in Fever Hospitals." *British Medical Journal* (27 October 1928):763  
**[13:183]**

28 December 1893

10 South Street  
Park Lane, W.

Dear Sir [Dr E.W. Goodall]

I shall be much pleased to see you on Saturday afternoon at ¼ to 5, as you kindly propose. But it will be to receive information from you, which I know your kindness will give me, before a receipt for the "best method of training nurses for the hospitals of Metropolitan Asylum Board" can be worked out--or indeed even its A.B.C.

You possibly may have a copy of the Blue Book (many years old) on "Cubic Space in Workhouse Infirmeries," which contains a good deal besides "cubic space" and in it they ave printed a paper which I was desired to write for them and which contains some of the A.B.C. of nursing in these infirmeries. It is called "Suggestions," etc. I have not a single copy left. But I would try and get one for you, if you would wish to see it, and have it not already.

Pray believe me,  
most faithfully yours  
Florence Nightingale

**1896** Source: Supplement, Mrs Roundell, *Agnes Jones or She Hath Done What She Could*. London: Bickers & Son 1896  
*To the Nurses*

It is a noble calling,  
the calling of Nurses;  
but it depends on you  
Nurses to make it  
noble or not

Florence Nightingale

*To the Nurses*

While you have a Ward,  
it must be your *home*  
& its inmates must be  
your children

Don't be like water  
turned on from a cock,  
& turned off again.

Florence Nightingale

August 1896

**1897** Source: "Florence Nightingale Shore," *Queen's Nurses' Magazine* 17,1 (February 1920):7-8 [13:842]

[8 December 1897]

My dear Florence Shore, If you will allow me to call you so. I am very fond of the name *Shore*. Thanks for your kind letter. Let me send you £2.2s for your little clock. I hope this will be enough to get you a serviceable clock.

Do not be discouraged, for you are discouraged. You will find the real joys begin when you are actually at work, or

rather, perhaps, you will find then that you do not want joys.

I should like to hear from you from Reading, if you are so good as to write me. I think district work brings one more in heartfelt contact with one's fellow creatures than anything else. And when one knows that doctors who know say that the mere visit of the nurse diminished the mortality, one thanks God who puts such God-like powers into our hands, provided they are genial hands.

Excuse haste and pencil.

ever yours

F. Nightingale

**[1897]** Source: Henry Morris, *Life of John Murdoch, LLD, The Literary Evangelist of India*. Christian Literature Society 1999. 1906 218-20 **[10:846]**

June 27th 1897. At last, at last, I see your handwriting. I had quite given you up. I am afraid I cannot ask you for an appointment this week. There are so many people leaving England now who want one. But I am delighted that you are staying a good part of July and I hope to see you more than once. Thank God you have such wonderful energy.

Your little books are a great deal better than anything we have done. The viceroy is not at all indifferent to the subject of village sanitation. He has instituted a Village Sanitary Inspection Book, which you have no doubt seen. But you know this is a bad year for India to get anything done--plague, famine, war, earthquake. The viceroy cannot put anything more upon the officials who are still so heavily worked. I will tell you what I hear from Indian gentlemen themselves when I have the great pleasure of seeing you, and you will tell me a great, great deal more. Then I may be allowed to write to you as soon as I find myself at liberty.

**1897** Source: Victor Bonham Carter, *In a Liberal Tradition: A Social Biography 1700-1950*. London: Constable 1960 120 **[1:457]**

10 South Street

Park Lane, W.

28 January 1897

Dear 'Charlie'

I should be very sorry not to see you before you go. Would 5:30 or 5: tomorrow (Saturday) or Sunday suit you?? Or have you twenty-five better engagements?

your affectionate

F. Nightingale

This is you!

Je suis le capitaine de vingt-cinq soldats

Et sans moi, Paris serait pris.

Source: 2 letters to Elisabeth Robinson Ssovil, *American Journal of Nursing* 11,5 (February 1911):365-68

[1] 28 May 1897

[13:839-40]

May 28/97

{printed address:} 10, South Street,  
Park Lane. W.

Dear Madam

Thank you very much for your book which is admirable for lady-mothers. But what do you do for poor mothers who have hardly *if one* of those conveniences & arrangements which you so justly advocate.

District Nurses when acting as Maternity Nurses for the poor mothers & infants have to improvise substitutes for these.

Leaflets, tho' excellent ones are given by Hospitals & Infirmaries appear to be as much use to the mother as they would be if given to the infant.

\*

But if all District Nurses & Midwives (some do) knew how to attend not only to the baby but to the *back babies*, something might be done -

The ignorance of mothers as to *feeding*, clothing, washing their babies say up to 2 years old is something past belief-

Doctors say that indigestion before 2 years old is scarcely ever cured thro' life - And, they say, the want of milk for babies, since all milk now is sent up to the great towns by rail, is causing a national degeneration.

Suppose a toothless child of some months old, & you ask the mother what it has, she always

\*

answers: *It has what we have.*  
We in Hospital know this very

well.

Then cleanliness both of the mother after her delivery & later on in their 'one-room' dwelling places where no privacy is possible & of the child ~~is~~ does not exist.

Ask at blind Asylums how many are blind from birth, from want of cleanliness of the eyes at & after birth.

Till, every mother knows how to manage her babies, till every child has a fair chance of health, we are only on the threshold of training -  
\*

It seems to me such impertinence to draw your attention to these things.

You must have studied these things & a thousand others pertaining to the health & happiness of mother & child more than I could.

And now, work increasing - every month & every year, - I have not (& have not had) 5 minutes' leisure to myself to finish this note

Yours faithfully  
F. Nightingale

Miss Scovil  
[2] 9 June 1897

June 9/97

**[13:840-41]**

{printed address:} 10, South Street,

Park Lane. W.

Dear Madam

Thank you for your kind note - But we want the district Nurses, (& Maternity Nurses) to know how to manage the children & the mothers for their good - And how ~~d~~/are they to know if they are not taught? And we want *you* to teach them.



E.g. that *milk* is a *food*  
& not only a drink like water  
- how many poor mothers do  
you think - know this? Not  
\*

one. Yet perhaps upon  
nothing else does the health  
of the rising generation so  
much depend -

Be sure that every  
District Nurse not only in  
London but in the country  
shall know this - [Perhaps in  
America & Canada not only  
trained Nurses but mothers  
do know it.]

We have tons of Nursing  
books full of Technical & not  
common sense words; full of  
analyses of food & c & c, (by  
which even Doctors themselves  
never guide themselves)

\*

copied from one another -  
full of Physiology (with a  
skeleton of course at the  
beginning - we want not a  
skeleton but a wholesome baby)  
also all the Physiological  
mistakes copied from one  
to the other - full of bacilli  
& all the fads of the present  
day - & not of cleanliness -

We want a book written  
in English & not in Latin & Greek.

at present we call milk  
milk, but we shall soon get  
to call it the lacteal secretion

In London, the ~~large~~ majority  
of the well trained District  
Nurses are gentlewomen,

\*

educated women - & therefore appreciate English - In the  
country they are not &  
therefore the more inclined  
to fine words, from which you  
have to save them.

I wish you had taken

a course of poor people  
 while you were in England  
 But now - mayn't we have  
 a book for the poor people's  
 District Nurses?

I am obliged to stop, & you  
 will be glad - Fare you very  
 well - & let us hear of you  
 again, about many things (besides  
 milk) in a book for poor Nursing -  
 ever yours sincerely

F. Nightingale

Miss Scovil

**1901** Cook, Gordon C. *Disease in the Merchant Navy: A History of the Seamen's Hospital Society*. Oxford: Radcliffe 2001. "Nursing and Nurse Training at the *Dreadnought* and ADH: Establishment of a School on Nightingale Lines,"

346: 10 South Street [printed address]

Park Lane W.

Dec 17th 1901

Dear Madam

Many thanks for your very kind letter. I am delighted that Bertha Sutcliffe has passed for South Africa. And I trust, God willing, that she may fulfil her duties as a nurse should do. It is very kind of you to ask to see me--and I shall be most happy. I am sorry that I am engaged all this week, but I could see you next Monday if that would be quite convenient to you, at five (5) o'clock.

With kind regards

yours very faithfully

Florence Nightingale

Miss Alice Mary Hall

**undated** Source: Extract (undated letter to Abbé Legendre) *Heroines Worthy of the Red Cross: Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Bunyan, Elizabeth Fry*. London: Dent & Son [1883] (unpaged)

I feel the warmest sympathy with you in the touching object of your work, and I am happy to join in it to the limited extent which my own engagements allow. I received, too, from the excellent religious ladies who were attached to the French Army in the East so many tokens of their friendship--they gave me their assistance with such entire self-denial, and lightened my hard task in the hospitals with so much devotedness that I shall always seek any opportunity of showing my gratitude to France, and to her brave children, whom I have been taught by those ladies to love and respect.

Florence Nightingale

**1903** Source: Sarah A. Southall Tooley. *Life of Florence Nightingale*. London: S.H. Bousfield 1906. letter, read by the Hon Fred Strutt, mayor of Derby: August 1903  
 Will you express to each and to all of them my very warmest wishes for their very highest success, in the best meaning of the word, in the life's work which they have chosen. We hear a great deal nowadays about nursing as a profession, but the question for each nurse is, 'Am I living up to my profession?' The nurse's life is above all a moral and practical life, a life not of show, but of practical action. I wish the nurses God-speed in their work and may each one strive with the best that is in her to act up to her profession, and to rise continually to a higher level of thought and practice, character and dutifulness."

**1878-82** Source: Priyaranjan Sen, ed. *Florence Nightingale's Indian Letters*. Calcutta: Mihir Kumar Sen. 1937, 14 letters  
 I **1878**

April 4-78  
 10, South Street  
 Park Lane, W.

*Private*

Sir,

I am extremely obliged to you for your letter of Feb 21, and for your marked copy of the "Arrears of Rent Realization Bill" and the discussion upon it in the Bengal Council.

I have made what use of this I could. From enquiry here, it appears as if this new Bengal Rent Act were not yet passed. Could you let me know whether it is so, tho', alas! in that case it will be too late?

The difficulty is that in all these cases, the Zemindars are strongly represented in the Bengal Council, while the Ryots are not at all, except in so far as the official men protect them.

I know there was a strong protest against a previous proposal (before the time of Sir Ashley Eden's Governorship) to make a radical change in the rights established by Act X of 1859; and it was understood that this should not be carried out.

With regard to the Bill, it should equally be a part of the scheme that there should equally be a summary remedy by process within reach of the Ryots against attempts to exact more than the established rent without any regular legal enhancement. The fairness of the arrangement altogether depends on an adequate provision of that kind.

On the side of the Ryots the boon which Sir A. Eden proposes to give them is to make their hereditary tenures freely saleable and transferable in the market.

But here comes in the broader question whether the right of sale, and consequently of running into debt and pledging their

properties, might not be as fatal a gift to the Ryots as it has been to the small proprietors of the Deccan.

But the Bengal men are more accustomed to the law.

It is a very difficult question, and till the Bill is in the shape in which, after discussion, it is proposed to pass it, an opinion could scarcely be offered here.

It is most irritating that the Bill should be recommended as being "Tenderness itself" compared with the landlord's powers under Reg. VII of 1799 and Reg. V of 1812, which were "engines of oppression" indeed in the Zemindar's hands and for that very reason repealed by Act X of 1859. It is rather hard to go back beyond 1859,-as if Act X, which has done so much for the Ryots, is or ought to be repealed.

At the same time it may be admitted,-may it not?-even by the best friends of the Ryots, that there is need of an easier and less expensive process for realizing undisputed rents, in the interests of the tenants who have to pay costs; but on condition that there should be a summary remedy by process within reach of the Ryots, as above said.

It is most remarkable,-the British testimony given in the Bengal Council to the flourishing condition of the Ryots under the Rajah of Benares.

And I would suggest that it would be most useful if you were to obtain *facts*-about their prosperity and its *causes*. That would not only be most interesting but would lead to great and practical good.

The British tribute to the Ryot that there is no more zealous improver of the soil, "when his tenure is assured", even when "his rent is crushing," is also remarkable. And I would again venture to suggest that you would be doing an enormous good, if you were to collect and give facts-individual and personal histories of Ryots-as to this his zeal.

A great statesman not now in the Cabinet, said to me the other day that the time has now come, bad as some of the means had been to bring it about, when India's interests must "force their way to the front"-meaning, particularly, in the British Parliament.

2. It seems that the fairness or otherwise of a very summary adjudication of rents depends entirely on the nature of the evidence accepted as to *past* payments-does it not? If the old laws requiring a regular register of these payments by *official* accountants (Patwarees and Canoongoes) were put in force, would it then be objectionable?

The *Road Cess* returns have indirectly furnished a register, if they are accurately kept up-have not they? *N.B.* Is the Rule adhered to that half the Road Cess is paid by the Ryot, and half by the proprietor?

Many of the provisions of the Bill which you notice *do*

certainly seem far too severe and one-sided.

Neither the Backergunge nor any other Ryots are nearly so bad as they are painted. On the contrary, it is a good sign that they learn to stand up for their rights. Only let them do so by lawful means. And remembering that, besides the wickedness of murder and robbery, such evil deeds do the greatest possible harm to their own cause and their country's.

I thank you again and again for your extremely interesting letter. I shall have much to say to it some day, but there is no time this mail. Thank you again for your this Bill and your remarks, and pray believe me, wishing you success,

ever your and the Ryot's

faithful servant

Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

\*

II 1878

Private

London, Dec. 20-78

Sir

I have very many thanks to offer you for your kind note of Sept. 16, and for your valuable pamphlet which accompanied it on the "Bengal Land Question,"-as also for one on the "Rent Question" by Mr. P.C. Roy: and for Mr. Dutts' most interesting little book on the 'Bengal Peasantry' with which I was already acquainted.

For each and for all of these pray accept my hearty thanks: as for the copies of the "Bengal Land Question" which I am circulating among men who care for India and who have influence.

Your subject is one of such surpassing interest to me, (as you will readily believe,) that I had already been occupied in collecting information, which could not be successfully challenged, upon the very questions,-land tenures, connection of Zemindar and tenants, illegal 'abwabs', condition of peasantry, which you touch upon: as well upon the history of the Permanent Settlement.

What you say about agricultural earnings in Bengal-about the dispersed character of petty holdings, and the impossibility of having "model farms" is of intense and piteous importance: so also about the decrease in *amount* of produce: and the agricultural ignorance of rotations of crops and manures: and the tenants being unassisted by the Zemindar's providing anything, either capital, seed or cattle. The introduction of "competition" and its effect are ably pointed out.

You will not wish me, I know, to take up time and paper with idle, tho' well-deserved compliments, when the object of both of us is one of such pressing, such vital importance.

I would earnestly request you to put down narratives of

individual ryots, (with time, name and place) in this connection. English people will not read Reports in general, nor generalities, abstractions, statistics, or opinions, such as most Reports are full of. They want *facts*: individual facts concerning particular instances, real lives and effects.

Give us detailed facts. We want to rouse the interest of the *public*: for behind the Cabinet in England always stands the House of Commons and behind the House of Commons always stands the British public. And these are they we want to interest: and these can only be interested by narratives of real lives.

With an ignorant or indifferent public what *tells* are: individual facts about individual ryots with name and place: taken, for instance, in the relations of

-Land Assessment and Land Tenures:

-As to the Ryots's condition

(a) under the Zemindari tenure;

(b) under different methods of agriculture;

(c) under Land or Rent Unions (as in Eastern Bengal);

(d) also where as in Sir G. Campbell's time, I believe, a voice to tax themselves was

given locally to the people.

-As to the dwellers

(a) Under Irrigation or none:

(b) Under water communication or none:

(c) Markets or none.

-As to the daily food and habits of the people.

Real facts,-not only the Reporter's own opinions or generalities:

This is what is wanted to interest the people of England and make a Government work for us.

Give us some particular type of village by name: some particular type of biography by name:

It is true that villages are "mere dots". Let them cease to be "mere dots", to us in England thro' Mr. P.K. Sen's pen.

May I venture to urge you most strongly to give us facts concerning the following points: for instance:

Under the "*Permanent Settlement*" of Bengal:

1<sup>st</sup> Point: There were to be cesses: *i.e.*, no arbitrary taxes levied at the pleasure of the

Zemindar (abwabs) upon the Ryot.

2<sup>nd</sup>: The taxes were to be paid by the Zemindar: and not out of the rent.

3<sup>rd</sup>: The Zemindars were not to be raise their rents: and on this condition the taxes

on them are not to be increased.

4<sup>th</sup>: The Zemindar is to undertake roads, lesser public works, etc.

*Has he done so?*

*Does he not rather avail himself of public works undertaken by the Government as a reason for raising his rents?*

5<sup>th</sup>: The Ryot was to have redress in case of exaction.

*What redress does he ever to obtain?*

6<sup>th</sup>: The Governor-General promised Regulations for the protection of the cultivators of the soil.

*Were they ever enacted?*

7<sup>th</sup>: The Zemindar was to give leases.

*But are leases granted?*

*Or is there any proper system of sub-letting?*

It would be of unspeakable importance if you could give us facts, real facts and narratives upon these and similar points.

[I would venture to point out the Report on the "Deccan Riots"<sup>3</sup> by the 'Commission' appointed to enquire, as the only official Report from India (I have ever seen) which gives facts and narratives, with name, date and place before the summing up and conclusions in a way that would interest an English public.

[ I wrote an article on it, in the XIX Century" for 'August' last, which gives many extracts from it which is very much at your service, if you have not the Report itself at hand.]

I venture to suggest this Report as a model for what we are seeking as to the *Bengal Presidency* to know.

It seems like a Providence that you should have written on this subject and kindly sent it to me at the very time that we are seeking for information on the above points.

As you request it, I feel bound to promise, God willing, that, if you will have the great kindness, as you have the power, of writing and sending us the accounts and facts which I venture to suggest you, I will write a paper upon a subject which I may almost say interest me as much as it does you according to your desire.

Should you be kindly willing to collect the facts, but there should arise some difficulty as to the expense of putting them in print, perhaps you will kindly let me know. I had meant to make this letter much longer, by asking questions and dilating on various points connected with the above: but am unable to do so by mail. I may trouble you with a letter by next mail *perhaps*. Pray accept my excuse or rather my true reason for my delay in answering your kind letter, *viz.*, severe pressure of overwork and illness.

I am and have been for years a prisoner to my room from illness.

But none the less-rather the more- do I earnestly feel for the people of India-and dedicate my poor efforts to their

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service-calling down God's blessing on all faithful friends of India and on their exertions in her cause.

Again thanking you most warmly for your invaluable pamphlet,  
Pray believe me (tho' in haste)

Sir,  
ever her and your faithful servant,  
Florence Nightingale

I had omitted to say there will be no time lost if you kindly undertake to do this. At this moment people in England are so absorbed by the Aghan War in one way or another, that they cannot spare attention for the far deeper tragedy than any that can be acted there which took place but one brief year ago in Southern India, for the permanent state of Bengal.

It is best to wait in order to have peoples' minds at the service of our subject.

India has lost a true friend in our Princess Alice. Everything good she set herself to learn. She never came to London but she went to see herself all the best and most practical methods to doing good. She went about among the poorest London streets to know the people for herself, without anyone knowing that she was a Princess. She was known and loved at my Training School for Hospital Nurses. She had established one, and was to establish one on that model as soon as she was Grand Duchess. Our trained nurses are sending a white wreath for her grave.

Poor children! Poor Darmstadt!

F.N.

\*

III 1879

Private *New Bengal Rent Act*. 10 South St.

Park Lane

London W.

April 11/79.

Sir

I am truly thankful for your information that the Select Committee have not pledged themselves to any part of the Bill- that they are waiting to consider the criticism of mofussil officers-and that the Government will hardly attempt to hurry the Act thro' the Council.

I had previously made all the use I could of your very important information about the nature of the Bill itself: and had learnt that it was still under consideration here: or rather that it had not yet reached the stage of formal consideration: but that there still was ample time to secure for it full attention.

I do trust therefore that this Act will not pass without being modified to what it ought to be for affording full rights to the Ryot.



You will, I hope, kindly continue the valuable information which you have been so good as to give. And I shall hope to answer much more satisfactorily.

Thanking you again and again for your Regulations, your Calcutta Gazette,<sup>4</sup> your remarks upon the Bill in it of which I made the greatest use and for your letters: and may God speed the cause!

In haste,  
and under severe stress of constant  
overwork and illness,  
pray believe me  
ever the Ryot's faithful servt  
Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

\*

IV 1879

*Bengal Arrears of Rent Realization Bill.*

May 30/79

10, SOUTH STREET,  
Park Lane, W.  
London

Sir

I am extremely indebted to you for sending me the petition, intended to be signed by the Ryots, against the provision in Part 2 of the Bill under the head "Procedure for summary realizn of arrears of rent."

I rejoice very much that the Lt.-Governor, in accordance with the suggestions of the Select Committee, has postponed the further discussion of the Rent Bill till next session, -and has appointed a Commission for revising and amending the entire Rent Law.

How important this will be. May all good attend their labours!

I conclude that the gentlemen, whom you name as the members, are all good men for the purpose.

The petition dwells much upon the fact that, whereas the Zemindar's rent is the same as in 1793, the ryot's rent is from three to twenty-fold what it was in 1793: [this is, I suppose, strictly correct?] and that, tho' the Zemindar may have parted to middlemen with much of the difference between the rent paid by the ryot in 1793 and the much larger rent paid now, the fact that many are now fattening on the ryot, whereas the Permanent Settlement destined *one zemr* (not to fatten but) to protect the Ryot, is no reason for collecting with extra severity these high rents.

In the long note, the petition shows that its observations

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(on the Regns. of 1799 and 1812) apply equally to provisions of Sections 3 and 4-

You concur in this?

Such observations as that any one, whether Zemr or Goma, who can assert falsely that a cultivator owes him rent, can sell off his property, etc: that the tenants can find no effectual security: and that petty officials can always be *bribed* to reject 'security': that the Zemindar should not be judge in his own case, subject to only ineffectual "restrictions:" that false witness can always be had for a few annas apiece:

This, I suppose, was too true,  
& is still too true?

The Table in the "Indian Tribune" (which you are so good as to enclose,) is very important: viz., the Table showing that, out of 1915 cases in which defence was entered, it failed only in 478. And this in the 24-Pergunnahs!

Certainly, if any "restrictions" are to be placed, on any party in rent suits, it is on the landlord plaintiff & not on the tenant defendant.

After the statement about the fraudulent magnifying of rent-claims and supporting them by false witness and forgery, the challenge, which you say has not yet been taken up, is very striking.

As also that Part II of the Bengal Rent Bill will become "an engine of oppression in the hands of the corrupt 'amla' of the absentee Zemr."

Alas! how does this evidence of corruption confirm the plan of putting natives-the thing we all so much desire-into Government situations and offices? That is what I think of continually. Can you devise the reform which will lessen this all but universal corruption? I ask it with the truest devotion to the cause.

Is it true that the Rent Leagues in Eastern Bengal have ceased to exist?

It is said that the prices of food are so very high now in Bengal as to make the necessaries of life even beyond the reach of thousands:

When you are kind enough to write again, please mention how this is.

I assure you that I have not been idle in pressing attention to the Rent Bill at *this* end:

From want of time and strength, I am obliged with which I had to trouble you till next mail.

Pray, believe me,  
with many thanks,  
ever your faithful servt.  
Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

&amp; 1879

V

London, June 20/79

Sir

I am extremely indebted to you for sending me the 'supplement' to the 'Calcutta Gazette' of April 23: It is an exceedingly important document, as showing what is *acknowledged* by Government.

The Secretary to Government of Bengal says that the *Zemindars* declare the amended Bill to be of little use to them: and it is they who asked for the Commission.

At this end at the India Office it comes to this: that, as the Bill lately before the Council has been wholly dropped, and the whole question referred *de novo* to a fresh Commission, nothing can be done till they have reported.

The men selected to form the new Commission are far from hostile to the Ryot: and I earnestly hope they will examine Ryots and ascertain what their actual condition is.

Some means must be devised for dealing with this land question compared with which all others put together must sink into insignificance.

At the same time, is it not to be feared that, in any readjustment, the *men of money* who command the lawyers, and the newspaper, and the native members of Council, will certainly not lose, & may not improbably gain?

The thing would be: that there should be lawyers-noble native gentlemen,-who, despising worldly advantage, and gain, should be at the service of the Ryot, the weaker interest: that there should be newspapers, fearlessly but with the utmost attention to accuracy of facts, to advocate his cause. And we may hope that the day will come when the native members of Council will not be only in the interest of the Zemindar.

In European countries, such things have been known as young men patiently working their way up to riches or at least have to honour and influence-not for their own sakes but for the sake of their proper fellows, of the people's cause: till at last they were elected to representative political life, to high official post, or even to the Cabinet.

*Disinterested* political, not party principle-oh what a great, what a divine quality that is!

One hears much in India-I do not say it is at all peculiar to India-of the corruption, the exacting of petty bribes, by the petty native officials, from the people, the wretched cultivators, who are in their power.

[There is, I believe we may say, less and less and almost nothing of this in England now, tho' there is very much in Russia.]

What a glorious career for a band of young native gentlemen

in India, not only to be quite inaccessible to every kind of corruption themselves-[*that*, no doubt, they are already] but to set their faces like a rock systematically against every kind of corruption, however small-& probably it is the small and universal taking of bribes which is the worst mischief-in the *petty native* officials-to use every means in their power, not passively but actively, to establish a *public native opinion* against bribery-a manly horror of it-to raise the small official out of the habit of 'buttering his palms,' of taking 'douceurs' from the poor.

What a glorious object!

It is impossible for English officials in India,- incorruptible themselves,-to check or even to know the bribe-taking of the peons,-the small Public Works Irrigation overseers, etc. from the poor. Only the native gentlemen could speak and work against this.

And may God speed them!

2. I had hoped to have gone into this most important Gazette-important as showing what is acknowledged by Government-by this mail. But I find time and strength wanting.

But I assure you that there is, at last, so powerful an interest awakening in England for the affairs of India as I never expected to live to see. The Houses of Parliament now discuss India as if it were a *home* question, a vital and moral question, as it *is*. This new public opinion in England only requires educating.

It requires *facts*.

I was exceedingly glad to see that you were circulating questions requiring facts for answers among your mofussil friends, and that you were going to collect information yourself.

That is what is wanted.

3. To return to the Commission of the Bengal Rent Law: would you not be inclined to hope for the *crystalizations* resulting from time to turn the Ryot's holdings into property as has been the case in most European countries and in our own country in the instance of the copyholders?

I should hope for legislation to give the Ryots relief against illegal exactions in excess of the rent established by law. For while the cases in which undisputed rents are withheld are few, those in which illegal cesses etc. are exacted are very many. It was a terrible thing that, while the Zemindars are supported in every title of their legal rights, when it was shown by a Commission of indisputable authority that illegal exactions were habitually made, all special interference was forbidden, & the Ryots were left to their legal remedy.

At present, I suppose, a suit for rent or a suit for over-rent or exaction can only be brought as a regular civil action: the same as if it were to try a question of title: & such actions

only come on in their turn: it may be a very slow and long turn. Should there not be a separate file for such, and cheap and summary mode of trial—a case being stated for regular trial when a real question of title crops up. The summary jurisdiction would in all cases be confined to enforcing the rent previously paid & keeping down the levy by the Zemindar to that previous rent till it is legally enhanced. In Bengal and Behar no doubt the Zemindar's papers (in the absence of a public accountant) have been, as you notice, thoroughly unreliable. But I have understood that the Road Cess returns have done much to obviate that difficulty. Is it not the case that the Ryots come trooping in, even in Mozufferpore, to obtain certified copies of the Zemindars' records of their own rents: and that they, the Ryots, will not then pay a rupee more than the amount? [I give them joy.] If the Zemindars fail to keep reliable accounts, so much the worse for them: they will lose the benefit of the summary jurisdiction.

I am obliged to leave off abruptly, I hope to write by next mail.

In the meantime, let me thank you for all your valuable information and trust that you will kindly send me more of what I expect to turn to good account, please God.

Pray believe me faithfully yours  
Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

\*

VI 1879

Lea Hurst  
Cromford,  
Derby  
Sir

Oct. 13/79  
10, South Street,  
Park Lane, W.

I will not lose another mail in thanking you for several kind letters & enclosures containing valuable information. The statements, endorsed by the High Court of Judicature (for *that* is all important), contained in the Calcutta Gazette of some months back, are beyond price. And I made considerable use of them in directing the attention of officials to official statements which cannot be successfully challenged.

You well know how deeply I was interested in watching the prospects of crops in East Bengal. Thank God that a famine is averted. And thank God that there are Zemindars who will look after their poor.

Continue, I pray you, your valuable information to me.

No blacker cloud hangs over one now than the dread lest the necessity for retrenchment should touch some of the most progressive Institutions, Education, and some productive Public Works etc.

Pray tell me the results of your Examination, which I

earnestly hope will have proved perfectly successful: I assure you that I have not failed to bid you 'God speed' in that as in your future life-that it may be long & vigorous & devoted to the highest aim, the country's service.

The reason of my silence for 2 or 3 months has never been, never can be, want of interest. It has been: not to trouble you with detail: increased business, permanent illness, & the taking charge in the country of my dear mother: (she is a widow and infirm) with looking after our own schools for the poor, our own sick and dying people on this estate.

We have two large Training schools for Hospital Nurses in London.

I must break off now: But I shall hope to write more fully by another mail.

My interest in India can never be abate.

Any information that you could kindly send me, printed or otherwise, concerning the progress of the Commission for revising the Rent Law of Bengal, would be exceedingly valuable.

With every kind wish for your highest success, pray believe me.

ever yours faithfully  
Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

I venture to send you a poor little address of mine our Nurses in training: about half of them are ladies and half working women.

May I add that I know if instances of our native Indian soldiers and Non-Commissioned officers fighting & dying for duty quite as striking as those I have given?

F.N.

\*

VII 1879

Dec. 5/79

10, South Street,  
Park Lane, W.

Sir

Most heartily am I desirous to hear any facts which you may be kind enough to communicate to me:

Especially as to the progress of the Commission for revising the entire Rent Law of Bengal<sup>5</sup> of which Mr. Field is Secretary.

Might I ask whether there are any reports or correspondence published in the Gazette or otherwise relating to the rent question as treated by this Commission: or any kind of information as to its progress and proceedings?

In the course of your enquiries as to the state of the

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Ryots, it would be very valuable to give a List of 30 or 40 *bonafide* cases, quoting names and particulars, as regards each of these questions which we have raised in our correspondence.

But I am more particularly anxious just now to know the proceedings of the Commission on the Rent question:

Thanking you again for that valuable Gazette you sent me with a minute by the High Court of Judicature, & again bidding you 'God speed' in your undertakings,

Pray believe me

Yours faithfully

Florence Nightingale

P.K. Swn, Esq.

\*

VIII 1880

*Private and confidential*

London, March 5/80

Sir

With the utmost satisfaction I learn that you have passed your Examinations; & I trust that your health is fully restored. And I assure you you have my best wishes for your success.

But, far and away beyond this, I join with you in unceasing fervent prayer to the Fatherly Providence of us all for your *highest* success,-that is, that you may be enabled wisely, soberly & continuously through a long life to help others to help themselves, to speak for those who have no voice, to be the voluntary representative of the poor & dumb & ignorant. And to make others noble, we must ourselves be noble.

As regards the *Bengal Rent Law Commission*: I have ascertained that they have *not* reported as yet: they are in fact only entering on their work. The 'situation' is: that Mr. Field who is the working member has made a Digest of the existing law with suggestions of his own for its improvement: & the Commission are going over these. Still I am afraid the whole thing is to be feared: tho' the Ryots have powerful friends here.

Mr. Field is anti-Ryot: There seem to be only two native members attending the meetings, of whom one you speak of is wholly for the Zeminders: but Babu Brajendra Kumar Seal (the Sub-Judge) is not so: he seems inclined to be just to the Ryots in most things. And other members of the Commission are so also.

As regards the *Road-Cess*:-Of course there may be & we fear there are cases of over-exaction of Road-cess: but certainly there is a wonderful absence of general complaint: this however may be thro' fear if the Zeminder. The Cess was doubled for public works (Famine fund) & is now 1 anna in the Rupee, I believe? It is on these matters,-over-exactions & the like,-that it is all-important to glean exact information: information that cannot be successfully challenged.

To return to the *Rent Law Commission*:-No tacit assumption of

the English idea that everything *prima facie* belongs to the Landlord, & that all subordinate rights are so much derogation from his, & therefore to be construed strictly & put to the proof-an idea certain to find favour with the Zeminders-should be encourage. Both by status & by the Law of 1793 the Ryot has original rights of his own. What is very much wanted is some record of Ryots' holdings so that a right once acquired may not be lost by a mere irregular increase of power: is it not?

A proposal for protecting Ryots who have cultivated for 12 years in the same village is most desirable: I suppose. No improved facilities for enhancement should be put in the hands of the Zeminders in respect of procedure. They are only persons who have certain legal rights under a compromise effected in 1859. The decisions of the Courts have been on the whole very favourable to the Ryot: have they not? Ultimately I hope that our efforts will be directed to re-establishing a Peasant Proprietary-tho' our well-meant immense experiment in Western India has been far from successful

But I earnestly trust that the present Commission will limit itself to giving effect to the Act of 1859, refusing to give the Zeminders anything which that Act does not give them. It is doubted whether under present circumstances the Ryot might not suffer by a re-casting of the hole Rent Law.

But I only suffer these considerations to your notice, as being those of some of the best friends of the Ryots here: And as inviting *facts* which will be of the utmost importance-that is, provided they *are facts* & not mere opinions: *type facts* & not exceptional ones. The facts collected, to be of any value, must be, it needs scarcely be said, *truly typical* & *not exceptional*. Induction from single instances is a kind of reasoning too much in favour everywhere, but more particularly in India, is it not?-To pick our facts to support our arguments & views I have ever found destructive of all progress, all hope of right conclusion and righteous action. But I need scarcely say *this* to you.

To return to your career which interests me deeply: A people cannot really be helped except thro' itself: a people must be *informed, reformed, inspired* through itself. A people is its own soil & its own water. Other may plant, but it must *grow* its own produce. As well might crops be grown without soil & without water as prosperity and knowledge be *grown* without the people's minds being the cultivated soil for these noble crops.

Therefore, I do so earnestly bid 'Godspeed' to the noble efforts of young Indian gentlemen to educate *their* poorer brethren into men.

I am delighted to hear that your friend is determined to devote himself to giving the people practical education and teaching improved methods of agriculture. In an agricultural country like India, *that* must be one of the main things. The



estates of landlords ought to be centres and nuclei of improvement: It ought to be the landlord's aim to prove that a peasant is better off as the tenant of an improving and intelligent landlord than as a proprietor who has to stand by himself.

But it would be a fine thing to turn the tables on them, the landlords: and to show that, as regards agricultural backwardness, the Zeminder is the backward man, the *ryot* the improving man: to show *on the ground* that the *ryots* are models of agricultural progress, the landlords—those who do little or nothing for their soil, their tenants or themselves.

If there were anything that could recommend the system of a peasant proprietary, it would be *this*. *This* is the real proof to aim at: the real work to do.

I would not miss another mail in answering yours of January 21, which reached me on the funeral week of my beloved mother.

23 years of overwork and illness have been mine. But this last half year, ending with my dear mother's blessed going 'home' (but what a gap to me!) can scarcely come again. 6 years without one day's rest of body or mind I have had. (Excuse my excuses.)

Pray believe me

every yours faithfully *in hope*

Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen, Esq.

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IX 5 1881

Private

London, July 15, 1881.

Sir

I beg to thank you very much for yours of June 3, and for the information contained in it about Mr. Reynolds's Draft Bill—a subject so deeply interesting to me—and for two numbers of 'Bramho Public Opinion.' I have already made some use of the Resolutions, especially Resolution 2, passed at the Ryots' meeting at Calcutta and hope to make more. Could you be so very good as to make me a present of another copy of this 'Bramho Public Opinion' of 'March 31, 1881,' for circulation, if it is not asking too much? It might be very useful here. (I have not seen a copy of Mr. Reynolds' Draft Bill, exactly as it stands. If not too voluminous, might I ask you for a copy? But do not send it, if too troublesome.)

I am extremely sorry, because you must have thought me ungrateful, that you do not appear to have received a letter of mine thanking you for your great kindness in sending me last December a copy of the Rent Commissioners' Report and Draft Rent Bill (two volumes—and two numbers of 'Bramho Public Opinion' with accounts of the Ryots' meetings. I made, I assure you, the greatest use of all these.

Let me request that you will be good enough to put your

address in full at the head of each letter with which you honour me.

I eagerly await such information about the Ryots in Bengal as you have kindly promised me.

The memorial to Government on behalf of the Ryots, and the pamphlet, of which you are so good as to promise me copies, will be very valuable.

Let me assure you that, so far from any of the information you so kindly sent, both in letters and in printed documents and in your annotations upon these things, being wasted, it is always among the most important I receive.

It is impossible to exaggerate the state of the Ryots in Bihar, I fear.

But do not think the question of Bengal Land is "shelved". In the Irish Land Bill the House of Commons is affirming a principle very important to the Bengal Ryots' interest. The House of Commons is on our side. And when this is passed the Bengal Land question will come to the front.

Thank God!

May God defend the right!

I am anxious to save this mail in conveying to you my thanks; but hope to write more fully another time. I am, as always, (you kindly ask) under the severe pressure of overwork and illness.

But I am as ever

Your and the Ryots' faithful servant  
Florence Nightingale

I trust that you are now quite well.

F.N.

P.K. Sen, Esq.

\*

X 1881

*Private and confidential*

London August 12 1881

My dear Sir

I promised to write about the subject which so interests us both, again-my last letter having been so meagre. And this will be hardly less so-

Little is known about Mr. Reynolds' Draft Bill here; and it is supposed to be non, or only semiofficial; & that therefore it does not bind the Government. But no one seems to have seen a copy of the Draft here.

Yet if it gives to all resident ryots rights of occupancy, that is so great a boon that it is said here to outweigh the requiring "proof" from 1839 instead of from 1859-a clause so fatally objectionable.

As for Behar: something *must* be done for the Ryots there when a Committee even of Indigo-planters and Zeminders find that

the ryots have lost all their rights, partly from being moved about by Indigo-planting, partly from other causes.

I assure you that there is no lack here of determination in the highest quarters to give the subject the fullest consideration and justice. The Bill must come first from the *Bengal* Government-then go up to the Government of India-then come here to the Secretary of State, who is so 'thorough' that he *will* understand all about this Bill in order to do it full justice, before he will pass it. Nothing is to be done in India without referring Home.

The Bill has not come up to the Government of India yet. And they are determined there in Council to have plenty of time to consider it.

Though much way has not been made yet, it is much more hopeful than if there was a disposition to precipitation instead of to justice.

The case of the Bengal, and still more of the Behar Ryots is indeed urgent. But there is good ground for hope-and there is certainly that our rulers are looking at it in the most dispassionate & thoroughly just spirit.

I wish there were not room to fear that the present Lt. Governor's health is falling off. He is not what he was, I suppose?-

Very much pressed for time & in haste to save the mail.  
pray believe me

ever yours & the Ryots'  
faithfully

Florence Nightingale

I hope to hear from you,  
And to see a copy of  
Mr. Reynolds' Draft Bill.  
F.N.

\*

XI 1881

*Private*

Nov 28 1881

10, South Street

Park Lane, W.

My dear Sir

I feel that I have never half thanked you for your kindness in sending me Mr. Reynolds' Draft Rent Bill, and the Ryots' Memorial to Sir Ashley Eden and 4 copies of the "Indian Association" address of June to Mr. MacKenzie.

(Would you kindly tell me more particularly the character of the "Indian Association" & its constitution, especially as regards the Ryots?)

Also: for the copy of "Bramho Public Opinion" of March 31 and of the "Bengalee" of July 2 with Resolutions.

Also: for 2 copies of the pamphlet on the "Rent Question" by

Mr. P.C. Roy.

And now I am going to ask you another favour.

I am told that the Government of Bengal *reamended* Mr. Reynolds' Bill and circulated the result as their view.

Could you kindly send me this (Government of Bengal's) re-amended Draft Bill?

It is almost impossible, -and especially this year when the House of Commons was fairly exhausted with the Irish Land Act, -and, ever since, the question of Ireland has been so pressing that the attention of Ministers and every one has been absorbed by it-but this is of good augury for India-it is almost impossible, I say, to obtain attention to great public and administrative questions, during October and November. But the time is now approaching when all political men and officials are re-assembling in London. And I assure you the great vital interests of India, that wonderful country, will not pass unnoticed. On the contrary, it seems as if a new era were opening for her. God grant it be so!

ever your and her faithful  
servant

Florence Nightingale

Would you present my best thanks to Mr. P. C. Roy for his kindness in sending me his pamphlet?

P.K. Sen Esq.

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XII 1881

*Private*

Dec 9 1881

10, South Street

Park Lane, W.

Dear Sir

I would write just a line to say that the great well-wishers to the Ryots here are "agreeably surprised" by the liberality of Mr. Reynolds' Draft Bill, and by the allusions, in the papers which you sent, to Sir A. Eden's views. He desires, it seems, to make strong occupancy rights 'the rule and not the exception.' It is true that Reynolds' Bill requires Ryots claiming fixed Rents to go back to 1839 (20 years before 1859) instead of 20 years from date of action-a provision which must be modified. But he gives *all* resident Ryots right of occupancy and puts their privileges on liberal and solid ground-and this apparently in accordance with the views of the Lieut. Governor.

Till we know what is the Govt. Draft Bill to be seriously proposed, I think my friends would hardly consider it worth while to discuss the details of Mr. Reynolds' Bill, beyond the main features which I have stated.

I trust you will be so very good as to send me the Draft Bill which, it is understood, the Govt. of Bengal have now put forward as their view, but which has not yet reached the India

Office here.

The present Secretary of State is the most serious, conscientious and painstaking of men will soon patiently take up the question, with which he is very well fitted to deal after his Irish experience.

Any information about the Associations which have sprung up of late years would be valuable.

There was one, got up in Sir G. Campbell's time, in a kind of opposition to the "British Indian Assocn"?

The upshot of the papers is to make one feel that, as far as the Bengal rent question has gone, (so the Ryots' friends say here,) it is in the hands favourable to the ryots. And I do trust it may be satisfactorily settled. You may rely on my doing all I can.

At the same time the absence of information from India here is very unsatisfactory. But Lord Ripon is pretty sure to do justice to the popular side so far as he can if action is really taken.

In haste

Yours very faithfully  
F. Nightingale

P.K. Sen Esq.

\*

XIII 1882

Private

February 24/82

10, South Street,  
Park Lane. W.

Sir

I am greatly obliged to you for your last valuable letter of January 2: and for four Reports (which followed it) of the Indian Association: viz. the second and fourth Annual Reports, and the Proceedings at two Public Meetings of the Ind. Assn. On the Vernacular Press Act.

I am looking forward to your kindness to send me the "Amended Bill", the Govt. of Bengal's Bill, on the Revised Rent Law.

Not a word you send me is lost upon the cause. I will perhaps await the coming of the "Amended Bill" before entering on the whole question of what is best and what is attainable for the Ryot. It is a matter of indeed incalculable importance what may be the consequences of this 'Act.' The Government has no disposition to "shelve" it; but they are right to give it the utmost deliberation.

Would it be troubling you too much if I ask whether you would have the goodness to send me the *Calcutta Gazette* of April 23 1879, containing a Minute of the High Court of Judicature on this same Rent Law question, which I have seen, and which is singularly to the purpose? It is impossible to get in England, because the India and other Offices will not break their files.

The gentleman at Howrah whom you mentioned has been good enough to send me copies of his book on the Settlement (Permanent) of Bengal and the Land Question. The work is one of great research and value. But it is a pity that these gentlemen do not see that these works which require only literary talent and that what English Statesmen want are *facts*, plain facts, if possible from an eye-witness, showing the present condition of the Bengal Ryot. In haste

pray believe me

ever yours faithfully

with many thanks

Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen Esq.

&

XIV 1882

March 24 1882

10, South Street,  
Park Lane. W.

Dear Sir

Pardon me for only writing one line today to say that I have found in London a copy of the Calcutta Gazette of April 23, 1879, which I think I troubled you by asking for two or three weeks ago.

If you have kindly obtained and sent it me, it will be useful: for no one here could procure a copy. But if not I trust you will not trouble yourself, as my copy is available.

I trust you know that every paper you have been kind enough to send me is put to use. Not a word is lost. It was your sending this Calcutta Gazette which drew attention to it.

But I hope that you have now collected the all-important recent information about the actual condition of the Ryot in the country on his own fields in Bengal, in Eastern Bengal, and especially in Behar and that we shall soon have the benefit of it. [last lines reproduced in FN hand]

May God defend the Ryot is the prayer of my heart. God save Bengal!

Pray believe me

in haste

ever yours faithfully

Florence Nightingale

P.K. Sen Esq.