

# **HANDBOOK FOR HOSPITAL SISTERS**

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Handbook for Hospital Sisters by Florence S. Lees & Henry W. Acland

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**FLORENCE S. LEES & HENRY W. ACLAND**

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**HOSPITAL SISTERS**

BY

**FLORENCE S. LEES**

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE AMBULANCE OF H. I. & R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY  
AND PRUSSIA FOR THE WOUNDED IN THE LATE FRENCH AND GERMAN WAR.

EDITED BY

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1874

TO  
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE  
THIS BOOK  
IS  
Dedicated.



## PREFACE.

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AMONG the social changes in England during the present century none is more remarkable than the increased desire for systematic care of the sick poor. It is not implied that the humane and religious care of the poor had not been among the chief works of mercy of pious persons generally, and of the religious orders in particular, for centuries past. But since the suppression of the religious orders, and especially since the rapid increase of population produced by our manufactures, it must be allowed that the State has found great difficulty in adequately supplementing the action of private charity towards the sick, and that private charity has been unequal to the task of systematically supplementing the stern economy of the State.

But this period we may hope is passing, and nothing is now more encouraging to philan-



thropic political economists (for such there are) than the attempts made in every direction to secure such a national organisation as shall reduce to a minimum the preventable sickness among the poor, and reach every needy sufferer, without waste of strength or waste of means.

The present little volume is an attempt to strengthen one corps in that army which is battling with the evils that prey on our great urban populations, or which desolate the rural homes of our agricultural classes.

Completely to appreciate the place of nursing in our body politic needs a little attention. Miss Nightingale first startled this country by making familiar the idea that a cultivated woman of gentle birth could safely leave a wealthy home for the lines of a sickly camp, and staunch the wounds and tend the fevers of an army in the field. She first showed how great a work is here for woman, but at the same time how requisite are training, instruction, and organisation.

Her writings as well as her practice show this. Her "Notes on Nursing,"\* her "Notes

\* "Notes on Nursing: What it Is, and What it is Not."  
By Florence Nightingale. London: New Edition. 1860.

on Hospitals,"\* her remarks in the Report of the Cubic Space Commission † with respect to nursing in workhouses, her regulations for the Nursing School at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, are but parts of a great landmark she has raised in the history of civilization.

On this landmark there seems to be engraved in clear characters, "NURSING IS THE MEDICAL WORK OF WOMAN."

But the nursing there recorded is an art which needs special mental qualities, special culture, and special power of physical endurance.

Nursing is a department of the profession of Medicine and Surgery.

It is incompatible with the ordinary practice of the physician and the surgeon, because there is often implied entire devotion by the nurse to a single patient, and sometimes, indeed, the devotion to a single patient of two or of three nurses.

Nursing has, therefore, become a special subject of education, and the appliances of the Nursing School also are special.

This is at once seen by considering the work

\* "Notes on Lying-in Hospitals. London: 1871.

† Report of Cubic Space Commission, Lond. 1867, p. 64.

that must be daily done in a large hospital ward—

1st. The common work of cleaning, "housemaid's work." This in a room where there are twenty to thirty sick persons must obviously be constant and laborious if the condition of absolute cleanliness is to be maintained in person and bed, in all articles of furniture, and all the vessels and apparatus of whatever kind for daily use.

2ndly. The work of tending the sick themselves in every variety and complication of disease. Wounds to be dressed, posture to be attended to, medicine to be administered, tempers to be soothed, inquiries wisely answered—directions on all these subjects to be received from the physicians and the surgeons with respect to every one, and to be understood, remembered, and acted on, day by day, week by week, the beds never empty, cure or death removing one anxious charge only to be replaced by another—all these demand no light attention, no feeble character.

3rdly. The work of the one organising mind which is to superintend and regulate the steady harmonious action of one or of several such wards.