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Gender, Conflict, and Identity in British Women's Accounts of the Crimean War

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Abstract

This thesis examines women's accounts of the Crimean War to explore the ways that women navigated ideas of femininity in military spaces. It also investigates the relationship between femininity, military space, and British society during the war and its afterlife into the early twentieth century. Rather than treating individuals, such as Mary Seacole, or distinct groups, such as the military hospital nurses, largely separately as much scholarly literature has tended to do, this thesis brings a wide range of individuals, texts, and spaces into dialogue. Drawing on accounts written by soldiers' wives, officers' wives and family, military nurses, and nursing applicants, this thesis follows Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair's approach to the social history of gender relations. It goes beyond considering women's participation in the war in relation to the nineteenth-century ideology of "separate spheres", by considering the diverse networks and discourses that shaped women's lived experiences of the war and their accounts of it. As such, it identifies important interconnections resulting from shared experiences of military spaces and interrogates the nature of individuals' and communities' relationships to nineteenth-century gender ideologies in practice. It also provides insight into the highly subjective nature of women's war experiences, by foregrounding the role that factors such as class, labour, personal relationships, and wider public attention played in shaping these.

In a time when ideology dictated that women were suited to private, domestic lives, the Crimean War provided opportunities and spaces for individuals to renegotiate these parameters. Women were able to navigate ideals of femininity, construct roles for themselves in wartime which could bear little resemblance to the feminine ideal, and even find acceptance for doing so, precisely because the war was experienced and constructed through far more complex social and cultural matrices.

Acknowledgements

At the beginning of my PhD programme, I was searching through my emails when I found one from 2014. I was an A-Level student at the time, seeking advice for my Extended Project Qualification. I had chosen to write an essay on the legacy of Peter the Great's reforms in Russia and had written to several lecturers in Russian history for recommended reading. The only answer I received was from Sarah Badcock. I've never since forgotten that email as, by pure coincidence, Sarah went on to become my supervisor for my undergraduate dissertation, my master's dissertation, and finally for my PhD thesis. She has helped me grow as a researcher and as an individual throughout the majority of my time in higher education, and I will be forever grateful for her support. My second supervisor, Onni Gust, has been no less wonderful. From my master's studies they have encouraged and challenged me in my research and have helped me to develop professionally. Working as their Editorial Assistant for *Journal of British Studies* has been a wonderful opportunity, and I consider myself lucky to class Onni as my colleague. Hearing Sarah and Onni say how much they have enjoyed my project, and even that they have learned so much from it, has often given me the boost that I needed when I doubted my writing. I like to think that it is due to their encouragement that I finish this thesis with a sense of confidence and conviction that my 18-year-old-self, back in 2014, would be proud of.

My thanks extend more broadly to the History department at the University of Nottingham, where I have spent a wonderful seven years of study. In particular, I am grateful to the staff and students who have taken the time to read and discuss my work, including Anna Greenwood, Richard Bates, and David Robinson.

Thank you also to my fellow postgraduate students, with whom I have shared this process. It has been a joy to be a part of such a lively community. The efforts to sustain this community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have sustained me, too. Our online Work-in-Progress seminars, virtual cafes, and the establishment of our online writing group not only

alleviated the monotony and loneliness of our extended period of home working, but also provided fundamental support that I could not have done without.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my family. Thank you to my parents and grandparents for always supporting me throughout my university career. Thank you particularly to my dad for reading every essay, blog post, and chapter I have ever written since my undergraduate degree. And thank you always to Liam. You have been there for me unfailingly and, as I finally reach the end of my university days, knowing that you always will be makes the future—whatever it may hold—seem bright.

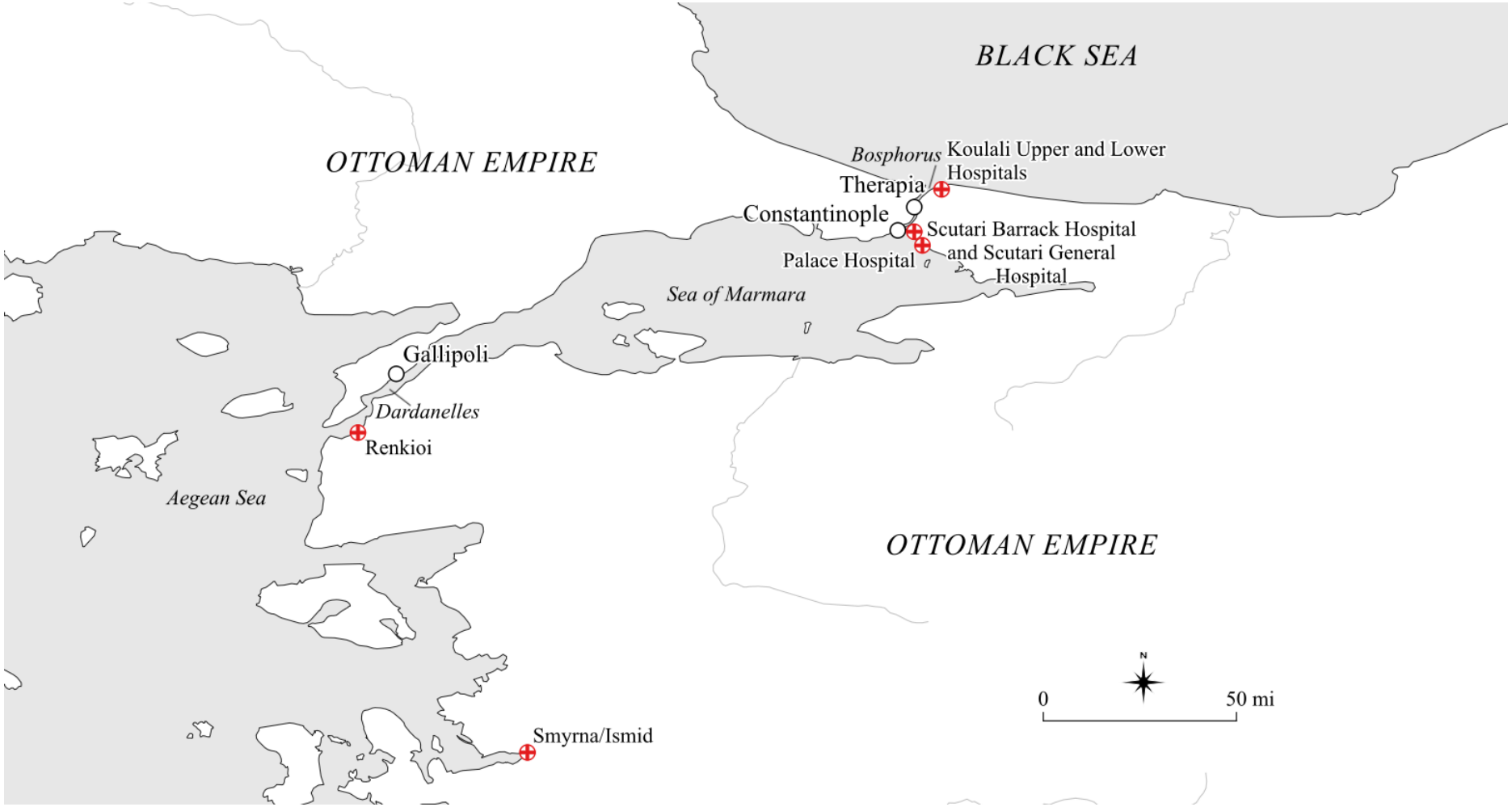
Note on transcription

All transcriptions of archival material are my own unless otherwise stated, except the Register of Nurses. A transcript of this document was kindly provided by the Florence Nightingale Museum. All original punctuation and emphasis has been preserved in transcriptions, but "original emphasis" or "emphasis added" have been indicated in the footnotes for clarity. Original spellings have been maintained and are indicated with the use of [*sic*]. The common spellings of nineteenth-century proper nouns which appear in the source material have been used throughout for consistency, including Sebastopol; Balaklava; Inkerman; Tchernaya; Koulali; Renkioi; Eupatoria; the Redan, Malakoff, and Mamelon batteries. Any other variations in the spellings of these proper nouns in the primary source material has been indicated with the use of [*sic*].

Maps



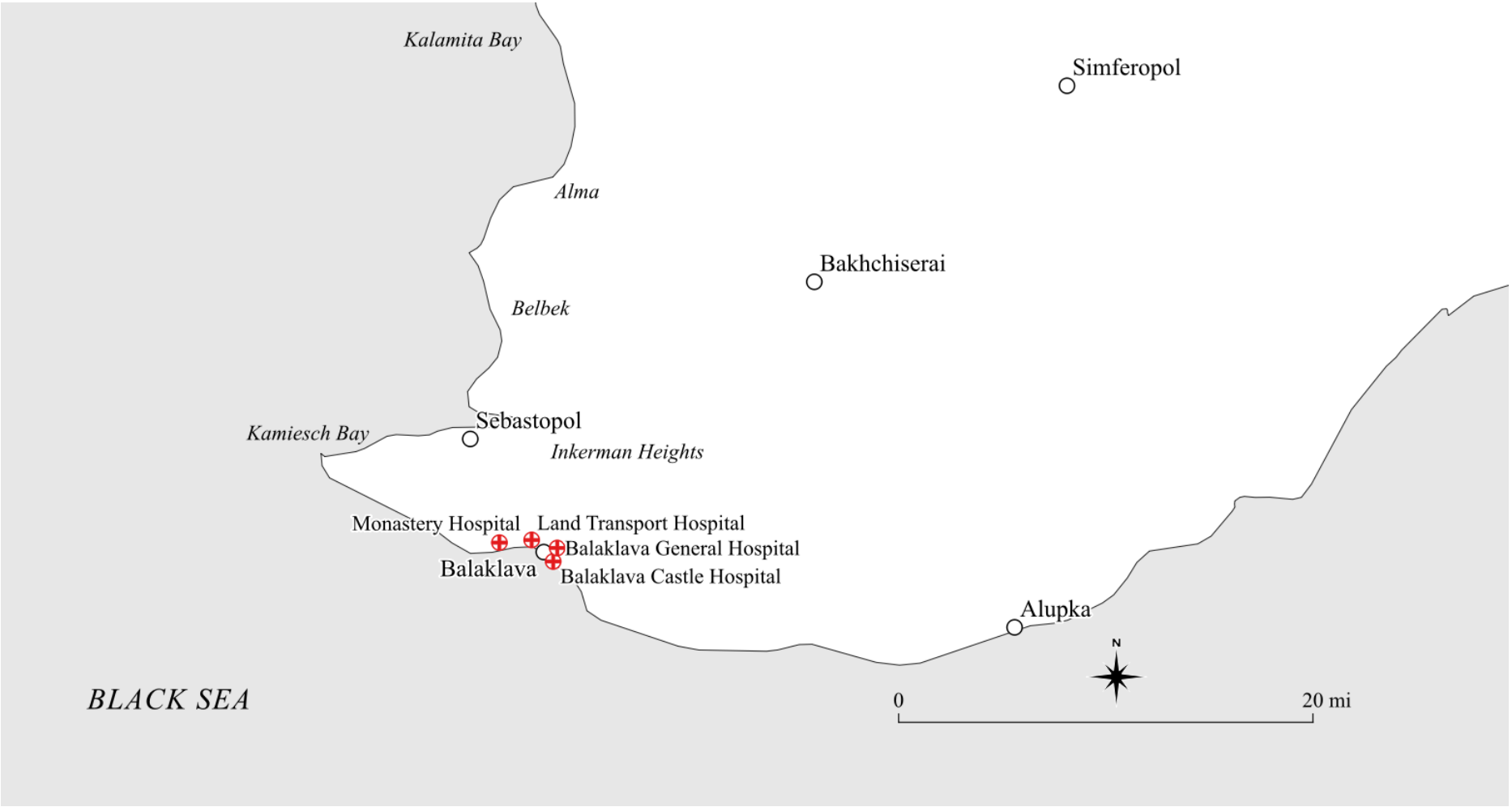
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Introduction

Women and War

In 1855, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* printed a prize essay on the subject of "women and war". Britain had, since March 1854, been embroiled in a war with Russia, now known as the Crimean War. Florence Nightingale had led the first of several bands of nurses to the military hospitals located in Scutari in October 1854, receiving a great deal of public attention through the press as she did so, and the writer of the essay, credited simply as "L.", reflected on the history and present nature of women's participation in war. 'It would be superfluous to prove the remark', the writer stated, 'that, whatever may be "Woman's part in War,"—her office, so related, always existed . . . From the first dawn of civilisation, and through the transit of centuries, that image has been imprinted in the annals of nations, and on the hearts of men'.[1] In scripture, Deborah, Jael, Judith, and the unnamed daughter of Jephthah oversaw, committed, and suffered violent acts of war, while throughout history, 'Amazons of nearly every age start forth'.[2] However, "L." declared,

> The female warriors of antiquity, and the heroines of chivalry, are now lifeless as "figures on arras" . . . What has been magnanimous, great, and appropriate, would now be bizarre and fantastic, if not unfeminine and revolting. Our times *could not* produce Zenobias, and Cleopatras, nor Jaels and Judiths.[3]

Rather, the writer continued,

> The only type . . . of woman's active connection with war which has outlasted the

[1] "L.", 'Woman's Part in War', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 4 (1855), p. 249.
[2] "L.", 'Woman's Part in War', p. 250.
[3] "L.", 'Woman's Part in War', p. 250. Original emphasis.

> various revolutions in states, kingdoms, customs, and domestic life, is that which I have called the pure and divine type; not the result or contingent of changing institutions, but a verity based on the eternal principles of religion, and that beautiful characteristic of the Christian—human love.[4]

The essay subsequently offered praise for the truly Christian, feminine work carried out by Nightingale and the nurses in the hospitals; work that, according to "L.", embodied nineteenth-century women's duties to act as bearers of peace but also to stand as the helpmates of man. Certainly, Nightingale became, and has remained, synonymous with the idea of women's engagement with the Crimean War. Her own actions, and the public image constructed around her, fundamentally reflected the middle-class, feminine ideals that were widely propagated in mid-nineteenth century society, which "L." summarised succinctly. This was all the more the case, as Nightingale's "sacrifice" of her upper-class lifestyle in aid of the sick and wounded was taken as an indication of her innate Christian and feminine goodness. This idealistic view, however, neglected the varied roles of other women who also participated in the Crimean War. They may not have entered into battle like the heroines of old, but most had far less devotional motives and far more varied roles than "L." propagated. From family ties to fighting men, a need for work, and even the desire for travel, women looked to follow the army to the theatre of war as soldiers' wives, officers' wives, nurses, and even tourists. Many, if not most of these women were from a very different social background than the upper-class Nightingale. Even among the parties of nurses who ventured to the military hospitals between October 1854 and September 1855, there were few women who resembled Nightingale socially and none who became the subject of similar extensive acclaim. Instead, these women struggled with the ideals of appropriate femininity, feminine action, and heroism which "L." articulated, but it is those

[4] "L.", 'Woman's Part in War', p. 250.

struggles that provide great and necessary insight into what women's part in the war actually consisted of.

Background to the Crimean War

The Crimean War, known to contemporaries as "the Russian War", began in late 1853 between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, but the conflict's roots lay in the political concerns of the European powers extending back to at least the 1820s. The Ottoman Empire became known as the "sick man of Europe" during this period, as its hold over an ethnically and religiously diverse expanse of territory weakened socially, economically, and politically. This deterioration became a crucial concern for the European powers, including Britain, which sought overland railway access to the Far East, and which faced the possibility that Russian expansion into Ottoman territory would threaten those routes. Known as the "Eastern Question", this problem of Ottoman decline became a core feature of British and broader European politics.[5] Tensions ultimately came to a head over a religious dispute. The Holy Places in Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire, had been opened to Christians in the 1830s, provoking rivalries between Christian Churches that only intensified over the subsequent years. By the 1850s, Orthodox Russia and Catholic France levelled competing claims to authority over these sites, and the Ottoman Sultan officially granted rights to the Catholics in 1852. Russia attempted to safeguard the interests of the Orthodox Church through the Menshikov mission in early 1853, but this diplomatic mission also sought to affirm the Ottomans' cooperation in Russia's expansion, by securing the former's agreement to close off the Dardanelles at Russia's command. After the Ottoman Empire refused, Russia occupied its Danubian principalities and the Ottoman Empire declared war in July. Britain and France sent

[5] W. Baumgart, *The Crimean War 1853–1856* (London, 1999), pp. 3–8.

their own fleets towards the Dardanelles as a precaution while they attempted to broker a peace, but both joined the war—allied with the Ottoman Empire—at the end of March 1854.[6]

British forces departed from England, travelling to Scutari via Malta and Gallipoli throughout the spring and summer. The first British and French troops arrived at Varna in Bulgaria, then part of the Ottoman Empire, in June 1854. The Russian forces had been concentrated at Silistra, on the Danube, but retreated unexpectedly to the Russian naval base at Sebastopol, in the Crimea, in late July. When the remainder of the allied forces arrived in Varna in August, there was a period of inactivity, a severe outbreak of cholera, and a fire on 10 August which destroyed many supplies, as the allied commanders organised the armies' removal to the Crimea. The forces finally embarked across the Black Sea on 7 September, landing north of Sebastopol at Eupatoria a week later. It was during their march south that, on 20 September, the first battle took place—the Battle of Alma. The allies undertook a confused charge across the River Alma, and it was only their superior weaponry and firepower—notably their Minié rifles—that allowed them to gain the upper hand.[7] Although the battle ended in a Russian retreat, the allies did not pursue them to attack Sebastopol from the north. Instead, they marched south, setting up camp around Balaklava and beginning the construction of trenches and batteries, in order to commence their siege of the city. The battles of Balaklava and Inkerman swiftly followed, on 25 October and 4 November. Ostensibly allied victories, these were costly encounters; the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaklava is still remembered as a British military disaster. The casualties mounted, stretching the ill-prepared British army medical department to breaking point as disease ran rampant throughout the army and the men suffered the effects of the army's unpreparedness in the form of malnutrition and exposure.

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[6] Baumgart, *The Crimean War*, pp. 8–16. For a detailed account of these religious-political disputes, and the additional role of the press directing British political and popular support for the war, see chapter 1–5 in O. Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London, 2011).
[7] See Figes, *Crimea*, pp. 208–18.

While women were sent out as nurses in October 1854, as these conditions came to light in British newspapers, a number of women were already at the scene. Soldiers' and officers' wives had travelled with the army from England to Varna and, finally, to the Crimea, living close to the front lines. Many went on to suffer the hardships inflicted by a severe winter as the allies continued their siege of Sebastopol. More women joined them in the spring of 1855, as the siege drew on and attracted officers' families and tourists. A number of women were with the army until Sebastopol finally fell in September 1855, marking the defeat of the Russians and the effective conclusion of the war, which was finalised by the Treaty of Paris on 30 March 1856.

Historiography

The Crimean War has been the subject of increasing academic attention from the perspectives of social and cultural history, which seek to expand understandings of personal and collective experiences of the war as well as the war's wider significance in areas as diverse as sound history, contemporary literature, material culture, popular memory, and national identity.[8] The specific study of the involvement of women has largely been considered in terms of three broad, though not mutually exclusive, categories. In the first, the focus is on military nursing. Florence Nightingale herself has been the subject of numerous studies and biographies.[9] The broader military nursing venture which she led, and for which she remains so well known, has often been situated as an important step within the development of civilian and military nursing

[8] See A. Massie, *The National Army Museum Book of the Crimean War: The Untold Stories* (2nd edn, London, 2005); S. Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2009); G. Williams (ed.), *Hearing the Crimean War: Wartime Sound and the Unmaking of Sense* (New York, NY, 2019). See also *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 20 (2015). This issue, "Charting the Crimean War: Contexts, Nationhood, and Afterlives" explores the significance of the war through articles on photography, literature, medicine, military reform, and the creation of soldier heroes.

[9] For an overview of these biographies, see M. Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend, 200th Anniversary Edition* (London, 2020), pp. 525–45.

more broadly, most notably by Anne Summers, Carol Helmstadter, and Judith Godden.[10] Scholarship has also begun to reclaim the experiences and promote the participation of a broader array of women in the work of nursing during the Crimean War, including that of the Irish Roman Catholic nuns and lower-class women involved in the British effort.[11]

The second category is devoted to Mary Seacole, the Jamaican-Scottish "doctress" and "mother" figure to the British soldiers. Her experiences, contemporary renown as a woman of colour, and, most of all, her documentation of her experiences in an autobiography, published in 1857, have attracted academic attention across literary and cultural studies of nineteenth-century discourses of race and Englishness, colonialism, and Black female writers in particular.[12] Increasing public awareness of Britain's colonial past and the role of Black

[10] A. Summers, 'Pride and Prejudice: Ladies and Nurses in the Crimean War', *History Workshop Journal*, 16/1 (1983), pp. 33–56; A. Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses, 1854–1914* (London, 1988); A. Summers, 'A Home from Home — Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century', in S. Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women* (2nd edn, London, 2013), pp. 33–63; C. Helmstadter, 'Building a New Nursing Service: Respectability and Efficiency in Victorian England', *Albion*, 35/4 (2004), pp. 590–621; C. Helmstadter, 'Shifting Boundaries: Religion, Medicine, Nursing and Domestic Service in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Nursing Inquiry*, 16/2 (2009), pp. 133–43; C. Helmstadter, and J. Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale, 1815–1899* (Farnham, 2011); C. Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale: Nursing on the Crimean War Battlefields* (Manchester, 2019).

[11] See for example M. Luddy (ed.), *The Crimean Journals of the Sisters of Mercy, 1854–1856* (Dublin, 2004); J. S. G. Wells and M. Bergin, 'British Icons and Catholic Perfidy – Anglo-Saxon Historiography and the Battle for Crimean War Nursing', *Nursing Inquiry*, 23/1 (2016), pp. 42–51; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*.

[12] See S. Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes: The Negotiation of Gender, Race and Location in "Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands"', *Globalization and Gender*, 26/4 (2001), pp. 949-81; R. Frederick, 'Creole Performance in Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands', *Gender History*, 15/3 (2003), pp. 487–506; A. Rupprecht, 'Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands (1857): Colonial Identity and the Geographical Imagination', in D. Lambert and A. Lester (eds), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 176–203; A. Poon, 'Comic Acts of (Be)Longing: Performing Englishness in Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35/2 (2007), pp. 501–16.

individuals in British history have also seen her promoted for a popular audience as Nightingale's rival, "another Nightingale", or even as the "Black Nightingale".[13]

The third category incorporates a broader array of women and their experiences, most notably army wives, and most often in the form of trade histories. Some situate the Crimean War within broader patterns in the changing relationship between women and the British Army, but all tell the story—and it is certainly an engaging one—of women's travels with the army and their lives in time of war, describing their joys and their struggles.[14] In addition to Mary Seacole, Frances Duberly, a young officer's wife, commonly takes centre-stage. Her voice is the most profuse, documented as it is in her published *Journal of the Russian War* (1855) and in her extensive letters written to her family throughout the two years of the war, but it is also the most verbose, as her vibrant character shines through in both mediums.[15] Typically supplementing these central figures are a number of other upper-class ladies and soldiers'

[13] See R. Bates, 'Florence on Film: Representations of Nightingale in Cinema and on Television', in M. K. Harmes, B. Harmes, and M. A. Harmes (eds), *The Nurse in Popular Media: Critical Essays* (Jefferson, NC, 2021), p. 19. Mary Seacole has increasingly featured in British popular references to the Crimean War and to the history of nursing. She has featured in the educational entertainment series *Horrible Histories*, and appeared on postage stamps in 2006. Most recently, she has featured in an episode of popular television show *Dr. Who* ("War of the Sontarans", aired 7 November 2021), and popular podcast "You're Dead to Me" (aired 5 November 2021). She is set to be the subject of a biopic, *Seacole*. A biography, written by Helen Rappaport, is also due for publication in 2022.

[14] See V. Bamfield, *On the Strength: Story of the British Army Wife* (London, 1975); N. T. S. J. Williams, *Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady: The Army Wife and Camp Follower since 1660* (London, 1988); A. Venning, *Following the Drum: The Lives of Army Wives and Daughters, Past and Present* (London, 2006); H. Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies: The Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London, 2007); M. Gillies, *Army Wives from Crimea to Afghanistan: The Real Lives of the Women Behind the Men in Uniform* (London, 2016). On French army wives, including during the Crimean War, see T. Cardoza, *Intrepid Women: Cantinières and Vivandières of the French Army* (Bloomington, IN, 2010). On the subject of women's relationships to armies more broadly, see B. C. Hacker and M. Vining (eds), *A Companion to Women's Military History,* History of Warfare, vol. 74 (Leiden, 2012).

[15] See E. E. P. Tisdall, *Mrs Duberly's Campaigns* (London, 1963); P. Compton, *Colonel's Lady & Camp-Follower: The Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London, 1970).

wives, some of whom wrote their own accounts.[16] These histories serve to highlight the incredible diversity among the women involved in the Crimean War, in a way that the scholarship on Crimean War nursing has begun to embrace, and that scholarship on Mary Seacole has yet to incorporate. In the latter case, the focus has overwhelmingly been placed upon the ways in which Seacole used her text to construct her own identity, and she is often studied in isolation.

It is a notable trend in the broader histories of women in the Crimean War, however, that they implicitly cling to a narrative of public–masculine and private– or domestic–feminine divisions of space and conduct, in both ideology and lived experience. As such, the women who feature in them can appear wilful, even eccentric, as they command a space of agency. The existence of distinct histories of Crimean War nursing, the focus on Seacole and her text, and a lack of critique directed at the popular framing of women's participation has meant that the question of how women's diverse engagement in the Crimean War intersected with contemporary gender ideals *and* with lived experiences of those gender ideals across society has gone largely unexplored. So too has the question of what impact these convergences had—and continue to have—on understandings of military space, femininity, identity, and even the form of women's participation with the British "imagined community".[17] These are the questions that will be explored throughout this thesis.

Sources and Concepts

It has long since been recognised in academic scholarship that the rigid ideology of "separate spheres" for men and women, and the espousal of women's innate suitability for domestic life,

[16] Compton, *Colonel's Lady & Camp-Follower*; Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies*; Gillies, *Army Wives from Crimea to Afghanistan.* See also G. Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary: The Secret Journals of a Victorian Lady* (London, 2017).
[17] See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Rev. edn, London, 2006), pp. 6–7, 12, 36.

was not so sharply replicated in practice during the nineteenth century.[18] Separate spheres ideology is still acknowledged to have been a guiding middle-class principle and a central tenet of British national and imperial identity; it was certainly one which was articulated in law and social custom, as well as throughout religious literature, conduct books, novels, and the popular press more broadly.[19] It also manifested down the social hierarchy. Relationships between the middle and lower classes were characterised by the former's supervision of the latter. As such, middle-class philanthropic and employment practices saw the principles of separate spheres ideology imposed onto lower-class lives, while the pressures of industrialisation saw increasingly gendered divisions of labour emerge among the lower classes themselves.[20] However, studies have increasingly challenged the boundaries imposed by this ideology, by focusing on women's lived experiences, as well as the spaces and forms of women's action. The emphasis has overwhelming been placed upon the middle classes, though Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair have articulated the broader need for such shifts in social histories of gender well.[21] As they have stated of the separate spheres thesis, 'as an interpretation of the lives of

[18] See L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-Class, 1780–1850* (3rd edn, London, 2019). Davidoff and Hall established that separate spheres was a crucial ideology, influenced by Evangelicalism, which contributed to the formation of the middle class in the early nineteenth century.

[19] See M. Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London, 1989); E. Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture*, Reading Women Writing (Ithaca, NY, 1995).

[20] See D. W. Elliott, *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville, VA, 2002); A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, CA, 1995).

[21] Simon Morgan has argued that middle-class women's participation in public life—through philanthropy, cultural projects, education, and the increasing politicisation of these with the rise of the women's movement—rendered them key to the development of middle-class identity. More broadly, it deconstructed strict boundaries between male and female public and private spaces, and signified women's significant contribution to the construction of civic structures and culture: S. Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2007). Such recognition of the potential for feminine-public space has seen middle-class women's lives examined in far more detail in relation to the home and family, travel and mobility, and work.

men and women in the nineteenth century, it is far from being the whole story'.[22] Rather,

> Men and women were enmeshed in a matrix of circulating discourses, some of which competed with separate spheres, cut across it, supplemented it or even supplanted it. Moreover, discourses could be resisted, subverted and refused; material factors and individual experience played an important role in shaping the ways in which representations were absorbed, interpreted and challenged . . . One needs to look for the diverse influences which shaped men and women's experiences and identities, and one needs to restore agency and self-reflexivity to individuals.[23]

This study will draw principally upon documents and accounts written by soldiers' wives, officers' wives and family members, military nurses, women who applied to be military nurses, and upon Mary Seacole's autobiography. In doing so, it will attempt to reconcile the extant approaches to women in the Crimean war in light of the "diverse influences" and individual agency which Gordon and Nair champion in analysis of lived experiences. While these sources refer to the period of British involvement in the Crimean War, from 1854 to 1856, the documents themselves—a mixture of contemporary correspondence, published accounts, and private diaries—date from between 1854 and 1908. As such, the scope of the study extends to include the afterlife not only of the Crimean War but of its female participants into the early twentieth century. These women were not exclusively of middle-class status, but all were situated within complex and, often, shared networks of personal relationships, social and institutional structures, and conflicting ideologies pertaining to women and to war, which shaped their experiences of the Crimean War and their identities as British women in light of these. It is by examining these networks and their intersections that we can move beyond

[22] E. Gordon and G. Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, CT, 2003), p. 3.
[23] Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, pp. 2–3.

particularly classed understandings of gender roles and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between women and war.

Space forms a significant theme throughout, particularly the spaces occupied by the military and those that constituted the war zone. The term "war zone" is used to refer principally to the south-western tip of the Crimean peninsula, specifically the area between and around Balaklava harbour and the city of Sebastopol. This was not only the main theatre of military operations, but the area where most regiments were stationed throughout the duration of the siege of Sebastopol, and the space that women most commonly documented when writing about their experiences of the war. Before the war broke out, the Crimea itself had received little attention in Britain, and relatively little was known about it. As it became evident that the Crimea would form the war's main arena, it assumed some increased visibility in the contemporary popular consciousness. Articles in popular publications discussed the Crimea's people, landscape, and culture as the war progressed, sometimes drawing upon the few travel accounts that had been published to the 1850s to do so.[24] As the war progressed and popular papers across the country reported on its events and, notably, its mismanagement, the key locations throughout the Crimea entered into household vocabularies across Britain. Letters from officers, soldiers, and their families were reproduced in those same publications, which were themselves sent to the soldiers and civilians in the war zone. This dialogue was crucial

[24] See, for example, 'Baktchi-sarai and the Tartars of the Crimea', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 37 (1855), pp. 279–88; 'Simpheropol: Capital of the Crimea', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 37 (1855), pp. 539–50. Notable travel accounts of the Crimea published to 1854 include E. C. Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven, to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandebourg, Anspach, and Bareith* (London, 1789); L. Oliphant, *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852, with a Voyage down the Volga, and a Tour through the Country Od the Don Cossacks* (New York, NY, 1853). With popular attention focused on the Crimea, another account remembering a journey through the Crimea in the 1830s was published during the war by politician and soldier, William FitzGerald-de Ros, who briefly served as Quartermaster-General in early 1854: W. L. L. F. de Ros, *Journal of a Tour in the Principalities, Crimea, and Countries Adjacent to the Black Sea in the Years 1835–36* (London, 1855).

not only for the formation of popular knowledge and opinion on the war, the war zone, and the Crimea in Britain, but also for maintaining connections between the British public and the army at all levels of society, and for constructions of the war and its spaces among those men and women at the scene. As such, I employ Doreen Massey's concept of space as constructed through social relations that are 'stretched out', and of place as 'a particular articulation of those relations'.[25] Constructions of class and gender relations constitute significant aspects within those networks, 'in their very construction as culturally specific ideas – in terms both of the conceptual nature of that construction and of its substantive content – and in the overlapping and interplaying of the sets of characteristics and connotations with which each is associated'.[26] Women's experiences of the war and their sense of identity were connected to the network of social relationships and ideologies they encountered in the immediate environment of the war zone and wider military space—spaces that women occupied and experienced which were dominated by the military presence or by military authority. They were also always articulated in relation to social networks extending back to Britain, and the culturally constructed nature of gender roles and relationships across these.

In tracing their navigation of space, however, it has been necessary to attend to the ways in which women were restrained by the networks and individuals with whom they intersected, specifically with others'—usually men's—contradictory views on war, space, and women arising from the persistent influence of separate spheres ideology. As Massey states, the formation of space through social relations implies 'the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox and antagonism'.[27] Individuals' experiences of the spaces of the Crimean War, therefore, were influenced partly by their subjectivity in relation to the

[25] D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), pp. 2, 5.
[26] Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, p. 2.
[27] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 3.

separate spheres ideology, which women's presence and actions during the Crimean War could challenge and subvert. Therefore, I also want to draw upon Anne Digby's concept of "social borderlands". A tool for understanding and analysing nineteenth-century gender relations, these borderlands represent spaces of flexibility within social ideologies otherwise characterised by binaries, in which Victorian values could be 'silently transgressed' by women, but which still held the potential for conflict when their reconfigurations overtly threatened 'masculine or patriarchal strongholds'.[28] Women's actions in these spaces and the conflicts that they encountered as a consequence of their movement through and occupancy of them signify important dialogues taking place. Women's experiences of the war impacted their self-perceptions, their framing of community, and their relationship to and reconfigurations of ideas of Britishness, class, and femininity. However, experiences of the war did not fully facilitate women's inclusion into the military structures in operation throughout the war zone; for the other occupants of these spaces and wider networks beyond them could react in ways which upheld the more binary values of separate spheres and restrained women's autonomy. It is not my intention here to argue that Crimean War experiences represented any significant shift in nineteenth century power relationships, but to demonstrate that those power relationships offered opportunities for women within the context of war.

Chapter Outline

A difficulty that became apparent at an early stage of this study was the issue of how to navigate the relationship between women's experiences of war and their representations of those experiences in the source material. Roy Scranton has suggested that 'the fact that accounts of war are authored', in the sense that they are always carefully constructed representations of

[28] A. Digby, 'Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 78 (1992), pp. 198, 210.

war experiences, 'should lead one away from conjectures about "war" as an experience and toward the critical subject of war as a discourse'.[29] It has become evident while researching this project that war, discourse, and experience cannot be divorced from one another. They are, in fact, intimately connected. War is both experienced and discursively constructed in texts, in dialogue with the discursive construction of war and individuals' subjectivity in culture and society. Equally, textual, social, and cultural discourses work to shape the experience of war. Consequently, Part I of this thesis emphasises women's experiences of military space, while always bearing in mind the ways in which these were culturally and textually constructed and restricted. In particular, it will explore the ways in which femininity was understood, reconfigured, articulated, and performed with the army and across the war zone. Chapter 1 explores individual women's understandings of their own femininity, which was renegotiated amid their close relationship to and identification with the armed forces in military space. Analysing women's accounts of living and travelling with the men across the war zone foregrounds the significance of women's social experiences. These encompassed multiple types of social relationships and were notably impacted by both class and military hierarchy, as a consequence of women's location between civilian and military spheres. Their resulting articulations of "military femininity" reflect the shared elements of women's war experiences, but they also encapsulate the ways in which individuals' experiences of military spaces and communities prompted them to adhere to, subvert, and relinquish specific, and possibly more "conventional" or expected aspects of femininity and feminine behaviour.

Chapter 2 addresses women's battlefield tourism. The very fact of middle- and upper-class women in particular being "out of place" on the battlefield, viewing it from a touristic vantage point, created multiple meanings of the space. Middle- and upper-class women

[29] R. Scranton, 'Review of Kate McLoughlin, Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq', *Partial Answers*, 11/2 (2013), p. 352.

constructed the battlefield as a space they were entitled to venture through for leisure, and which they had authority over as actors and commentators. The limitations of these rationalisations were exposed, however, when considered in terms of the wider military and touristic networks that converged in the war zone. The different meanings attached to the practice of collecting souvenirs from the battlefield by different groups who participated in it, and the ire that women's souvenir collection could inspire in particular among military men, foreground the contested nature of the battlefield and ideals of femininity in relation to it. Women's presence in military space emerges as a significant contemporary problem, which these privileged women consciously subverted as part of their own touristic experience and identity construction.

In Part II, discourses of the Crimean War specifically relating to women's participation take on an increased significance, though again always in relation to women's experiences of the war. The chapters in this section shift the focus back to Britain, to the "feminine" discourses of the war and its legacy. Chapter 3 examines the recruitment of Crimean War nurses in their contemporary social context, highlighting the relationship between normative social ideals of gender and class, women's labour, and war during this period of national and—for many—personal crisis. Taking a prosopographical approach to the applications of hopeful nurses, this chapter shifts the focus away from the politics of nursing in military hospital spaces. Instead, it posits the establishment of female military nursing during the Crimean War as fundamentally inflected by the classed and gendered concerns around women's labour held by the upper-class organisers of the venture. At the same time, it highlights expansive constructs of women's participation in the war through caregiving and begins to outline the ways in which these outlooks intersected and ultimately manifested within the military hospitals.

Finally, chapter 4 explores the place of women in the legacy of the war, as it was constructed in the British popular press and published accounts of the conflict, through the

figure of the Crimean heroine. Originally formed around Nightingale and appropriated by a few individuals who successfully met the terms of this cultural elevation, over time the boundaries denoting the Crimean heroine broadened. Amid changing ideas of heroism, gender roles, gendered labour, and articulations of the war in popular memory, by the early twentieth century the title of "Crimean heroine" represented public recognition of the wartime services rendered by a far broader array of women.

By framing the events and spaces of the war in relation to their own everyday lives and relationships, women's accounts of the Crimean War richly document the ways in which war impacted their lives and identities across boundaries of rank, class, race, labour, and the civilian-military divide. They even document the ways in which women sought to impact aspects of the war across these same margins. Examining their multiple perspectives together foregrounds "woman's part in war" as considerably more problematic and changeable than "L." proposed. It imbues women's roles with highly subjective meanings and situates this relationship between women and war within wider socio-cultural negotiations of femininity and identity.

Part I: Women and Femininity Across the War Zone

Chapter 1: Navigating Military Femininity

> I am not coming home. I could not live at home. I should suffocate. You may say this is all bosh – but I assure you it is truth. I dread going back. Fancy coming from being the only woman back into all the artificial muslin rags – conventionalities and slanders – the Fashions and the heartgrindings [*sic*] of English sociality – after being out here on a fresh horse – free as air – to come & go – & do what you please . . . Beside – upon my honor [*sic*] I wouldn't leave Henry, as if I did I believe in my heart he would die – and I couldn't rest – in short I won't leave him – so there's an end of that.[1]

Frances Duberly wrote these lines to her sister from the Crimea in March 1855, after almost eleven months spent on campaign with her husband, Captain Henry Duberly, the Paymaster of the 8th Hussars. Her statements are interesting for a number of reasons. She was obviously keen to remain with the army. Though this extract is a particularly strong expression of her feelings on this matter, it is far from the only example. She felt a great sense of personal freedom from much of the proscribed behaviour expected of her as a middle-class woman in England. Yet she was still bound to her husband not only through ties of affection, but also through implied notions of wifely duty that suggest she saw her relationship, and thus her access to the freedoms she so relished, through the standard contemporary framework of gender relations that foregrounded a woman's ability to provide emotional support to her husband. Duberly's uneven adherence to prevalent cultural expectations in the army camp suggests that

[1] London, British Library (BL), Frances Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 March 1855, fol. 126. Original emphasis. All letters are between Frances Duberly and her sister, Selina Marx, unless otherwise stated.

some gendered ideologies were more compatible with military contexts than others. The reasons for this warrant investigation.

Duberly's sense of personal freedom was matched by an actual bodily freedom. In the days before writing the lines quoted above, Duberly enjoyed pastimes more suited to the English countryside than a war zone. She recorded in her account, *Journal Kept During the Russian War,* published in late 1855, that she had attended 'the first race of the season', recounting the day's wins in some detail, and that she had joined a riding party on an outing to the Monastery of St George.[2] Her ability to enjoy the Crimean country in this way seems at odds with the nature of this context; the Crimea was, after all, an active war zone in March 1855, but Duberly was acting in accordance with behavioural norms among the officers in the Crimean camps. Organised outdoor pursuits had an important social function. They were a display of officers' class identity and maintained morale by preserving a familiar social calendar.[3] The fact that Duberly shared in these entertainments, apparently without contest, invites one to question the extent to which intersecting categories of identity—particularly gender and class—served as tools for social ordering and social identification in this incongruous space of extreme danger and familiar living.

Finally, Duberly's emphatic assertion that she was the only woman with the army begs scrutiny. It is unknown precisely how many women followed the British army to the Crimea, but it is certain that they did so in some numbers. Soldiers' wives in particular were a more numerous group than officers' wives: thirteen left England with Duberly's own regiment, yet she seldom acknowledged any soldier's wife during her sojourn with the army.[4] Neither did

[2] F. I. Duberly, *Journal Kept during the Russian War, from the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol* (London, 1855), pp. 171–73. For a discussion of Duberly's self-construction in her published *Journal*, see 'Frances Duberly: A Failed Heroine' in chapter 4.
[3] Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies*, p. 197.
[4] Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies,* p. 33.

she mention Mary Seacole, the celebrated Jamaican-Scottish "doctress". Mary Seacole travelled to the Crimea in the spring of 1855 and achieved fame among the army and the British public as "Mother Seacole". She established a canteen, the British Hotel, near the headquarters of the main army camp before Sebastopol and provided medical care and supplies for the men. Duberly's meaning would have been obvious to her sister, as the two took for granted their own social position. It requires more explicit attention from the modern reader: she was not the only woman present but claimed to be the only woman of her class. Born into a prominent Wiltshire banking family, raised in her family's country homes, and educated at school in Wycombe, Frances Duberly was every inch the upper-middle-class woman. But Duberly was the youngest of nine children and her husband Henry, the youngest son of a landowner, had little inheritance. As such, they both sought advancement and respectability through his military career. His role as Paymaster was a relatively safe, non-combatant position and the 8th Hussars was a fashionable regiment. However, the cost of the officer's lifestyle was a source of anxiety to them both with little other private income.[5] Duberly's ostensible confidence in her own class identity and effective erasure of other women through her general non-acknowledgement of difference reaffirms the importance of class to the construction and maintenance of her social identity in the army camp. However, it also raises questions about the experiences of army women who lived outside of Duberly's social strata, for some of their accounts also survive.

Elizabeth Evans, for example, travelled to the Crimea with her husband, William, a soldier in the 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot. Like Frances Duberly, Evans' experiences of the war zone were shaped by her marital relationship and class status. As such, they provide a sharp contrast. It appears that Elizabeth Evans was born in Clifton, Bristol, the eldest child of a shipwright. Her husband William, a private, was from the same parish, and they married

[5] F. I. Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War: Journal and Letters from the Crimea, 1854–6*, C. Kelly (ed.) (Oxford, 2007), pp. xii–xvi.

in 1851.[6] Evans lived and worked among the rank-and-file in barracks for over two years before embarking for the Crimea. Once there, she shared in the desperate hardships inflicted by rampant disease, inadequate provisions, and a severe winter. These challenges were not part of Duberly's experience in the same way, as she resided aboard ships in Balaklava harbour and later in a wooden hut and had relatives of means in England to send necessities. Yet, there are some similarities in their stories. Evans felt as exceptional as Duberly, having 'lived such a life as few women in existence can speak about'.[7] She also claimed a dedication to the army and a camaraderie with the men which, through their shared suffering, positioned her first and foremost as an active participant in camp life and the regimental community.

For these women who were intimately connected to the army, travelling with the men and living at the front for prolonged periods amid scenes of active warfare, military life necessitated and facilitated forms of femininity that competed with or contradicted the prominent middle-class ideal of the domestic woman. The spaces that women travelled through were dictated by military interests and were saturated with particular notions of military masculinity, which impacted women's responses to that environment in significant, and often similar, ways. At the same time, the accounts of women from vastly different social backgrounds throws the diversity of the female war experience into relief. The Crimean War

[6] An 1861 census record lists both Elizabeth Evans' (laundress) and William Evans' (Chelsea Pensioner) birthplace as Clifton, Bristol. They were living with Evans' unmarried sister, Mary Jones, younger by four years: London, The National Archives (TNA), *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861*, RG 9/1727, fol. 49, p. 34. An 1841 census record lists Elizabeth Jones, age 12, and her family living in Clifton, including a sister, Mary A. Jones, younger by four years, and parents William (a shipwright) and Ann Jones: TNA, *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1841*, HO107/378, Book: 3, fol. 51, p. 11. Evans stated that she and William were married in 1851: E. Evans, 'Survivors' Tales of Great Events, No. XLII.—A Soldier's Wife in the Crimea, From the Narrative of Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, Late 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot, as Told to Walter Wood', *The Royal Magazine* (1908), p. 265. A marriage record exists for William Evans (a soldier) and Elizabeth Jones, daughter of William Jones (a shipwright). They were married on 1 December 1851 in Clifton: Bristol, Bristol Archives (BA), *Bristol Church of England Parish Registers*, P/St.GB/R/2/b, p. 144.
[7] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.

challenged socio-cultural "norms" of femininity as women of different social classes who travelled, lived, and worked with the British army reframed their femininity, and adopted distinctive, but personal, "military femininities".[8]

Expanding Military Femininity

The Crimean War was the first experience of conflict for many of the women who witnessed and left accounts of it. It is doubtful whether anything could have prepared them for the life they faced, as there were considerable obstacles from the very beginning. Women's role in relation to the British army—its hierarchies, daily living, wartime operations, and relationship to civilian society—was a thorny subject. On the one hand, the British military framework often broadly reflected Victorian attitudes towards gender and class relations. Although marriage was not the only means through which women came into sustained contact with the army, it was as wives that women predominantly experienced army life. In this role, women performed essential supporting tasks for the army. Soldiers' wives often acted as cooks and laundresses in exchange for pay that would supplement their husbands' meagre incomes.[9] Officers' wives also mimicked the forms and function of social supervision employed by their civilian counterparts, by overseeing soldiers' wives' living spaces and superintending the few

[8] The nurses who worked during the Crimean War will not be included in this chapter, as military hospital space functioned significantly differently from spaces of military living in the army camps. As chapter 3 will intimate, and other work has shown, hospital spaces were tightly controlled by military and medical authorities, and women's presence there was policed further within familiar civilian frameworks of social and labour relations. See Summers, *Angels and Citizens*, pp. 48–61. Moreover, the military femininity discussed here was not shared by nurses, whose labour and relationships to the soldiery rested on discourses of female caregiving that little incorporated military culture. Chapter 4 will demonstrate that this caregiving was incorporated as a part of soldiers' wives' roles in the popular memory of the war, but the values of military femininity did not undergo a similar diffusion to other women. Rather, they remained particular to army women such as those discussed in this chapter.

[9] However, the sexual division of labour was not as pronounced as in civilian society. The military regulations which governed soldiers' relationships with women, particularly marriage, produced a huge gender imbalance, while the army's need to be self-sufficient saw soldiers take on roles that might otherwise be considered a woman's domain.

barrack hospitals and educational establishments. Social structures in army barracks were not only formed around rank, but around the same rhetorics of class, gender, and morality that structured civilian hierarchies.[10] On the other hand, the military frequently came into conflict with changing social values, particularly when focused on the figure of the lower-class wife. The army's interest in the control of its men for the sake of military efficiency clashed with middle-class standards of Christian welfare and morality, which focused on lower-class women as dependents, but also as potential mediums of domestic and cultural reform.[11] Concerns about lower-class morality, women's work, and domesticity clashed with the realities of women's military living and military authorities' attitudes towards them. Only official wives—those who married with the permission of the regiment's commanding officer and who were consequently considered to be "on the strength"—could reside in barracks. However, very little provision was made for them: married couples, like Elizabeth Evans and her husband, often shared rooms with other soldiers, possibly separated by a curtain. Furthermore, only six official wives per one-hundred men could accompany a regiment on campaign. Unofficial wives received no military or government recognition or aid, while those official wives left behind when regiments were stationed abroad were expected to rely on poor relief from their husband's parish. It was only during the Crimean War, when an official committee was formed to

[10] M. Trustram, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 105–108.

[11] Scholars, such as Katherine McKenna, have begun to look beyond the barrack setting, to the nature of army policy towards lower-class soldiers' wives and its impact on their lives at colonial outposts. These were characterised by a similar marginalisation of soldiers' wives by military authorities, and by "home" society: K. M. J. McKenna, '"My Own Character Is Thank God above Suspicion": Soldier's Wives with The Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment and Social Values in Mid-Nineteenth-Century British North America', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 49/100 (2016), pp. 481–82.

investigate barrack accommodation, that the issue of provision for women was seriously discussed.[12]

The official non-recognition of women's contributions in particular created a lasting divide between women's own self-perceptions and their ambiguous position under military policy. This tension can be found in other military contexts and has formed a prominent component of recent literature on officers' wives in the nineteenth-century American army, as scholars have analysed the ways in which women's written records demonstrate an active denial of their official marginality. Michele Nacy, for example, found that the middle-class principles of the "Cult of True Womanhood" did not translate into American officers' wives' experiences on the US frontier. This was an environment that not only fundamentally challenged many principles of private and submissive womanhood, but also made the attainment of the separate spheres domestic ideal impossible.[13] Instead, these wives adapted the values of their middle-class upbringings to their domestic lives with the army—over which women had little or no personal claim or control—and in doing so came to identify with army culture, creating a distinct role for themselves within it.[14] Their attachment to the military was often lasting as they came to view themselves as integral "members of the regiment".[15] This identification, Anni Baker has subsequently argued, was not only at the centre of army culture, but involved such a pervasive and genuine acceptance of military values and of the military lifestyle to be identified as a distinct "Cult of Army Womanhood".[16]

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[12] Committee on Barrack Accommodation, *Report from an Official Committee on Barrack Accommodation for the Army; with the Minutes of Evidence* (London: War Department, 1855), pp. iv, 15, 27–28, 140.
[13] M. Nacy, *Members of the Regiment: Army Officers' Wives on the Western Frontier, 1865–1890*, Contributions in American History (Westport, CT, 2000), pp. 9–12.
[14] Nacy, *Members of the Regiment*, pp. 21, 40, 67–80.
[15] Nacy, *Members of the Regiment,* pp. 2–4, 15–21
[16] A. P. Baker, 'Daughters of Mars: Army Officers' Wives and Military Culture on the American Frontier', *The Historian*, 67/1 (2005), pp. 22, 41.

A similar phenomenon can be perceived in Frances Duberly's and Elizabeth Evans' responses to the army. It can also be seen in their similar conceptualisations of their place within that institution. Army women's reactions to their ambivalent position in the eyes of military authorities expose their understandings of their own roles and validation in military contexts which, as Nacy and Baker rightly argue, often involved women adopting military culture as a central aspect of their own identities. However, while Nacy's "members of the regiment" and Baker's "Cult of Army Womanhood" represent significant work into the female experience of military life generally, and into gender relationships and women's identity formation in armies and military spaces more specifically, a comparison of Duberly's and Evans' experiences highlights a lacuna requiring redress. The wider demographic of women who were intimately connected with the British army in the Crimean War and who left accounts of their experiences demonstrate broader constructions of military femininity than these concepts allow. We must attempt to extend an analysis of military forms of femininity beyond the boundaries of the middle class, and beyond a perception of women's military roles as a reconfiguration of a particularly middle-class domestic femininity.

This is often difficult, as lower-class women left far fewer first-hand accounts of military life. Lower-class women's accounts of the Crimean War, such as Elizabeth Evans', present their own difficulties. These women published their accounts after the war, sometimes much later in life, in a context which, as chapter 4 will demonstrate, promoted popular narratives of the war and lower-class army women that were far more sympathetic to both their social position and their military affiliation than contemporary attitudes which manifested during the conflict. Nevertheless, their memories of the war are no less significant than accounts such as Duberly's, written during the conflict. Both speak to the social conditions and feminine experience of war and, together, they testify to the central and enduring significance of the army and experiences of the Crimean War to individuals and their sense of identity. Focusing

less on the veracity of specific moments and instead viewing women's experiences and accounts of the Crimean War through the multiple social and cultural variables that contributed to their actions and constructions presents an alternative, and more fruitful, "language" of social organisation to the contemporary ideal of separate spheres. This ideal often reinforces a middle-class focus in research, but while middle-class stoic masculinity and domestic femininity were central to popular social discourse, they did not dictate all social experience.[17]

The term "military femininity" has been used predominantly by scholars of twentieth- and twenty-first-century conflict to examine constructions of femininity and its militarisation among modern armies and female service members.[18] In the context of this study of the Crimean War and the nineteenth century, military femininity is taken to mean the experiences, actions, and values documented or demonstrated by women, which show a significant, personal affiliation and identification with the army. These experiences, values, and actions could, but did not necessarily, challenge or eschew traditionally understood gender roles. More precisely, they represent individuals' and communities' renegotiations of these gender roles in relation to military spaces and their wider communities. While military femininity could be a very personal construction, common elements can also be recognised. It impacted an array of lived and literary articulations of the self and representations of women that will be explored here and throughout subsequent chapters, including women's physical mobility and their access to space, their private and public self-constructions, and their authority as participants and

[17] For a critique of the privilege granted to separate spheres ideology in studies of gender in the nineteenth century and the formation of the Victorian middle-class, see A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36/2 (1993), pp. 400–401.

[18] See T. Brown, '"A Woman in the Army Is Still A Woman": Representations of Women in US Military Recruiting Advertisements for the All-Volunteer Force', *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 33/2 (2012), pp. 151–75; M. Spychala, 'Military Femininities and Soldierly Identity in the Iraq Memoirs of Female US Veterans', *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 19/3 (2016), pp. 321–36; J. Greenburg, 'New Military Femininities: Humanitarian Violence and the Gendered Work of War among U.S. Service Women', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24/8 (2017), pp. 1107–26.

observers of war and other military endeavours. When studying women's experiences of the Crimean War through an expanded social frame, it becomes apparent that very different women could pursue similar strategies to validate their inclusion with the military. Women across classes adopted elements of the army lifestyle and culture as defining aspects of their own identities. They integrated with the military community as military and civilian cultures collided. Moreover, women's relationships with the army resulted in both lived and literary expressions of their self-perceived authority within and over that institution.

The difficulties that Duberly and Evans experienced reaching the army camps illustrate this renegotiation of gender roles in military space well. Viewing their shared central relationship to the military—marriage—in the wider context of the mid-nineteenth century military and society demonstrates their constructions of similar military femininities around this relationship, despite their social differences. Frances Duberly was expressly prohibited by the cavalry commander, Lord Lucan, from embarking with the troops to Varna from Constantinople in May 1854. She concocted not one, but two contingency plans which she shared in her published *Journal*. She was determined, either by riding 130 miles across country or by being smuggled on board, to remain with her husband. She wrote that while 'he looks upon the order as a soldier: I look upon it as a woman, and—laugh at it'.[19] In the end Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief, stopped this interference with Duberly's travel plans; she accompanied the army with the permission of the Horse Guards, and with her accommodation provided by the Admiralty, after all.[20] However, when she once again faced the possibility of being prohibited from travelling with the army to the Crimea in September—this time, at Lord Raglan's insistence—it was Lord Cardigan, the commanding officer of the 11th Hussars and

[19] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 20.
[20] Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 20–21.

of the Light Brigade, who turned a blind eye to her embarkation and helped her where he could.[21]

Elizabeth Evans had similar trouble when the 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot were also ordered to Varna that summer.[22] She and two other wives were initially prohibited from accompanying the regiment, which was 'more than flesh and blood could endure—certainly more than devoted wives could bear'.[23] Believing that 'orders are orders, and discipline is discipline; but women are women, and glory in circumventing orders, especially where love is concerned', she and her companions persuaded the embarkation officer to let them travel.[24] Evans, too, was once again thwarted on reaching the Crimea, as she was prevented from disembarking with the men. She reported that it was only when her husband told Lord Raglan directly that he would 'rather put a stone round her neck and drown her' than leave her 'at the mercy of foreigners' that she was permitted to go ashore.[25]

These two experiences were heavily mediated by class. Frances Duberly's status as an officer's wife undoubtedly helped to facilitate her journey without active mediation by her husband, in comparison to the joint clandestine and beseeching efforts of Elizabeth and William Evans. However, class alone was no guarantee of success. When she was hoping to

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[21] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 1 September 1854, fol. 36.
[22] Note that Elizabeth Evans' chronology is unclear, as she discusses her landing in the Crimea "in the summer" before discussing the order to embark for Varna. The army went to Varna first. In fact, the 4th Foot were sent to Varna, via Scutari, in August 1854 from Gallipoli, where they had been for three months. They were sent there in response to the Russians' siege of the strategic Turkish fortress at Silistra, on the Danube front, and arrived later in the month. The siege of Silistra was abandoned soon after, as the Russians retreated to conduct a defensive war. The 4th Foot embarked from Varna for the Crimea on 31 August, and they landed on 14 September. See 'Letter from the Crimea', *The Ipswich Journal*, 4 November 1854, p. 3; King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster, 'Soldiers of the Regiment: Major James Paton, Recollection of the Crimean Campaign, http://www.kingsownmuseum.com/jamespaton02.htm, accessed 13/10/2021; and Baumgart, *The Crimean War*, pp. 100–101.
[23] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267.
[24] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267.
[25] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 268.

depart for the Crimea Duberly reported that Lord Raglan explicitly prohibited officers' wives from travelling.[26] Here she became strategic, for although she detested Lord Cardigan for his character and military leadership, she valued his influence.[27] She wrote while sailing across the Black Sea in the *Himalaya* that 'unless he had been my friend I must have been left behind at Varna – or had to shrink away to the women's colony at Therapia'.[28] Therapia was a fashionable resort on the Bosphorus which became a base for army and naval officers' wives throughout the campaign. Duberly wanted to avoid this fate at all costs: not only did she possess a general dislike of female society outside of her family circle and a few respected individuals, but she also wished to avoid the extortionate cost of living.[29] This choice would not have been available for Evans, and the fate of soldiers' wives was much less secure. *The Times* reported on 5 October 1854 that when the army prepared to embark for the Crimea:

> The women of several of the regiments who had mournfully followed their husbands to the beach at Varna, and rent the air with their wailings when they heard they were to be separated from those with whom they had shared privation and pestilence, were allowed to go on board by an order from head-quarters. It was found when it came to be considered what was to be done with them that no provision had been made for their domicile or feeding. A camp of women!—the very idea was ludicrous and appalling; and so, as they could not be left behind, the British Andromaches were perforce shipped on board the transports and restored to their Hectors.[30]

[26] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 1 September 1854, fol. 36.
[27] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 July 1854, fol. 18 and 17 August 1854, fol. 26.
[28] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 11 September 1854, fol. 42. Original emphasis.
[29] BL, Frances Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 17 August 1855, fol. 35 and 6 February 1856, fol. 135, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis and Selina Marx.
[30] 'The British Expedition', *The Times,* 5 October 1854, p. 7.

The army had no clear or consistent policy regarding military wives on campaign. This ambiguity created circumstances in which commanders were confronted by their own lack of foresight and preparation, and in which they were subsequently faced with the perceived moral issues associated with leaving soldiers' wives behind. However, Duberly and Evans did not experience this bigger-picture context. Both were anxious and uncertain right up until their embarkation and relied on certain forms of appeal to assure their own security with the force. Of particular interest is their relative vulnerability as young women with comparatively little experience of military life: both were around twenty-five years old when they went to the Crimea; both of their husbands were several years their seniors and had been in the army for a number of years; Duberly had been married for four years, and Evans for just under three years.[31] This vulnerability may account for their overt performance of a confident married womanhood, for their marital ties were a central aspect of their identities with the army and the principal means through which they gained access to military space.

The belief so clearly held by both women in a headstrong female—particularly wifely—nature as an override to military orders, and their successful defiance of those orders partly through their appeals to this hierarchy, highlight three important and interlinked trends connecting nineteenth-century femininity and the military. The first, that femininity itself was actually multifaceted rather than defined by a rigid gender binary, has been well-documented in relation to nineteenth-century women, including in war.[32] Mary Poovey, Cynthia Dereli, and Clare Broome Saunders have all drawn attention to the degree of compatibility between domestic ideology and Crimean War spaces in particular, by exploring the connections made

[31] Duberly, *Journal*, pp. xii, xiv–xvi; Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 265. Both Henry Duberly and William Evans had joined the army in 1839, both at around 18 years of age: TNA, *Royal Hospital Chelsea: Soldiers Service Documents*, WO 97/1395/33379; Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War*, Kelly (ed.), p. xiv.

[32] See Poovey, *Uneven Developments*; Langland, *Nobody's Angels*; Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*.

between women's missions and war in literature. Representations of women—most notably of Florence Nightingale—could appeal to central tenets of the domestic ideal, while simultaneously exploiting the aggression that was a contradictory but innate component of middle-class femininity.[33] The image of the brave officer's wife was also a trope of nineteenth-century literature and popular culture, not only in Britain, but elsewhere in Europe.[34] Duberly and Evans drew upon this same subversive authority and articulations of assertive military wifehood across their public and private narratives, and demonstrated it in their actions as well.

Consequently, Frances Duberly has been classed by Mona Macmillan as an example of an "incorporated wife".[35] Such women were socially identified, and identified themselves, as '"wife of" a particular kind of worker' within an institution.[36] Thus, they experienced that institution—in this case, the army—through that association and the 'person-defining power' of such organisations.[37] An important aspect of the incorporated wife framework is its emphasis

[33] See Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp. 167–69; C. Dereli, *A War Culture in Action: A Study of the Literature of the Crimean War Period*, (Oxford, 2003), pp. 176–84; C. Broome Saunders, *Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Medievalism* (New York, NY, 2009), pp. 61–63. See also 'Constructing the Crimean Heroine: Women and the Legacy of the Crimean War' in chapter 4.

[34] Mona Macmillan has noted that Mrs O'Dowd, a character in Thackery's *Vanity Fair,* acted as a companion and source of support to her husband as she followed him to war, but was also 'a mascot . . . a female myth' to the men: M. Macmillan, 'Camp Followers: A Note on Wives of the Armed Services', in H. Callan and S. Ardener (eds), *The Incorporated Wife* (London, 1984), pp. 92–93. During the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842), Lady Florentia Sale, an officer's wife, gained recognition for her letters documenting the condition of British hostages, taken captive after the slaughter of the British forces leaving Kabul in January 1841. Her letters were used and published in lieu of official reports, and she was adopted in the press as a brave heroine: S. Malhotra, '"If She Escapes She Will Publish Everything": Lady Sale and the Media Frenzy of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842)', *Book History*, 17/1 (2014), pp. 272–97. In Russia, the popular image of the self-sacrificing "Decembrist wives"—noble women who followed their husbands into exile after the Decembrist uprising of 1825—remained important in literature, national symbolism, and personal political experiences throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: E. Katz, '"I will empower him!": Representations of Prisoners' Wives in Russia', *Slavonica*, 19/2 (2013), pp. 128–46.

[35] See Macmillan, 'Camp Followers', pp. 89–105.

[36] H. Callan, 'Introduction', in H. Callan and S. Ardener (eds), *The Incorporated Wife* (London, 1984), p. 1.

[37] Callan, 'Introduction', p. 5.

on wives' frequent marginality in contexts in which they were simultaneously central to official concerns. While the army could and did ensure wives' subordination by controlling and promoting particular images of military marriage, wives themselves could hold a considerable degree of potential power—through their 'hidden services', their potential to both cause and solve problems of power, control, and loyalty, and the confidence necessarily placed in marriage when it was permitted.[38] As Joan Perkin has comprehensively shown, marriage was considered an important relationship across nineteenth-century British society.[39] Moreover, debates about the benefits of permitting marriage within the army were increasing at mid-century.[40] Both Duberly and Evans embodied ideals of marriage which, though theoretically stabilising within the abstract military institution, fundamentally conflicted with the army's militaristic aims in the Crimea. As Callan states, 'a paradox of incorporation is that it can turn wives into ambiguous subversives who are at once reconstituted as ambiguous guardians'.[41] During the Crimean War, marriage did not only provide a discursive site for the debate of class or gender power relations. It also provided a language which encompassed the wider points of tension that existed between civilian society and the army over issues of military efficiency, morality, and the army's duty of care over the women who were associated with it—or who depended upon it. It was this language that Duberly and Evans drew upon to assert their own authority in these matters, and to access military space.

However, the military context requires nuance in this sense, as domestic sentimentality could pervade in the army despite official steps to sever such civilian ties. Louise Carter has argued that the domestic ties which were promoted as central tenets of civilian masculinity were pervasive among the army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic War era. From

[38] Callan, 'Introduction', pp. 4, 18, 21, 22.
[39] See J. Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1988).
[40] Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 38–40.
[41] Callan, 'Introduction', p. 22.

taking wives and children on campaign to familial connections to particular regiments, maintaining correspondence with family at home and forging quasi-familial bonds within the regiment, military men experienced and recorded the 'stubborn persistence of family in constructions and experiences of martial masculinities'.[42] That "stubborn persistence" was evident in the importance of domesticity not only across space or in the connections between military and civilian spheres, but also over time. Holly Furneaux has made similar observations about soldiers and masculinity in the Crimean War. Using letters and souvenirs sent by men across the ranks, Furneaux has demonstrated the high degree to which domestic and familial concerns imbued martial masculinity in the Crimean War. These could in fact form central pillars of soldiers' social relationships and emotional frameworks. The father-son relationship adopted by commanders in many regiments, for example, provided 'sufficiently emotionally expansive models through which to express the desire to nurture, showing that care could be imagined in masculine terms', while the exchange of letters and objects with family members in Britain not only allowed the men to '"send home" . . . at least some part of the felt experience of war', but also to 'create lines of continuity between military and domestic life'.[43]

Such revisions of military masculinity allow for a more critical analysis of forms of military femininity, through their emphasis on the contingent and constructed nature of gendered performance in war. The discourse and symbolism of domestic femininity was compatible with the conceptualisation and representation of war. The army's inconsistent policies towards soldiers' and officers' wives gave rise to a subversive potential through which

[42] L. Carter, 'Brothers in Arms? Martial Masculinities and Family Feeling in Old Soldiers' Memoirs, 1793–1815', in M. Brown, A. M. Barry, and J. Begiato (eds), *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 2019), p. 50.

[43] H. Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling: Emotion, Touch and Masculinity in the Crimean War* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 139, 175, 156. See also H. Metcalfe, 'Recalling the Comforts of Home: Bachelor Soldiers' Narratives of Nostalgia and the Re-creation of the Domestic interior', in M. Brown, A. M. Barry, and J. Begiato (eds), *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 2019), pp. 58–81.

women identified with both the army and civilian values. However, the persistent mediation of men's emotional responses to war through a broader domestic discourse, and the importance of those structures to men's psychological survival, rendered connections between civilian and military cultures one of the war's daily encounters across ranks and classes. For Duberly and Evans, the emotional bonds of marriage and displays of impassioned wifely devotion served as tools for justifying and facilitating their own presence with the army. Their actions—and their shared conceptualisation of social power relationships within the army that drove them—appealed to broad, emotive, and established views of domesticity that could transcend rank and class.

Military communities

The relative privilege that their married status could give these army wives in terms of access to the military as civilians certainly granted them confidence in their own positions as members of the military milieu. However, the relish that Frances Duberly and Elizabeth Evans took in defying orders was certainly in opposition to any notion of private, obedient, or subordinate womanhood in either middle- or lower-class society. There is a stark contradiction, as their similar conceptualisations of a hierarchy that placed wifely devotion above obedience to military command self-consciously located them outside official military authority, even while they fundamentally depended upon military channels and consistently identified with the army more broadly. Moreover, while Duberly and Evans found similar ways to proclaim their roles with the army through marriage, marriage was not their only link to the army; in Mary Seacole's case, it did not feature at all, yet she proclaimed a similar self-assurance in her identification with the army.[44] These parallels among women from vastly different social

[44] See A. Hunt, 'Ordinary Claims: War, Work, Service, and the Victorian Veteran', *Victorian Studies*, 61/3 (2019), pp. 407–14. Hunt argues that Seacole's memoir drew upon a language of labour and service used by veteran soldiers in their own memoirs, to establish her enterprise as

positions prompts one to consider the nature of their interactions with the army, which foregrounds an important fact underlying women's constructions of their own military femininity: while certain forms of community, like the regiment, were formalised within the structure of the army, military communities could also be constructed more subjectively by individuals along various intersecting axes of military and civilian hierarchies and relationships.

During the war, women's social experiences narrowed considerably to focus on military men. This is not surprising given the relatively small number of women, a disinclination—or inability—to interact with local communities beyond issues of employment or commerce, and a lack of family ties in the war zone. As such, and in the absence of clear demarcations between living and working, public and private, or male and female spaces, the regiment did form the basis of many social and emotional networks. The regiment was central not only to the organisation of the mid-nineteenth century military, but to soldiers' status, discipline, and loyalty: the regimental system encouraged close identification with the regiment as a surrogate family, and officers particularly could derive much military and social prestige from fashionable regiments.[45] Living, training, working, and fighting were done in regiments which came together in war time; even uniforms denoted belonging to a specific regiment and encouraged pride in that affiliation.[46] The regiment also shaped soldiers' identities in more extreme ways. As Scott Hughes Merely has stated:

> The private was forced to take part in a precisely regulated, perpetual spectacle; every waking moment of his life he wore the vibrant tokens of martial honor representing

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a civic-minded patriotic service and thus to legitimise her claims to state support as a veteran herself in her bankruptcy.

[45] See Carter, 'Brothers in Arms?', pp. 46–50 on familial constructions of the regiment; Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 22, 68–75. S. H. Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars Through the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 6–7, 88.

[46] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, pp. 1, 6–7, 87–103.

> sublime values . . . this elaborate complex of visual and physical manipulation became a core feature of his identity . . . the solider did not just acquire a new identity in the army; this process was much deeper and more profound. To a great extent, the Other Ranks' (and to a lesser extent, the officers') identity was forged anew by this manipulation of both the senses and the body within a mostly nomadic, isolated subculture.[47]

The overlap that we now understand to have existed between military and civilian or domestic cultures challenges this final notion of military isolation but it does not alter the strength of such military identifications. The regiment impacted army women's experiences and identities in similarly profound ways. Nacy's analysis, for example, is rooted fundamentally in women's experiences of regimental life on the American frontier, where the regiment acted as the locus for their own social relationships and where regimental movements and regulations largely dictated women's experiences of both mobility and domesticity. In the French army, soldiers' wives working as *cantinières*—canteen and storekeepers—played a central role in regimental life. They closely identified with, and were to an extent incorporated into, the military's symbolism, even donning their own regimental uniforms.[48] For British soldiers' wives travelling and living with their regiments during the Crimean War, the regiment could be vital to their sense of belonging and to their very survival.

Elizabeth Evans' account contains abundant emotive declarations about her camaraderie with the men of the 4th King's Own. She was keen to emphasise, for instance, that 'whatever faults they had, they [the soldiers] were good and faithful friends to me'.[49] Evans was always clear about the way in which she perceived her connection to the regiment: she believed that

[47] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 103.
[48] Cardoza, *Intrepid Women*, p. 131, 137–42.
[49] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 265.

with her marriage, she had 'joined the King's Own', and consistently referred to 'my own regiment—you see, I cannot help speaking of the brave old 4th as mine'.[50] It seems that she had a close attachment with and genuine feeling for these men that still held strong as she reminisced about her wartime travel in 1908. She wrote about the cholera epidemic, which tore through the army and killed thousands, saying that 'at least it was merciful, and most of us who have been through life's great sorrows, and have seen the sufferings of those we love, know that for such brevity of illness we have cause to be thankful evermore'.[51]

Those bonds went both ways, as the men provided emotional and material support to Evans in turn. She stated that the officers, men, and even the Colonel would cheer her on the long and difficult marches.[52] Later in the war, her husband was sent to Scutari with the Russian prisoners of war, leaving Evans with 'no husband to look after and protect' her.[53] When she subsequently fell dangerously ill, it was the other soldiers who tended to her: they tried to make her comfortable and eventually saw her put on board a ship to return to England. Through these reminiscences of the regiment, Evans revealed her determination to display bravery and strength on a par with the soldiers, while simultaneously asserting her feminine vulnerability; traits that were compatible within the framework of a benevolent regimental community, sharing the hardships of war.

Margaret Kerwin, the wife of an Irish soldier in the 19th Regiment of Foot, also wrote a brief account of the Crimean War in her later life, which was published in the 19th's magazine, *The Green Howards Gazette*, in 1898. Like Evans, Kerwin also recounted a reciprocal relationship between her and the men. While the regiment were marching through Bulgaria under the burning sun in the summer of 1854, she was kept busy providing them with drinks

[50] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', pp. 265, 266.
[51] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 266.
[52] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267, 268.
[53] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 272.

to stay strong.[54] When a report reached them in Varna that the Russian army was approaching, she and the other fourteen women who had accompanied the 19th were immediately shifted to the rear for their protection.[55] Kerwin laboured for the regiment throughout the war, writing that 'when we marched up to Monastne [*sic*] all the duty of No. 5 company fell on me, that is, the washing'.[56] However, in Kerwin's account, her own actions and experiences generally work to affirm her supportive capacity as a woman. For example, both Kerwin and Evans worked as laundresses.[57] Evans remembered this labour as a point of great personal dignity. She would take in the men's laundry twice a week for 'halfpenny a day each man', and at times 'had nearly a score of soldiers' as her clients, providing her with a 'comfortable' addition to her husband's meagre salary.[58] Her narrative is reminiscent of the same *Times* report from 5 October 1854 that had exposed the lack of provision for army wives, for it was quick to reassure its readers that:

> It must not be supposed for a moment that these women have ever been neglected, nor have they undergone any hardships, save those inseparable from a camp life . . . they make little fortunes as laundresses, and until the pestilence . . . smote the army and fell upon them with extraordinary fatality, they seemed the happiest and most contented beings in the camp, where their services as excellent foragers and washerwomen were fully appreciated.[59]

However, this report does romanticise the condition of the soldier's wife living and travelling with the army during the war, for it downplays their personal hardships, which could be

[54] M. Kerwin, 'In the Crimea with the 19th Regiment', *Green Howards Gazette*, (1898), p. 94.
[55] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 94.
[56] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 94.
[57] Evans's narrative jumps around chronologically and it is unclear whether she did this work only while she and the regiment were stationed in barracks in Britain.
[58] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 265.
[59] 'The British Expedition', *The Times,* 5 October 1854, p. 7.

considerable. Margaret Kerwin's washing tub was one of very few possessions that she carried with her during the war, but it was perhaps the most significant, as she did the laundry not only for her regiment but for the whole company. Washing for 101 men, Kerwin 'stood in the midst of the stream from 6 in the morning until 6 or 7 at night washing them the clothes, and the Colour-Sergeant would keep no account, and some men were able to pay and some were not, so that I was left with very little for my trouble'.[60]

For Evans and Kerwin, identification with and a sense of inclusion as part of the regiment was a negotiation of martial power, which tended towards their exclusion, and of affective ties which belied that power in both lived experience and in memory. Both performed work that corresponded to the familiar gendered division of labour for both lower-class women and soldiers' wives: Elizabeth Evans in fact worked as a laundress for the remainder of her life after her husband left the army.[61] When Margaret Kerwin's husband was sent to the Crimea without her, she also worked briefly as a nurse in Varna. She received 2 shillings and 6 pence per week to support herself in his absence; less than the average daily wage of a tradesman.[62] By comparison, Florence Nightingale's government-funded nurses were paid a minimum of 10 shillings per week. Far from earning a "little fortune", the scale and nature of Kerwin's work highlights the exploitative nature of soldiers' wives' labour. Evans also acted informally as a nurse, though in her reminiscences she stated 'I cannot say that I nursed [the sick and wounded]—there were no hospital appliances then, and all I could do was to give them the help of a woman's sympathy'.[63] Evans presented her labour as a laundress as a lucrative if

[60] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 94.
[61] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 265; TNA, *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861,* RG 9/1727, fol. 49, p. 34*;* TNA, *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1871*, RG10/870, fol. 80, p. 29; TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881, RG11/846, fol. 71, p. 20; TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, RG 12/623, fol. 14, p. 30; TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901, RG 13/679, fol. 43, p. 37; TNA, *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*, RG14/3601.
[62] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 95.
[63] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.

financially necessary enterprise, and her labour as a nurse as altruistically feminine, but both she and Kerwin lacked alternatives for respectable waged labour in the military context. The inability of many soldiers to compensate Kerwin is reflective of the very poor wages paid to the men, but the colour sergeant's explicit failure to recognise her contribution epitomises the military authorities' attitudes to women. Soldiers' wives were, as Trustram states, a 'captive labour force', dependant on goodwill for their work, but they were also 'absorbed into the military structure' through it.[64]

Yet, amid this web of martial power over women, Kerwin, like Evans, also found inclusion through martial sentimentality. Kerwin explicitly drew upon the paternalistic and familial rhetoric encouraged by the military's appropriation of family feeling within its own structure when describing her own and others' relationships within the regiment. Upon the death of one man, Sergeant Murphy, the regiment lamented the loss of one who was 'loved' by 'both officers and non-commissioned officers and privates'.[65] During the British attack on the Great Redan on 8 September 1855, the colonel of the 19th Foot, Thomas Unett, was seriously wounded. Kerwin wrote:

> I heard that the Colonel was wounded, and I went down to meet him, the shot and shell flying in every direction. I saw the Colonel and took out my handkerchief to wipe his face, and he asked after my husband. He did not live many days after that, and both myself and my husband went to the funeral. It was a sad day for both of us to lose Colonel "Daddy" Unett, as he was called in the Regiment.[66]

[64] Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 105.
[65] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 95.
[66] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 96.

"Daddy" was a term of affection, adopted by soldiers as a nickname for some particularly popular and paternalistic commanders.[67] Although it is unknown how or what extent Kerwin may have been adopted into this familial rhetoric herself—perhaps correspondingly as a "sister" or "daughter" of the regiment—Kerwin's own fondness for the Colonel is suggestive of the pervasive nature of regimental affections.[68] Furneaux has argued that such 'blurring of civilian and military felt experience' was an important 'personal strategy that soldiers used to maintain their sense of their own humanity during wartime'.[69] While the spaces of regimental control—particularly those concerning women, such as the barrack room—became less clearly defined as the army moved to the Crimean war zone, the physical and emotional demands of the conflict reinforced the need for such stabilising structures as the regiment could provide, for men and women. These relationships could transcend rank to some extent, and the idea of the regimental family provided a narrative structure within which women could relate their memories and encounters during the Crimean War, as well as a framework for the creation and maintenance of affective ties in their lived experiences. At the end of her account, Kerwin declared, in terms as forceful as any of Elizabeth Evans' declarations, that 'if I was young tomorrow, I would take the same travels, but I would be a little wiser'.[70] The tension between these women's personal dependency on the army and their *amour propre* as soldiers' wives—to which their experiences during the Crimean War contributed so significantly and which they proclaim so vehemently through their nostalgic pride in their regimental affiliations—testifies

[67] See Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling*, pp. 137–38, and Carter, 'Brothers in Arms?', pp. 46–47.
[68] Elizabeth Evans would later be dubbed a "daughter of the regiment", when news reports reflected on her status as a "Crimean heroine" and exposed the poverty she lived in throughout her later life. 'Crimean Heroine: The Only Woman Entitled to Wear the Balaklava Medal', *Northern Daily Mail*, 16 November 1907, p. 3. See 'Crimean Heroines Recognised', in chapter 4, on the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century promotion of soldiers' wives as "Crimean heroines".
[69] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling,* p. 139.
[70] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 96.

to the vitality of their relationships with and within their regiments. These engendered an identification with the military that was life-long for both.

In contrast, Frances Duberly constructed a very different military community, as her experiences and identity were rooted firmly in her social position as a middle-class woman and her aspirations for further social prestige. In particular, she shared an active social life with the officers in the camp. Mona Macmillan has stated that Duberly was accepted by these men 'solely because she contributed something which their lives lacked', namely, 'a comradeship with the other sex, a taste of the life which they had left behind . . . a distance from the sordid'.[71] Certainly Duberly was aware of her contribution in this way. In September 1855, after the fall of Sebastopol, Duberly wrote to her brother-in-law, Francis Marx, that 'half of them [the soldiers] know me as the never omitted guest, where a dinner is wanted to be amusing & brilliant & half – as the rider of their troublesome horses'.[72] However, there was more to Duberly's acceptance among the men than her role as a symbol of home, for Duberly's civilian and military worlds overlapped considerably, just as they did for military men who were also society gentlemen. A number of Duberly's officer friends were mutual acquaintances of her sister, Selina, and in the summer of 1854, she wrote, 'it is very agreeable having so many men that one knows – as we know two or three in almost every reg[imen]t out'.[73] Duberly's integration with the officers owes much to the structure and traditions of the mid-nineteenth century army and society. Wealth, property, status, and gentlemanly character—bravery, honour—had long been valued above professionalism or military skill. The character and ethos of the landed gentry still permeated the military hierarchy in the 1850s.[74] While that ethos did include paternalistic rhetoric towards the creation of a "regimental family", it also undermined

[71] Macmillan, 'Camp Followers', p. 94, 99.
[72] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 25 September 1855, fol. 64.
[73] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 July 1854, fol. 19.
[74] G. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London, 1977), pp. 15, 38.

that rhetoric through the creation and perpetuation of aristocratic cliques and an officer culture of interdependence with middle- and upper-class civilian society.[75]

Duberly was, therefore, able to assimilate into the established and familiar culture of officer society, which already continued the traditions of home as a way of creating distance from the realities of war, and which was made up of numerous personal friends and acquaintances. Many of her closest acquaintances were officers of the 8th Hussars, such as Captain Edward Tomkinson, who often accompanied her on outings and in whose tent Duberly, her husband, and others would often congregate after dinner.[76] However, with the overlap that British officers experienced between their civilian and military roles, it was certainly the case that, 'hospitality was the basis of the officer's world and the way of the Army', for Duberly's network encompassed officers of the Cavalry Division more broadly, such as "Bob Portal", Captain Robert Portal of the 4th Light Dragoons, who she dined with.[77] It also included officers belonging to a range of regiments and, to an extent, senior ranks, for 'the incorporation of women in the army through marriage neither automatically implied their subordination nor constrained their ambition'.[78] Although Duberly was never fully integrated into the more aristocratic circles of the most senior commanders, she eagerly took excursions around Varna during the summer of 1854 and explored the Crimea later on with Lord Cardigan, Lord George Paget, commander the 4th Light Dragoons, and Colonel Poulett Somerset of the Coldstream Guards and aide-de-camp to Lord Raglan, to name just a few prominent individuals.[79] At one

[75] Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, pp. 38–45, 280.
[76] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 17 August 1854, fol. 26; Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 32, 65.
[77] Nacy, *Members of the Regiment*, p. 45.; BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 13 October 1854, fol. 52; Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 101, 165.
[78] I. F. W. Beckett, 'Women and Patronage in the Late Victorian Army', *History*, 85/279 (2000), p. 480.
[79] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 17 August 1854, fol. 26; 17 December, fol. 86; and 22 March 1855, fol. 138.

point, Duberly and her husband had social engagements planned for most days with both naval and army officers:

> On Monday we go up to camp & dine that night with Major Peel & Capt. Cooke, – on Tuesday – lunch with Mr Vansittart, Wednesday ride to Rameish – Saturday dine with Capt. Singleton – Tuesday lunch with Capt. Lushington and Wednesday dine with Capt. Tomkinson.[80]

In contrast, the only rank-and-file soldiers that Duberly mentioned by name in either her *Journal* or her letters were those who she and her husband hired as their personal servants. The war zone represented a radical departure from the spaces of middle-class living, but it was also a space which could be domesticated, as Duberly perceived and experienced the military society there largely in terms of a civilian social hierarchy. As such, Duberly's social standing set strict boundaries to her military community within her own regiment. She could not, nor did she likely wish to make "downward" social connections. While her husband's rank as Captain offered limited "upward" pathways specifically within the military context, again her middle-class status posed restrictions. She could not fully access the social network of the most elite circles, as other, socially superior women such as Lady Stratford de Redcliffe, the wife of the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, would when they began to visit the Crimea in the summer of 1855. Duberly's social class embedded her among the officers, but her affiliation with an officer ranking opened networks that nevertheless expanded well beyond the regiment and rendered the war zone a site of social familiarity.

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[80] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 22 March 1855, fol. 138. William Peel was a Captain in the Royal Navy and commander of the Diamond Battery. He was the son of ex-Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel (d. 1850): see also 'The Authority of Close Encounter' in chapter 2. Captain Edwin Cooke was an officer in the 11th Hussars. Coleraine Robert Vansittart was a Lieutenant in the 11th Hussars. Sir Stephen Lushington was an officer in the Royal Navy. He commanded the naval brigade and was promoted to rear-admiral during the war. Edward Tomkinson was a Captain in the 8th Hussars.

This community shaped Duberly's conceptualisations of military life and her place within it, particularly her articulations and performance of her own femininity, in important ways. In her *Journal* and her letters, Duberly wrote about Captain Lockwood, a staff officer and aide-de-camp to Lord Cardigan. She was saddened by his death at the Battle of Balaklava, writing 'Lockwood (it is supposed) lost his life endeavouring to assist his brother Aide-de-camp Mr Maxse who was wounded. If so, he earned himself a glorious death'.[81] Duberly viewed ideal military masculinity as entrenched in gentlemanly chivalry. Most often, she specifically perceived that chivalry among the commissioned officers and not the military commanders.[82] Although she appreciated the advantages of the social circles and military authority offered by her acquaintance with men like Lord Cardigan, from an early stage in the campaign Duberly and her husband—like much of the public in Britain—blamed the British commanders for the poorly prepared state of the army. Her disillusionment translated into strong criticism at times, particularly in her letters. On one occasion, she wrote:

> Cardigan, who commands us, Lord Lucan who commands the whole cavalry, & Sir Geo[rge] Browne who commands the L[igh]t Division are three of the greatest fidgets and most pitiable old women you ever heard of. The very privates scoff at them and they drive the officers wild.[83]

Against the military commanders' failure to embody Duberly's ideal of military masculinity, Duberly perceived herself not only as a feminine addition to officer society, but as a companion and a fellow sufferer. In December 1854, after the army had fought in the battles of Alma,

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[81] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 3 November 1854, fol. 66.
[82] Duberly was not oblivious to displays of bravery among the rank-and file, though she mentioned them far less often. In her *Journal* she recorded an instance where a rifleman used his rifle to extinguish the fuse of a shell that landed in his trench. Duberly thought that he should be decorated immediately for such an act, rather than waiting for 'a medal he may never live to obtain'. Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 104–105.
[83] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 25 June 1854, fol. 12.

Balaklava, and Inkerman, Frances Duberly wrote, 'I shiver when I think of the horrors I shall most probably have to encounter again. But the old spirit is in me still, and I must be with our gallant men and see them fight their way'.[84] As a middle-class woman mingling with middle- and upper-class men, certain expectations of femininity remained in force and worked to domesticate the war zone, such as Duberly's provision of emotional support and her efforts to lift morale. However, the war zone remained a site of difference from, and at times of opposition to, domestic familiarity. The military's mandate to enact violence and the military culture that ultimately saturated Duberly's social relationships provided opportunities for her to re-frame her femininity in terms of the chivalrous masculinity she so admired. For instance, in early June 1855, after witnessing the third bombardment of the Sebastopol and a successful attack on the Russian Mamelon battery, Duberly fainted in her saddle from 'over fatigue illness & excitement' (she had fallen ill in the days preceding the attack), yet she wrote to her sister that she was to return to the front, and mused admiringly 'oh that I were a man – to take part is such magnificent deeds of wondrous courage & glorious self sacrifice'.[85] Her illness may have exacerbated her feminine vulnerability, but it also gave occasion for Duberly to engage in her own display of bravery and strength, as she did what she could to participate in the work of warfare in the only way open to her: as observer and chronicler of the army's deeds.[86]

Mary Seacole encountered military communities in different, and arguably more expansive, ways. In her autobiography, written in 1857, Seacole identified with the British army very closely despite entering its sphere of operation from a totally civilian position, for she lacked even the soldiers' wives' peripheral, semi-official association with the army. As a child and young woman, Seacole had developed skills as a "doctress" and businesswoman in

[84] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 17 December 1854, fol. 85. Original emphasis.
[85] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 8 June 1855, fol. 180.
[86] See 'Frances Duberly: A Failed Heroine' in chapter 4 on Duberly's writing and her public claims to status as war reporter and war heroine.

her mother's Jamaican boarding house, which often catered to soldiers; Seacole opened her own establishment in Jamaica after her mother's death, which also served a military clientele.[87] During the Crimean War, Seacole volunteered her services as a nurse for the army but was rejected by all relevant departments in London. She made her own way to the Crimea where she established her business enterprise, the British Hotel, selling comforts and medicinal remedies to men at the front.[88]

Much has been written about Mary Seacole's account of the Crimean War, particularly from the perspective of literary readings of her autobiography, which interrogate her narrative authority and her textual construction of a public identity. This identity is now recognised to be complex and multifaceted, as Seacole used several narrative strategies to position herself within and across British, English, "Creole", Black, and colonial subjectivities, embracing elements of each throughout her retellings of her various travels.[89] As Tan-Feng Chang has stated, Seacole constructs an 'interstitial subject position, which allows her to claim multiple affiliations with diverse racial groups and expose, and at times even exploit, the tensions and

[87] M. Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, S. Salih (ed.), (London, [1857] 2005), pp. 11–12, 16.

[88] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 71–74. On Seacole's rejection from British military nursing during the Crimean War, see chapter 3, particularly the section 'Age, Bodies, and Families'.

[89] See A. Robinson, 'Authority and the Public Display of Identity: "Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands"', *Feminist Studies*, 20/3 (1994), pp. 537–57; Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes', pp. 949–81; Frederick, 'Creole Performance in Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands', pp. 487–506; L. Paravisini-Gerbert, 'Mrs Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit' in G. Holbrook Gerzina (ed.), *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), pp. 71–87; N. Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning": Mary Seacole's Maternal Personae', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 34/01 (2006), pp. 95–113; Rupprecht, 'Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands (1857)', pp. 176–203; Poon, 'Comic Acts of (Be)Longing', pp. 501–16; J. Howell, 'Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity: Constitutional and Maternal Rhetoric in Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 38/1 (2010), pp. 107–25; T. F. Chang, 'Creolizing the White Woman's Burden: Mary Seacole Playing "Mother" at the Colonial Crossroads between Panama and Crimea', *College Literature*, 44/4 (2017), pp. 527–57.

rivalries of these "imagined" communities'.[90] As such, Seacole's labour, her presentation of that labour, and her articulations of her femininity can take on multiple guises and layers of meaning within British, imperial, racial, and gendered power relationships. However, the ways in which Seacole transgressed and transcended social boundaries in her actions—in addition to her textual constructions and representations—to occupy a series of significant and interdependent roles with the army clearly demonstrate her navigation of femininity in military space.

Like Elizabeth Evans and Margaret Kerwin, Seacole expressed particular affection for certain regiments, becoming especially close to the 97th during their years stationed in Jamaica. She wrote that 'there were few officers of the 97th to whom Mother Seacole was not well known, before she joined them in front of Sebastopol'.[91] Later, during the British assault on the Great Redan during the final, successful attempt to take Sebastopol in September 1855, she 'reserved my attentions for my old regiment, known so well in my native land. My poor 97th!'[92] However, unlike the soldiers' wives, Seacole's labour brought her into close contact with the armed forces in a far broader way, in a manner that enabled an expansion of her commercial, caregiving, and affective ties far beyond the boundaries of a single regiment. She catered to and nursed soldiers from many regiments and ranks, and even nursed men from other armies on the battlefields. She stated that:

> I derived no little gratification from being able to dress the wounds of several Russians; indeed, they were as kindly treated as the others . . . Many others, on the field that day, gave me thanks in words the meaning of which was lost upon me, and

[90] Chang, 'Creolizing the White Woman's Burden', p. 529.
[91] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 16.
[92] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 147.

all of them in that one common language of the whole world – smiles.[93]

However, in emphasising her role as surrogate "mother" throughout her autobiography, and in her actual renown as "Mother Seacole" throughout the army, Seacole demonstrated her affection for the British army in particular, for she was only ever "mother" to British soldiers. This motherhood was founded upon, and intrinsically linked to, her labour. It was through Seacole's work as a "doctress" and boarding house keeper in Jamaica that she had first become known as "Mother Seacole" to the British troops, and it was through her labour in the Crimean War as "doctress" or "nurse", "sutler", and surrogate "mother"—simultaneously a commercial service provider and feminine caregiver—that she gained prominence among the wider British forces; her patients, customers, and "sons".[94] Seacole's own maternal rhetoric emphasises her interstitial subjectivity, for she draws upon British middle-class principles and her own "Creole" heritage and 'coded her entrepreneurial ventures and medical work in the Crimea as maternal labor', establishing herself as 'the best woman for the job' of caring for the men.[95] As Aeron Hunt argues, her framing of her medical endeavours as maternal does not eclipse her own role as a businesswoman: she charged the men who could afford to pay for her medical services.[96] However, Seacole's representations of her labour as public-spirited charity, her subsequent claims to Britishness that these representations facilitated, and her assertions that she was singularly well placed to act in such a caring, motherly role to British soldiers were not only narrative strategies for authority. Her long history of labour and her location at the junction of multiple gendered, social, and racial constructs facilitated her connection to the

[93] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 142.
[94] A sutler was a merchant, usually a civilian, who followed the army and sold provisions, such as food, tobacco, and alcohol.
[95] Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning"', pp. 96, 98.
[96] Hunt, 'Ordinary Claims', pp. 410–11; Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 111, 117.

army upon terms that were always malleable, and which enabled Seacole to occupy multiple roles.

Through her selling of food and luxuries, and through her provision of medical attention and remedies—at her British Hotel, at scenes of battle, and in the camp, where disease frequently ran rampant—Seacole experienced military masculinity in her encounters with soldiers at least partly in terms of physical and emotional vulnerability. She could alleviate these through her own embodiment of femininity as a motherly figure, but also through her skill and competence. Seacole wrote that when she first arrived in Balaklava and assisted the surgeons in the harbour, she 'saw rough bearded men stand by and cry like the softest-hearted women at the sights of suffering they saw'.[97] In doing so, Seacole emphasised the falsity of impressions based upon physical appearance for her reading audience and foregrounded the fluidity of gendered characteristics in the war zone. She also distanced herself from those 'softest-hearted' women who, it is implied, may have embodied social expectations of gentle, emotional femininity, but lacked the hardiness required to act in the war zone, thus affirming her own useful role. This conviction was reflected in her actions, for though she was 'a motherly yellow woman' with a 'well-filled out, portly form', through her previous labour with British regiments stationed in the Caribbean, Seacole had a practical understanding of the soldiers' emotional, material, and medical needs.[98] A report in the *Morning Advertiser* described Seacole's efforts in terms of the interstitiality of her race, femininity, and labour, declaring in July 1855 that:

> We have at present a lady of colour in Balaklava, and occasionally in camp, who is quite original in her way; and an amusing specimen of the adaptability to circumstances of the darker specimens of the genus *homo*. She is both a Miss

[97] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 88.
[98] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 72, 78.

Nightingale and a Soyer in her way.[99]

Although this report sought to emphasis Seacole's racial identity above all else and establish her as a comic and subordinate "other", Seacole drew upon these same strategies to validate her work and travel through the very transcendence of social boundaries the report mocks for its readers. After her arrival at the front, Seacole tried to supply 'things suggestive of home and its comforts' for the British soldiers at her store, including clothing, tobacco, familiar dishes such as mutton and Irish stew, and favourite desserts, particularly rice pudding and sponge cake.[100] When providing medical treatment, she was attuned to the fact that soldiers preferred to consult her because of their general aversion to hospitals in all but the most urgent cases, as the men suffered stoppages—an amount taken from their wages—for every day they spent in hospital.[101] Once her British Hotel was established, therefore, Seacole's duties assumed some similarity to those of soldiers' wives, cooking and nursing for the men, on a vast scale. However, the British Hotel itself changed the site, and the nature, of this relationship. As a quasi-domestic space, Seacole's canteen served to further emphasise the connections between military and domestic life. As its mistress and primary labourer, Seacole assumed a domestic role that shared elements with those of the middle-class wife and mother, the lower-class servant, and the army wife. As a site of business, the British Hotel emphasised Seacole's removal from military authority. However, as one located 'not two miles from Balaclava [*sic*] . . . within a mile of head-quarters', it was a space that nevertheless facilitated a close

[99] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 713 (Appendix). Florence Nightingale, of course, was renowned for her work as a nurse and "ministering angel" with the soldiers (see chapters 3 and 4 on Nightingale's work and public image). Alexis Soyer was a French chef, who travelled to Constantinople and the Crimea, where he worked to improve the soldiers' nutrition and military cooking. He also gained renown as he worked with army hospitals to reorganise provisioning, and his own design of stove was used in every regiment. It is notable that this report also constructed Seacole as a comic figure; Seacole used comedy, particularly her own comedic potential, throughout her autobiography. See Poon, 'Comic Acts of (Be)Longing', pp. 501–16.
[100] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 121–23.
[101] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 110; Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 57.

relationship with the army in terms of both commerce and ministration, and necessitated sharing in many of the difficulties faced by the men in their experiences of transport, extreme weather, pests, and crime in the Crimea.[102] This active camaraderie extended to scenes of fighting, where Seacole herself was to be found 'prepared for the day's work', and where her 'bag of bandages and comforts for the wounded proved my passport'.[103] Again, Seacole's labour granted her access, for though the battlefield was 'a fearful sight for a woman to witness . . . it is in scenes of horror and distress that a woman can do so much'.[104] Her labour established her as the men's 'woman-comrade upon the bleak and barren heights before Sebastopol', and garnered significant affection from the soldiers.[105] Upon her being declared bankrupt after the war, numerous military men came to her defence and financial aid.[106] One, "Da Meritis", wrote to *The Times* in late 1856 'where are the Crimeans? Have a few months erased from their memories those many acts of comforting kindness which made the name of the old mother venerated throughout the camp?'.[107] Others organised the "Seacole festival" in her honour.[108] Seacole does not appear to have been influenced by indulgent sentimentality when she drew her autobiography to a conclusion, stating that 'every step I take in the crowded London streets may bring me in contact with some friend, forgotten by me, perhaps, but who soon reminds me of our old life before Sebastopol'.[109]

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[102] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 96, see also pp. 97–104.
[103] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 135–36.
[104] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 138.
[105] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 112.
[106] Seacole listed several of the prominent men involved in the establishment of the Seacole Fund at the end of her autobiography. They included Major-General Lord Rokeby, K.C.B., to whom Seacole dedicated her autobiography and who she named as a trustee of her will. Also named were the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Newcastle, Major-General Richard Airey, Rear-Admiral Sir Stephen Lushington, and William Russell, the *Times* correspondent, who also provided the foreword to *Wonderful Adventures*. Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 171. See also newspaper reports about Seacole on pp. 173–80, and notes on p. 219–20.
[107] Da Meritis, 'Mrs Seacole a Bankrupt', *The Times*, 24 November 1856, p. 8.
[108] 'Festival at the Royal Surrey Gardens', *The Times*, 28 July 1857, p. 10.
[109] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 170.

Seacole was not wedded—literally or figuratively—to a specific regiment or rank, or even to a single class or nationality. As such, she was able to transcend these communities in her various roles as doctress, sutler, and "mother", for while her labour was framed in terms of a charitable national service in her autobiography, it could in fact be reconciled with military needs, the realities of military-civilian and even military-colonial interdependency, and expectations of femininity in varied guises across military and domestic spaces. Evans and Kerwin shared this transcendence to an extent, as they grappled with lived hardship, military power, and nostalgic memory to frame their identifications with their regiments. While any such transcendence of military hierarchies was curtailed for Frances Duberly by the demands her middle-class status, she nevertheless attempted to reconcile the two as she declared her own sense of belonging among the officers. Experiencing military space as domestic, or as a site of socio-cultural familiarity, a site of female exploitation, or even female mobility and agency prompted women to refine their identification with certain communities across that space in order to negotiate their own roles within them.

The Values of Military Femininity

Across these different communities, women nevertheless shared many experiences intrinsic to war—though mediated by class, rank, and social networks—that necessitated and engendered particular values and characteristics. In this, they bear many similarities to women in other military contexts, and indeed to soldiers. Frances Duberly's impassioned declaration in March 1855 that she could not bear to return to 'the artificial muslin rags – conventionalities and slanders – the Fashions and the heartgrindings [*sic*] of English sociality' after her experience during the Crimean War chimes with the sentiments of officers' wives who experienced life on the American frontier throughout the nineteenth century.[110] These women 'embraced army

[110] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 March 1855, fol. 126.

values', 'demanded to be understood as tough and resourceful', and even rejected identifications with civilian society.[111] Likewise, Margaret Kerwin's and Elizabeth Evans' assertions of devotion to their regiments and to their military lifestyles echoes the unflinching commitment to duty expected of the men throughout the work of warfare. In her study of army officers' wives and their roles as imperial agents in nineteenth-century America and colonial India, Verity McInnis has stated that 'an oxymoronic ideal of rugged femininity may have provided a basic prerequisite for crossing the gendered divide' in imperial space, for it enabled these officers' wives to access channels of military and imperial power and forge their own imperial identities.[112] In the Crimean war zone, such rugged femininity functioned similarly, for by documenting how they embraced and adhered to more "masculine", military values, army women mapped the ways in which they negotiated their own femininity in light of them, and demonstrate the degree to which they identified with military culture.

Endurance is a recurring theme in women's accounts of the war, as they—and the army—experienced significant hardships throughout their journeys to and time spent living in the Crimea. Their shared suffering required both physical and mental endurance, which encouraged their identification with the army. Margaret Kerwin joined the soldiers marching on foot across Bulgaria in the summer of 1854, carrying her belongings in her wash tub on her head.[113] She wrote that 'I also had a water-bottle and a haversack to carry my biscuits in. The priest and the minister had to carry their water-bottles and haversacks just the same as the soldiers', and by extension, just the same as her, suggesting that at times Kerwin perceived her own participation, as Evans did, as soldierly.[114] When the army finally landed in the Crimea at Eupatoria on 14 September, it took five days to fully disembark. With plans to march south

[111] Baker, 'Daughters of Mars', p. 42.
[112] V. McInnis, 'Indirect Agents of Empire: Army Officers' Wives in British India and the American West, 1830–1875', *Pacific Historical Review*, 83/3 (2014), p. 385.
[113] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 94.
[114] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 94.

immediately, and with no means of conveying baggage overland, the disembarkation of tents and knapsacks was delayed until wagons could be procured from the local area. As a result, many men had no proper shelter. Soldiers' wives could be even worse off; in Gallipoli, many had not been allocated any resources, not even a covering to form a shelter with.[115] Once in the Crimea, Elizabeth Evans and her husband slept in a dugout for some time. Through the last of the summer, they used 'twigs and branches as bedclothes, but when the cold weather came the covering was taken away for firewood'.[116] Throughout the winter she was 'perished with cold and hunger' and had 'nothing except what I stood up in'.[117] She wrote, 'how I suffered physically! But that was nothing to the anguish I endured whenever my husband was away in the trenches'.[118] Joanna Bourke has stated that in war, 'the ability not only to bear pain, but to be seen to bear it, was explicitly coded adult-male'.[119] Until the mid-twentieth century, stoically bearing pain was taken as a reflection of individual soldiers' patriotism and of the nation more broadly. It was also a military and masculine value that was mutually reinforced across gender divides and military hierarchies.[120] Indeed, Evans wrote that 'with all the privation and suffering there was such courage and patience shown as almost put into the shade, I think, the valour of the battlefield'.[121] But Evans also tried to emulate these traits, and in doing so disrupted the gendered coding of behaviour in war. At the same time, she rooted her own physical and mental forbearance in her devotion to her husband, thereby relying upon a more traditional, civilian—even romantic—gendered discourse to frame her display of military values. This apparent antagonism between masculine and feminine, military and civilian

[115] Captain Arthur Layard, quoted in Massie, *The National Army Museum Book of the Crimean War*, p. 18.
[116] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267.
[117] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.
[118] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.
[119] J. Bourke, 'Bodily Pain, Combat, and the Politics of Memoirs: Between the American Civil War and the War in Vietnam', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 46/91 (2013), p. 49.
[120] Bourke, 'Bodily Pain', pp. 48, 50–53.
[121] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267.

characteristics was in fact reconcilable in the military environment, for on the marches 'it was tramp, tramp, tramp, for woman as well as man', but Evans 'held up to it with a stout heart. I was young and strong, and I loved my husband. My place was with him, at his side when that was possible, and always with my regiment'.[122] The reliance on the military community for support in the war zone created circumstances in which Evans' loyalty and service to regiment and family became tightly entwined.

Hardship, however, could be relative. Frances Duberly was apprehensive about all that lay ahead of her before she had even reached the Mediterranean, while en route to Constantinople with the army in the early summer of 1854. She wrote to her sister in May, as the *Shooting Star* passed Algiers, that 'if I come back at all I shall be either as hardened as brass or utterly worn down. I have seen so much suffering even now'.[123] But the war did not provoke quite so drastic a character change. Duberly in fact experienced periods of both inurement and despair throughout the conflict. After a thirty-mile march across Bulgaria from Devna to Jeni-Bazar that summer, she complained in her *Journal* about the 'intolerable' heat and the generally 'distressing' nature of the experience, though she was resolute in her decision to remain with her husband.[124] In a letter to her sister recounting the same episode, she wrote:

> You ask how I really endure what I go thro' [*sic*]– By never thinking of it for one moment. If any one [*sic*] abandons themselves to the contemplation of actualities they either fall ill or die. Nothing but the most reckless determination carries you thro' [*sic*] . . . I am very thankful (for their sakes) that no other women have come out – it is no place for women – you must have just as much pluck as the men, or you are trodden down. Men are so eager for their own health & their own lives – their own

[122] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 267.
[123] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 5 May 1854, fol. 8.
[124] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 56

> sports & amusements that if you cross them – they leave you behind, if you go with them it's all very well.[125]

In doing so, Duberly hinted at the extent of hardship she encountered in these early days of marching, and at the apparent incompatibility between conventional understandings of femininity and the actual experience of war. She also emphasised her own exceptional capacity for fortitude, and her means of exercising that fortitude by embracing, even emulating, the outlook and actions of the men. She would repeat these sentiments throughout the war. In November 1854, after the battles of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman had been fought, she wrote from the Crimea that the misery and hardships in the camp 'press upon me very much . . . and a sort of desperate determination rises in my heart – a sort of antagonism that I feel will resist to the last'.[126]

However, Duberly's contacts and social circles produced material benefits that not only helped to alleviate the hardship she experienced but worked to maintain the standards and expectations shared across officer, middle- and upper-class society. When the troops first landed at Varna, Duberly and her husband were given a ham by Major de Salis, the colonel of the 8th Hussars, and were invited to dine—on fresh meat and beer—by Captain Fraser of the *Shooting Star*. These kindnesses sustained them in the absence of any other food; only bread had been issued, and the men of the lower ranks were left to stretch the rations they had brought from the ship for days.[127] In late 1854, the army remained encamped around Balaklava harbour as it laid siege to the Russian city of Sebastopol throughout a long winter, for which the army was poorly provisioned. One of Duberly's own horses died of 'sheer starvation' in late November, though she was able to enjoy an 'excellent dinner and kindly hospitality' from the

[125] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 17 August 1854, fol. 25.
[126] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 November 1854, fol. 76.
[127] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 3 June 1854, fol. 10 and Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 29–30.

Guards.[128] Her community of officers began to dwindle as some of the men returned to England in the summer of 1855, and Duberly wrote that she and her husband 'suffered . . . from the want of some one [*sic*] to supply us with actual food', whereas 'last winter Col[onel] Somerset could get us coals – General Airey – planks – Capt[ain] Lushington built the hut' which she had moved into in the spring.[129] She had a Turkish tent erected outside the hut, to serve as a drawing room when entertaining, as she still found it 'inconvenient' to live in a single room.[130] Duberly could also rely on her sister to send her anything she required. Although the conveyance of packages to the army camp did not always go smoothly, she nevertheless made requests for, and was sent, items such as fabric, clothing, paper, books, wellington boots, and even bandoline to set her hair.[131] The mediation of women's experiences of war through their different military communities and through their own place within military and civilian hierarchies rendered their constructs of military femininity highly individual. They had access to different means and drew to different extents upon their relationships across these networks.

Women's claims to endurance and bravery that emulated military men did not represent a total militarisation of their understanding of femininity, however, for their adoption of these traits could be illusory, or even, paradoxically, fragile. Mary Seacole admitted that while she had a 'reputation for determination and courage', this was nothing but 'a poor delusion', which she 'took care to heighten by the judicious display of a double-barrelled pistol . . . which I couldn't have loaded to save my life'.[132] She confessed to being 'often most horribly frightened at Spring Hill', the location of her British Hotel, where thieves abounded.[133] She was also 'seriously frightened' by the shells at the final bombardment of Sebastopol, though this fear in

[128] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 140.
[129] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 21 July 1855, fol. 9. Original emphasis.
[130] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 187.
[131] See, for example, BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 13 July 1855, fols 6–7, which contain a list of requests Duberly sent to her sister.
[132] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 100
[133] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 107.

action was something she also acknowledged among the soldiers, alongside their bravery.[134] In fact, Seacole's account provides many instances in which adult men betray both their physical and emotional pain and suffering, deconstructing gendered codes in a different way to Evans, but nevertheless facilitating her own construction of a femininity capable of braving, if tentatively, military space. Endurance, even of fear, was more than just a product of war; it was an essential element of her participation in a broader patriotic service.

Moreover, masculine and military values in the war zone were not attained at the cost of feminine or common sensibilities. Women often professed to feel the emotional toll of the war—including personal fear and anxiety—very keenly. Despite her professions of fearlessness, Frances Duberly was always anxious about her husband, and that anxiety only increased when disease swept through the camp. As cholera struck once again in the summer of 1855, many men died swiftly and Duberly herself was in a poor state of health. She wrote to her sister, 'I dread to let Henry out of my sight – Fancy – Alive in the morning & buried at night!! Oh God can only support one under such sickening anxiety'.[135] Indeed, it was scenes of suffering that most commonly prompted such emotive expressions. Margaret Kerwin saw wounded Frenchmen taken away after the assault on the Malakoff battery and wrote that 'I was crying and lamenting listening to their cries and moans'.[136] Similarly, Mary Seacole came across the hospital in Sebastopol upon the fall of the city in September 1855. She wrote that 'the very recollection of that woeful hospital, where thousands of dead and dying had been left by the retreating Russians, is enough to unnerve the strongest and sicken the most experienced. I would give much if I had never seen that harrowing sight'.[137] These women's commitment to the military and its culture facilitated their exposure to scenes of pain and suffering but that

[134] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 147.
[135] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 28 July 1855, fol. 13.
[136] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 96.
[137] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 151.

commitment did not, by extension, entail a blind acceptance of war as a tool of the state. Rather, their acute awareness of the horrors of war signalled their considerable emotional investment in the human cost of military endeavour.

Sometimes, however, travelling, living, and working with the army did entail more overt and conspicuous compromises of some elements of expected femininity, whether by choice, necessity, or sheer practicality. By December 1854, for example, Frances Duberly had dispensed with petticoats as 'an impossibility' and wore men's boots and trousers under her gown as she waded up and down the muddy roads to the camp. By April 1855, when her sister's shipments had been delayed, she wrote that 'if I'm obliged to walk about in a jacket & trowsers [*sic*] – it will be because I've no clothes'.[138] Verity McInnis has observed that some officers' wives in America and India used 'their bodies as imperial texts', adopting military uniforms to display their own military status and their power as female agents of empire. [139] Indeed, donning male garb could provide a means for women to promote their identification with military culture more generally. Margaret Kerwin wrote that she had her photograph taken while working about the camp, wearing her husband's forage cap; a source of pride and one which signified her place embedded in the work of the army.[140] Duberly, who was drawn to military spectacle, wore a French Chasseur jacket on one visit to the French lines, and requested her sister to order her a jacket 'handsomely braided *à la militaire*'.[141] But the effects wrought by war upon women were not all so superficial. Duberly wrote to her sister in March 1855, 'I know Francie [her brother-in-law, Francis Marx] thinks I will be in the way, but Francie must come out here – to see what women are after a Crimean winter — I am not now (or very seldom,

[138] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 December 1854, fol. 82 and 14 April 1855, fol. 145.
[139] McInnis, 'Indirect Agents of Empire', p. 387.
[140] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 95.
[141] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 8 June 1855, fol. 178; Add MS 47218 B, 13 July 1855, fol. 6.

sometimes I am) gentlewomanly & quiet as if butter wouldn't melt in my mouth'.[142] At times, Duberly even drew upon her affiliation with the military to compensate for the limitations in her own grasp of "feminine" accomplishments. In November 1854, she sent a sketch of the grave of General Sir George Cathcart to her sister, writing 'how unfortunate is my talent as an artist! I am ashamed to send so inadequate a sketch of so interesting a subject'.[143] Selina Marx was herself a talented artist, but Duberly's knowledge denoted a different kind of mastery and authority over the events and spaces of war, for she provided detailed commentary on the General, whom she had known personally, and the location of the grave site, 'almost within range of the guns of Sebastopol'.[144]

Another notable element of this rejection of femininity is the sense of adventure and exhilaration that women could find in the war zone. The very title of Seacole's autobiography, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, speaks to her intrepid spirit. In it, she recounts her travels between Jamaica, Panama, and London before she ventured to the Crimea; after the war, she first 'made various excursions into the interior, visiting Simpheropol [*sic*] and Baktchiserai [*sic*]', and then 'did not return to England by the most direct route, but took the opportunity of seeing more of men and manners in yet other lands', though these later travels are not elaborated upon.[145] It was about the war zone, however, that Seacole wrote 'I never remember feeling more excited or more restless', referring to the army's preparations to assault the Malakoff and Great Redan batteries.[146] Frances Duberly had begun to enjoy her experiences in terms of adventure early in the campaign, when the officers had been encamped in Bulgaria. She wrote, 'I thank God that ever since I put my foot on board the *Shooting Star* I have never known what fear was – have never been flurried or nervous – I have ridden down

[142] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 March 1855, fol. 127. Original emphasis.
[143] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, begun 11 November 1854, fol. 68.
[144] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, begun 11 November 1854, fol. 68.
[145] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 162, 169.
[146] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 135.

steep gorges after dark with only Henry & no pistol – where men have been shot – & been just as happy as at home'.[147] However, it was her arrival in Balaklava in early October 1854 and her subsequent settlement there, first on board ships in the harbour and later in the hut she shared with her husband, that allowed her to embrace military life as denoting a freedom full of challenge. She wrote in October 1854 that 'this life is full of charm for me, you have an adventure, a danger, an excitement every hour'.[148] She later wrote in her *Journal* that 'I could not but feel a high degree of excitement, and I think it was not unnatural' as she and her husband looked over the city of Sebastopol under siege. She continued, 'I have often prayed that I might "*wear* out my life, and not rust it out," and it may be that my dreams and aspirations will be realised'.[149] The war zone may have shared features with civilian life, but it remained a space of distance from the rigid social constraints of mid-nineteenth-century Britain. As such, it was a space where, if so inclined, women could push the boundaries of those constraints as army women, to find fulfilment that simply was not available to them as civilians. Despite their many differences, the pride that these women felt in their military affiliations, the horrors that they witnessed, the liberation that they found, and the physical and mental strain that they endured contributed to a shared conviction in their belonging to an 'elite female identity'.[150]

Exceptional women

The values embraced by army women could create a certain distance from civilian women that has also been observed among officers' wives by Baker and McInnis.[151] Elizabeth Evans wrote proudly about how she repaired the regiment's colours after the Battle of Alma: 'I wonder if there is any other Englishwoman living who can say that she has repaired Colours which she

[147] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 17 August 1854, fol. 25.
[148] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 13 October 1854, fols 52–53.
[149] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 102. Original emphasis.
[150] McInnis, 'Indirect Agents of Empire', p. 408.
[151] Baker, 'Daughters of Mars', pp. 39–42; McInnis, 'Indirect Agents of Empire', pp. 407–409.

has seen carried into action and waving in the battle smoke?'[152] Similarly, Margaret Kerwin reported that she briefly witnessed the assault on the Malakoff battery through a telescope lent to her by William Russell, *The Times*' war correspondent. Russell told her that she 'had seen something that very few women in England had seen, and that was a heavy battle fought'.[153] While socially and culturally removed from the rank-and-file who suffered most, Duberly was not oblivious to the sobering realities of that suffering, as friends in England who only read about them could be at times. She wrote in late August 1854, while the army was still encamped in Bulgaria and besieged by cholera, that 'I shuddered as Mrs Butt said "she hoped to see me in Eaton Square & laugh over my adventures with me!" Why–not far from me was a soldier seized with cholera at 4, dead at 5 & buried at six'.[154] However, what stands out among accounts by women who experienced the Crimean War is the narrative distance that they created not only from civilian women, but also from other army women in their public construction of military femininity.[155]

Elizabeth Evans initially travelled with two other women belonging to the 4th Regiment, though they became separated when the army disembarked from Gallipoli for Varna. Evans wrote that together, they made a 'remarkable mixture, for [we] represented the United Kingdom. I was English, there was an Irishwoman, and there was a Scotchwoman'.[156] Although they all gained permission to travel, they did so aboard separate ships, and Evans claimed that she 'never saw another woman' for the remaining two years of the campaign.[157] However, another woman, Mrs Kelly, received some commendation in the press upon her

[152] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 268.
[153] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', p. 96.
[154] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 28 August 1854, fols 32–33.
[155] This is somewhat of a contrast to trends observed by Anni Baker in the writings of US officers' wives. In these women's accounts, older wives often set an example of military femininity, and helped younger wives to adapt to life on the frontier. See Baker, 'Daughters of Mars', pp. 29–30.
[156] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 266.
[157] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 266.

return from the war for enduring the hardships alongside her husband, while it was reported in her later life that a third, Mrs Chilton, had paid her own way out to join her first husband in the Crimea—both belonged to the 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot.[158] Also in later years, it was reported that another woman of the 4th Regiment, Rebecca Box, had been present. According to one report, she:

> Went through the whole of the Crimean War with her husband, extending over 2 ½ years. She was originally one of the three women selected to act as nurses, under Miss Florence Nightingale, and after performing these duties faithfully, eventually followed her husbands' regiment right up to the front. Throughout the progress of the war she suffered extreme privations, during the excessive cold was frost-bitten . . . "Beeky," as she was familiarly known by the troops, was a great favourite . . . Her daring was most noticeable, and she would find her way to the French lines and procure Brandy, so that her boys should have something to "warm them up a bit." Possessing Herculean strength, it is said she could pick up a big six-foot man, and put him on her shoulder.[159]

This report is remarkably similar to Elizabeth Evans' own account. Indeed, the women studied in this chapter do bear some striking resemblances to each other, though each made similar claims to such exceptionalism by erasing, through narrative means, the presence of other women. Although Margaret Kerwin acknowledged that there were fourteen other women who left England with the 19th Regiment, she only mentioned one woman, the widow of the

[158] On Mrs Kelly, see 'A Crimean Heroine', *Carlow Sentinel*, 30 August 1856, p. 3. See also 'Crimean Heroines Recognised' in chapter 4. It is possible, though it cannot be confirmed, that she was the Irishwoman that Evans refers to in her account. On Mrs Chilton, see M. F. Billington, 'Surviving Crimean War Nurses', *The Quiver*, 417 (July 1908), p. 743.
[159] King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster: 'Soldiers of the Regiment: Mrs Rebecca Box', http://www.kingsownmuseum.com/mrsbox.htm, accessed 29/09/2021.

Sergeant Murphy who died, explicitly; the rest simply do not appear in her account again. Mary Seacole encountered Florence Nightingale and Selina Bracebridge, Nightingale's friend and an administrator of the military nursing venture that Nightingale led, when she passed through the Scutari Barrack Hospital on her way to the Crimea. When Bracebridge assumed that Seacole desired a position in the hospital, Seacole set her straight: '"Excuse me, ma'am," I interrupted her with, "but I am bound for the front in a few days;" and my questioner [left] me, more surprised than ever'.[160] None of the nurses sent out by the government were employed at the front; the closest that they came were the military hospitals at Balaklava. Although soldiers' wives could work as nurses in the camp and at field hospitals, that work was informal and was rarely rendered visible in contemporary narratives of the war.

Amy Robinson has argued that by emphasising her proximity to the fighting as the only woman at the front, 'where even Florence Nightingale refuses to go on a regular basis', Seacole cemented her claims to British subjectivity through her consciousness of her racial difference, which 'augments her delighted account of her fame as *the* English woman'.[161] Within the context of women's writing about the Crimean War, however, this appears to have become a trope of the wider genre, as a means of also navigating class and, particularly, gender. Recounting the fall of Sebastopol, Seacole wrote that she 'offer[ed] bets to every one [*sic*] that I would not only be the first woman to enter Sebastopol from the English lines, but that I would be the first to carry refreshments into the fallen city'.[162] In doing so, she glossed over the potentially problematic presence of other women, such as soldiers' and officers' wives not only of the British but also of the French army, who could detract from Seacole's narrative authority. Likewise, in her *Journal*, Frances Duberly briefly acknowledged her acquaintance with Lady Erroll, the wife of a captain in the Rifle Brigade, whom she had met while the army had been

[160] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 81.
[161] Robinson, 'Authority and the Public Display of Identity', p. 553. Original emphasis.
[162] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 148–49.

encamped at Varna. However, Duberly stated that Lady Erroll had decided to remain on board the *Echunga* when the army crossed to the Crimea, while Duberly herself went on to narrate her own close proximity to the army and to the fighting throughout the war.[163]

These textual constructions of exceptionalism operate in terms of what Kate McLoughlin has referred to as 'being there' and 'be[ing] there *first*' in women's war writing.[164] As McLoughlin states:

> "Being there" is not just a matter of presence. It is also a question of *where*, precisely, to be, and how to get there, when to get there, and how close or distant (geographically, physically, politically, emotionally) to place oneself in relation to the subject when one has arrived.[165]

The Crimean War was the last conflict in which British women were permitted to follow their husbands to war. As such, in contrast to other contexts such as colonial outposts, women were relatively few in number. Accounts of the war—specifically of the war zone—written by women were even rarer, not only during the conflict and in its aftermath, but even into the twentieth century.[166] Being there, in terms of presence, bestowed some degree of status among a home audience as the war became a point of national focus, thanks to the extensive press coverage it received. In addition, women's textual and, often, retrospective claims to presence *and* to a deeper personal and emotional investment in the army—made to the wider public—

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[163] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 75. Duberly refers to the ship as the *Echinga*.
[164] K. McLoughlin, *Martha Gellhorn: The War Writer in the Field and in the Text* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 94, 99. Original emphasis.
[165] McLoughlin, *Martha Gellhorn*, p. 94.
[166] A surgeon's wife, Marianne Young, published an account, *Our Camp in Turkey, and the Way To It* in late 1854, which details her travels from Malta to Gallipoli, and thence through Turkey to Varna with the army. Young returned to England in late 1854. Although several accounts were published by nurses in the aftermath of the conflict, over the following decades, and even posthumously—some in recent collections—these nurses did not experience life in the camps or witness actual conflict at the front in the Crimea. See chapter 4 for more on nurses' accounts.

required a careful navigation of one's personal social standing and femininity. They took part in textual and experiential navigations of place; of McLoughlin's 'being there', and of Massey's concept of place as a particular articulation of social relationships within space. By excluding the presence of other women, these female narrators of war ensured their position as *the* legitimate embodiment of military femininity in the war zone, as constructed for their readers. Even as their texts subsequently compete with each other, their articulations of similar values do not necessarily undermine their exceptionality. Rather, their combined texts reinforce the basis upon which individual claims to exceptionalism are made, for each clearly occupied a unique positionality.

However, this exceptionalism was not only an important device in public narratives. Frances Duberly's letters demonstrate clearly that such claims to exceptionalism functioned as a crucial means of upholding constructs of military femininity even among small or intimate networks, and in her own self-perception. Soldiers' wives provided Duberly with a glaring point of contrast. Duberly hired several soldiers' wives as maids throughout the campaign. One, Mrs Blaydes, died in August 1854.[167] Another, Mrs Finegan worked for Duberly for some months. Finegan's husband died at the Battle of Balaklava in October 1854, and in March 1855 Duberly told her sister that 'Mrs Finegan (the soldier's widow) is all right – and making lots of money by washing – she has got over Finegan wondrously – & talks of him now much as I do about an old show – but is a very good woman nevertheless'.[168] Later, however, Finegan came to live up to the reprehensible reputation often attributed to soldiers' wives by apparently having multiple affairs, among other misdemeanours. Duberly wrote:

[167] Duberly commented in her *Journal* upon this occasion, though more as a reporter on the state of the army than as a mourner, that 'truly, we are in God's hands, and far enough from the help of man! . . . Insufficient medical attendance (many of the doctors are ill), scanty stores, and no sick diet—we must feed out dying on rations and rum!' See Duberly, *Journal*, p. 64.
[168] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 March 1855, fol. 128. Original emphasis.

> There has been a deal of very fishy business . . . & the upshot is that Sergeant Lynch refuses to marry the lady, as does also Corporal Hurst – I believe & the lady is in the high state of indignant virtue – & has been washing for every body [*sic*] except us – & having select parties in our place – while we were away & breaking the plates – & all kinds of scandal.[169]

As a result, Finegan was not only dismissed, but was ordered to be sent home, along with the last remaining woman of the regiment who Duberly also described as 'disgustingly disreputable'.[170] Duberly was left 'alone in my glory', and took much satisfaction in later finding out that 'Mrs Finegan's weak mind has (so I hear) been overpowered like Villikens' Dinah – by a "soldier both gallant and gay" & I am informed she is in the family way – which is delightful for all parties concerned, especially me'.[171] In another instance, Duberly had written that more generally, being steady and respectful were two things 'no soldier's wife out here ever dreams of being'.[172] For Duberly, soldiers' wives as lower-class *and* lower-ranking women—who were already widely held in contempt at this time as the focus of anxieties about female morality amidst the army—embodied traits that were wholly unacceptable to a woman of her own rank and class; the implication in Duberly's letters is that she herself was indeed "steady" and "respectful" in her conduct in the war zone. While there may be a tacit recognition in Duberly's statements of the disruption that such scandals and behaviour could cause to military discipline, her condemnations of Mrs Finegan and of soldiers' wives are primarily framed in terms of classed and gendered expectations that did not threaten her own position as

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[169] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, undated letter possibly written between 30 July and 3 August 1855, fol. 17. Original emphasis.
[170] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, undated letter possibly written between 30 July and 3 August 1855, fol. 18.
[171] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, undated letter possibly written between 30 July and 3 August 1855, fol. 17 and undated letter possibly written 1 September 1855, fol. 44. This is a reference to a stage song which became popular in 1853, "Villikens and Dinah".
[172] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, begun 11 November 1854, fol. 70.

a woman following the army. Rather, Duberly affirmed her own suitability as a follower of the army by contrast, as a married, middle-class, well-conducted lady.

Duberly equally drew upon women of higher social standing to navigate her own military femininity and to establish her exceptionalism in terms of it. When Lady Erroll first arrived at the camp in Varna, Duberly was sceptical. In her *Journal* she merely wrote that she was 'curious to see' Lady Erroll, though she elaborated when writing to her sister: 'she always goes about with a brace of loaded revolvers in her belt!! Very cocktail & no occasion for it'.[173] Lady Errol's social status and genteel nature soon won Duberly over. Her few subsequent appearances in Duberly's letters and *Journal* are framed in terms of a respected friendship, though their scarcity once again works to emphasise Duberly's own authority over the female experience of the conflict across both mediums. One episode in particular stands out, however; that is, when Duberly and Lady Erroll went to meet a new arrival at the camp in Varna, Mrs Adelaide Cresswell, the wife of a Captain in the 11th Hussars. Born Adelaide Eliza Gordon-Cumming, Mrs Cresswell was the daughter of Sir William Gordon-Cumming, 2nd Baronet of Altyre and Gordonstoun and Eliza Maria Campbell, an aristocrat, painter, and horticulturalist. Writing to her sister, Duberly expressed her horror at the figure of Mrs Cresswell from the beginning. Given that she was Duberly's equal in terms of rank—if not her superior in terms of social class—the vehemence of Duberly's condemnation is striking:

> We [Duberly and Lady Erroll] heard wonderful stories of her [Mrs Cresswell] before she arrived – such as that she was a "tremendous woman" – a dead shot – a brilliant rider – & very fast – Poor Lady Erroll (who is so kind to me) & I were frightened out of our wits, especially as they put in an Irish paper that "when her husband was killed she would lead the troops into action!" At last we determined to put on our most

[173] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 30; BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 3 June 1854, fol. 10.

> feminine get up – and go and call . . . We expected something rather fashionable & brilliant – but after waiting some time a woman came from among the troop horses – so dirty – with such uncombed scruffy hair – such black nails – such a dirty cotton gown, open at the neck without a sign of habitshirt or collar, or linen sleeve – Oh you never had a kitchenmaid so dreadful. She calls the officers "the boys" & addresses them as "Bill" & "Jack" – talks of nothing but her horse – and found fault with my saddle – which happens to be a particularly good one – says she hasn't ridden for nine years – and cries with fear if her horse does anything – Told me I was "a fool" to have a marquee, a bell tent was quite good enough for any one – that my husband would vote me "a bore" if I didn't cook his dinner – that I was foolish to wear collar & sleeves, as they were unnecessary – & that if I wished my husband to like me, I should always the night before a march strike my tent & sleep wither wrapped in a cloak or "anywhere"– I should like to catch Henry sleeping out! In fact she took my breath away so completely that I doubt if I shall not be broken winded all my life – I do not exaggerate when I say that her neck & bare arms – were earth colour with dirt . . . Lady Erroll is charming – she is an innate lady and is very kind to me.[174]

Duberly identified far more with conventional views of femininity held among civilian society than with this example of a woman whose femininity appeared utterly lost to military life, despite Duberly's own proclamations about the freedom that she herself found in the war zone. Duberly in fact drew upon the conventions of femininity that she adhered to in her criticism of Mrs Cresswell—fashionableness, cleanliness, grace, decorum, her own accomplished horsemanship, propriety, and comfort even in military living—in her own construct of military femininity, just as much as she adopted masculine and martial values or identified with military

[174] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 July 1854, fols 18–19. Original emphasis.

culture. For example, Duberly attempted to maintain an appropriately fashionable and feminine image about the camp, in contrast to the ostentatious display that she at first perceived in Lady Erroll's dress and the utter disregard of feminine propriety she denounced in Mrs Cresswell. Despite her adoption of men's clothing and her later declaration that 'as to a bonnet I can never stand one again . . . Petticoats also are an abomination', even after the hardships of the winter Duberly ordered 'pretty' coloured neck ribbons and a gown 'that will look nice' from her sister in England.[175] She had plenty of admirers as a result: Surgeon Major William Menzies Calder wrote in his diary that 'Mrs D is quite a famous lady here, having been with the army all thro' [*sic*] the expedition. She is good looking, but her nose is decidedly retroussé. She has beautiful fair hair which gets dishevelled & so forth when she gallops along; she is a good horsewoman'.[176] On several occasions, Duberly related her own anecdotes about the admiration she received from Omar Pasha, a commander in the Turkish army, who reputedly called her 'the beautiful English Lady with the long flaxen curls'.[177]

For Duberly, military femininity was about striking a balance between the outward expectations and standards of her social and military status, and her inward character changes as a result of experiencing the realities of life in the war zone. At the same time, the war zone also provided a space in which she could outwardly express sides of her character that chaffed against those expectations, and where she could also reflect upon the pitfalls in the relationship between femininity and the war zone in an attempt to navigate them. Soon after her lengthy condemnation of Cresswell, Duberly wrote 'I rejoice to say that the swaggering Mrs Cresswell has to retire to Therapia "along with the women folk" – while in about a week's time I shall be

[175] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 29 January 1855, fols 106–107.
[176] Crimean War diary of Surgeon Major William Menzies Calder, pp. 245–246, Wellcome Collection, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/xse9ag7h, accessed 14/09/2021.
[177] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, begun 11 July 1854, fol. 14.

hearing: The mingled din of steed & fife, & trump, & drum, & roaring culverin!'[178] Within weeks, Captain Cresswell had been killed, leaving his wife a widow before she could ever join him in the Crimea. Duberly expressed sympathy in her *Journal*, but writing towards the end of the war on the flirtatious, indecorous conduct of several women—including Cresswell—Duberly concluded vehemently that 'soldiers' wives from the dirtiest private's wife to the Colonel's wife – are all unlike any other woman . . . Can you now wonder at the abhorrent shrinking that I feel from <u>all</u> women. With almost the sole exception of my sisters – Lady D[uberly, her mother-in-law] – Mrs Charlton – and one or two more whom I know to be good Xtian [*sic*] women – & whom I love & honour as such'.[179]

Other women could embody alternative and, therefore, competing articulations of femininity that jeopardised claims to a legitimate military femininity. Duberly made comparisons and contrasts between herself and such women in her letters to her sister that reveal both the threat, and the potential, that these models held for her own construction of her military femininity. Although Duberly relished the freedom that she found in her life with the army, she continued to rely on many civilian conventions of femininity to affirm her status, as her military and civilian standings intertwined. Her military femininity was composite: she neither totally rejected nor attempted to exactly replicate middle-class gender norms. Instead, she navigated the resulting tension through comparisons and contrasts with other military women. Lower-class soldiers' wives did not align with her ideals. Lady Erroll embodied Duberly's ideal of feminine civility but appeared to lack the will or vigour to embrace the war zone. Mrs Cresswell, Duberly believed, rejected conventions of femininity to *too* great a degree, even while Duberly frequently highlighted her own departure from those conventional

[178] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 1 September 1854, fol. 38. This is a slightly misremembered reference to the ballad Ivry (1824), by Thomas Babington Macaulay: "Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din / Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin".
[179] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 6 February 1856, fol. 135. Original emphasis.

forms of middle-class femininity as she adjusted to the war zone. More broadly, minimising the presence of other women in narratives of the war, and drawing implicit and explicit comparisons that served to emphasise the necessity and exceptionality of one's own military femininity were the most common and effective ways that women managed their own "placement" and "arrival" in the war zone, in their texts and lived experiences.

Conclusion

Military femininity did not necessarily represent a struggle to uphold middle-class gender roles among the army; neither did it always entail a rejection of civilian life and values in favour of military culture. Military femininity was far more nuanced. Both in texts and in experiences, it was a navigation of class, rank, military power, loyalty across familial and martial relationships, physical hardship, patriotism, and femininity. Military femininity could be very similar to a remarkable degree across social demographics, but an individual's class status, army relationships, and personal experiences meant that military femininity was also an individualistic construction.

This individual positionality also influenced women's experiences of military communities. The variety of social connections that women forged challenged the nature of the military power structure as it related to them, by transforming the army from an institution and machine of war into a range of subjective social groups at a personal level. The military community could be multiply defined beyond the institutional parameters of the regiment, particularly as women—whose incorporation into the army's regimental system was both institutionally inconsistent and personally variable—formed their own social relationships. Within this matrix, women developed rich networks of connections that provided the setting for their negotiation of femininity in military space; for these military communities not only

represented women's aspirations for inclusion, but also provided multiple pathways for their unofficial integration.

Through their reflections on their affective personal relationships and upon their experiences of war, army women's accounts reveal the extent of their attachment to military life and culture more generally. Their articulations and displays of military femininity could include elements of a more traditional domesticity or civilian culture alongside a forceful identification with the army. In particular, the context, social dynamics, and needs of war and its participants—male and female—provided opportunities for discourses and values that belied rigid gendered ideals to take on increased significance in lived experiences. New physical and ideological spaces were created where women could traverse the divisions between expectations of womanhood, the role of military wives, affective and labour relations with the army, and the practical and cognitive demands of active conflict with some apparent legitimacy. Women across the social hierarchies of the war zone were able to do this, through broad and emotive cultural practices that add nuance to our understandings of gender roles and identities in the army.

Life with the army and experiences of the war zone required both bodily strength and strength of character among women but, as they embraced military culture as their own, women were prompted and able to go further, by emulating to varying degrees the bravery and stoicism that they observed among the men. In doing so, they participated in the maintenance of their military communities and even situated themselves within patriotic narratives of the nation, as they reflected the admirable character traits of their male companions. Some even found liberation in a space, and in communities, that did not seem to cling quite so tightly to gendered, civilian social norms. Women's displays and endorsement of masculine and military values could be changeable and contradictory as they encountered the changing conditions of war, experiencing periods of excitement, danger, suffering, and sorrow in the war zone.

Military femininity was, therefore, constructed partly through contrasts to and distance from civilian women and codes of feminine conduct. But, in their accounts of the war and through their (lack of) engagement with other women in the war zone, Evans, Kerwin, Seacole, and Duberly emphasised the broader necessity of situating military femininity amid, and perhaps most importantly in contrast to, other, arguably more legitimate or potentially more damaging forms of femininity. In doing so, they continued to establish their identification with the military and, in particular, they made claims to an exceptional status by virtue of their own, self-declared exceptional embodiment of a scrupulous military femininity amid the army. Both during the conflict and in their later lives, these women considered themselves to have valuable roles as wives, labourers, and as women that put them in a self-consciously ambiguous position under a military authority that marginalised them, but which always positioned them as the fellows of army men and as active participants in the Crimean War.

Chapter 2: Battlefield Tourism and the Boundaries of Femininity

In early May 1855, Adjutant General James Estcourt gave his permission for his wife and sister, Caroline and Marianne Estcourt, to join him in the Crimea. The three had been travelling together in Italy when Estcourt was given his military appointment in early 1854, and both women had accompanied him to Constantinople in April. When the General went with the troops to the Crimea that summer, Marianne and Caroline remained behind, living in Pera and Therapia, integrating with the community of British officers and officers' wives, and exploring the sights up and down the Bosphorus. The two finally travelled to Balaklava the following year, arriving on 12 May 1855, and spent the next six weeks residing on board ships in the harbour, visiting James Estcourt daily, and touring the battlements and surrounding countryside. On 6 June, Marianne wrote in her diary that 'James told us a great secret that they were going to open fire today at 3 & that we should like to see it, so we could go to the front'.[1] This was the third bombardment of Sebastopol. The Estcourts joined a number of other onlookers at the front of the 4th Division, where there were 'clouds of smoke, bang bang, whiz whiz, & the burst of the shells going on . . . awful sight, much more awful sound'.[2] Marianne continued, 'we watched for a little while & then Colonel Somerset took us to his hut, gave us cake made in Corfu'.[3] Later they 'dined together almost as peacefully as former days, only there was the horrible sound, & the thought that each sound brought death'.[4]

[1] Gloucester, Gloucestershire Archives (GA), Marianne Estcourt Manuscript Diary, 1855, D1571/F558, 6 June 1855.
[2] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 6 June 1855.
[3] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 6 June 1855.
[4] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 6 June 1855.

While military femininity is identifiable among the women who lived and travelled with the army as "army women", negotiations of femininity within this space of conflict are further evident among middle- and upper-class women who adopted the role of tourist. These two groups are not mutually exclusive; it has already been noted that Frances Duberly enjoyed excursions across the war zone for leisure. But while Duberly's experiences of both danger and leisure might be reconciled with her long residence in the war zone and her emphatic identification with the army, one might read Estcourt's account and be astounded. Modern sensibilities make it extremely difficult to comprehend such casual observation of scenes suffused with fear, death, and destruction in the war zone. It is hard to empathise with James Estcourt's supposition that his wife and sister would like to witness the bombardment, or the relative ease with which the Estcourts reprised the comfortable familiarities and luxuries of their social strata within that same militarised space. Indeed, the Estcourt women's role as observers at the battlefield bears more than a passing resemblance to that which they adopted throughout their excursions along the Bosphorus. Their visits to bazaars, the Hagia Sophia, the Sweet Waters of Asia, and harems—all "must see", "oriental" sights for the Western traveller in Constantinople—served similarly as sites of curiosity and amusement.

It is well known that experiences of conflict have historically been sharply divided along class lines. What is more significant here is that in laying bare the inequalities of class, the Crimean War battlefields became spaces that provided middle- and upper-class women the scope for inclusion in the conduct of the campaign, through knowledge of and confidence in their own privilege. Their touristic stance further exposes the connections across military and civilian spheres, which provided additional pathways for women to access military space. Marianne Estcourt was not oblivious to the deadly reality of the war zone. However, it is undeniable that the battlefield, like "oriental" tourist destinations, functioned conspicuously as a site of interest, display, and even leisure as part of a more holistic jaunt through "the East".

How are we to understand this convergence of tourism with a military campaign? A growing body of research exploring battlefield tourism has represented travel to war zones as an example of "thanatourism" or "dark tourism", characterised by a preoccupation with sites of death and tragedy.[5] A number of scholars have also interrogated battlefield tourism as a specific form in and of itself. Mark Piekarz, in particular, has termed the visiting of live battlefields 'hot war tourism', defined as:

> The phenomenon of people travelling and staying in locations, which are currently experiencing conflict and violence, or are still recovering from such events, and can either be directly sought and experienced, or else is an indirect experience, acting as a starting backdrop to the travel event, as the people involved are motivated by other purposes, such as travelling for work, or as part of a pilgrimage.[6]

Despite the modern examples used in its articulation, this is a definition that does not rely on modern understandings of curated and/or commercialised leisure travel. As such, "hot war tourism" and the "hot war tourist" are important and historically relevant concepts to draw upon, for they are sensitive and inclusive, recognising the draw that the ongoing or recent conflict can hold, and foregrounding the diversity of human interest and activity in such spaces. Indeed, Piekarz outlined a number of broad categories of "hot war tourist", by considering different visitor motivations for travel to battlefield locations. A number of these categories,

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[5] A. V. Seaton, 'War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815–1914', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26/1 (1999), pp. 130–158; A. V. Seaton, '"Another Weekend Away Looking for Dead Bodies…": Battlefield Tourism on the Somme and in Flanders', *Tourism Recreation Research*, 25/3 (2000), pp. 63–77; J. Lennon and M. Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London, 2001); S. Miles, 'From Hastings to the Ypres Salient: Battlefield Tourism and the Interpretation of Fields of Conflict', in R. Butler and W. Suntikul (eds), *Tourism and War* (London, 2013), pp. 221–31.

[6] M. Piekarz, 'Hot War Tourism: The Live Battlefield and the Ultimate Adventure Holiday?', in C. Ryan (ed.), *Battlefield Tourism: History, Place and Interpretation* (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 157–58.

which are not mutually exclusive, can help to contextualise the actions of women like the Estcourts, by considering the "tourist" in broad terms that encompass both leisure and obligation. The 'cocktail traveller', for example, finds that the danger of war enhances the experience of travel; for the 'pilgrim', such travel functions as a mode of private memorial; the 'duty' traveller goes to war zones as part of peacekeeping or support efforts; while the 'rubberneck' traveller has more morally suspect motivations, arising from curiosity and voyeurism.[7]

How did women view the Crimean battlefields and, consequently, how did they interpret and navigate the tension between characterisations of the battlefield as militarised and deadly, yet also enticing, exciting, and spectacular for a female audience? The nineteenth-century military was an institution suffused with spectacle, from extravagant uniforms to the regimental colours, the blaring music of military bands, and the minute discipline of military reviews. This spectacle and accompanying ceremony helped to forge an ingrained military identity among the soldiers, while creating an appealing imagery of state power, worthy of national pride, for the wider public.[8] Ulrich Keller has studied the consumption of spectacle in the Crimean War—by observers at the battlefield, as well as the British public's fascination with military imagery—arguing that the Crimean War 'required to be viewed and depicted in sophisticated ways, and the modalities of contemporary visual appreciation form an integral part of its history'.[9] Certainly the touristic outlook was particular to the middle and upper classes. In Estcourt's diary, the battlefield has the dual function of combat zone and site of interest. Estcourt's movement between scenes of war and relative domesticity is a recurring feature across middle- and upper-class women's accounts of the Crimean war zone more generally.

[7] Piekarz, 'Hot War Tourism', pp. 164–66.
[8] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle,* pp. 11–13, 87–103, 150–56.
[9] U. Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (New York, NY, 2001), p. 4.

Indeed, in this way they mirror the experiences of many military officers, who occupied the same social strata. Although the battlefield was primarily a site of fighting and bloodshed, contact with the battlefield could take many forms beyond the act of fighting and killing. For women in particular, this contact often included the consumption of the battlefield's spectacle. It is in these other, contiguous moments that middle- and upper-class women constructed the battlefield as touristic, by emphasising their participation in particularly classed ways of viewing and accessing the space. Furthermore, it was through classed and gendered expectations that existed in relation to women's conduct, and the ways in which individual women understood their own classed and gendered relationships to the military, that they composed a rationale for their presence and actions.

Consequently, this chapter will explore the contentious nature of women's contact with the battlefield. Despite a shared appreciation of military spectacle, classed and gendered expectations and relationships were often understood very differently by men and women in the war zone, both collectively and individually. Many military practices, particularly among officers, appear to have made men complicit in the deconstruction of apparent binaries between the domestic and martial, labour and leisure aspects of the battlefield, which women's presence complicated in very conspicuous ways. However, these same men nevertheless constructed boundaries around the battlefield and acceptable feminine behaviour that not only called into question women's presence, but also complicated their actions in terms of military and civilian values that went beyond binary gender characterisations.

The final question that this chapter will consider is: how were women situated within broader practices located at the convergence of Crimean War "tourism" and military activity? Men and women of all ranks and classes revisited scenes of conflict. Moreover, they shared in the practice of collecting material objects associated with the scenes of bloodshed, from flowers to ammunition, even pieces of military equipment and scraps of dead men's uniforms. This act

could be imbued with several meanings. It could provide a way for women to include themselves in patriotic narratives of the progress, celebration, and commemoration of the military campaign. It could function as a highly personal and emotive means of remembrance. It could also be drawn upon by military men as a way to emphasise women's non-belonging in militarised space, and foreground competing constructions of femininity. Examining this practice exposes the ways in which women's presence at the battlefield remained deeply problematic within broader military and social frames, despite their own claims to the contrary.

Gendered Space

The concept of the battlefield as a military space has gendered connotations that were substantially disrupted by the view of the battlefield as a tourist space, particularly as a tourist space suitable for women. Most men considered the war zone in general, and the battlefield in particular, to be a place unfit for women. James Estcourt was initially highly reluctant to allow his wife and sister to join him in the Crimea. He wrote to them in March 1855, 'do not think of coming here, my dearest people, all sorts of sights present themselves which do not suit your eyes'.[10] Although he relented, he still had reservations when they arrived in May, telling them that they would likely be confined to their ship in Balaklava harbour for much of the time, not only because his living space at the British headquarters was too far away by foot for him to see them daily, but 'because as I have told you before, this is not a very fitting place for a lady to be in'.[11] Another man, Edwin Galt, published an account of the war adapted from his dairy and letters in 1856. In one chapter, he summarised the problematic position of women in relation to the battlefield very explicitly:

[10] GA, Caroline Estcourt Diary and Copy Letters, D1571/F503, 15 March 1855 (copy of a letter from James Estcourt, written 13 March 1855).
[11] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 3 May 1855 (copy of a letter from James Estcourt, written 1 May 1855).

> Having finished this chapter, I am surprised at myself for talking so much to ladies about military affairs (this was originally addressed to a lady). The feminine disposition being so totally the opposite of warlike, and so full of peace, and love, and charity,—were it not that I consider this my diary, I could never forgive myself for having filled her head with such awful things as scarps, and counterscarps, trenches, parapets, curtains, fougasses, casemates, and barbettes, and sorties.[12]

Yet for Galt, the war in the Crimea was a tourist attraction. Galt was a civilian, who travelled to the Crimea in 1855. After a journey across Europe and the Mediterranean to pick up his cutter in Malta, he cruised to the Crimea where he spent several weeks exploring the military camp and Crimean countryside. He was entitled to do so, not as a soldier, but as a man. The battlefield was understood as a masculine space in opposition to the feminine "home", but "masculine" did not strictly equate to "martial". After all, the Crimea also functioned as a site of leisure and tourism for military men. When the siege of Sebastopol dragged into the spring and summer of 1855, officers took pleasure in exploring and hosting events throughout the war zone, as a way to maintain morale after the difficult winter and to distract from the slow progress of the campaign. Races and riding parties were held regularly, and the Monastery of St George, located just outside of Balaklava, was a popular picnic destination. As Doreen Massey has posited, spaces (constructed through social relationships) and places (a particular articulation of, or moment within those social relationships) 'are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood'.[13] In being coded "masculine", the Crimea as a war zone represented an articulation of nineteenth-century gender relations in which male and female had distinct and largely opposite characterisations. However, when accessed by a particular class of men—

[12] E. Galt, *The Camp and the Cutter, Or, A Cruise to the Crimea* (London, 1856), p. 97.
[13] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 179.

officers and others from the middle and upper classes of British society—the social relations in play in the construction of that space widened in scope, beyond the military to the civilian. They also intrinsically linked military endeavour and danger with touristic leisure: the widely attended races were at times interrupted by the need to assemble men to engage in skirmishes with Cossack forces; riding parties across the war zone were never entirely safe and were often fired upon by enemy Russians; and the popular Monastery of St George was in fact used to hold Russian prisoners of war. As Massey has also stated, the dynamic nature of social relationships that constitute space and place represent an 'ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification' amid the 'multiplicity of spaces' which those social relationships create.[14]

The practice of civilian travel was, therefore, significant. During the Crimean War, women's travel across wider "Eastern" space is fundamental to understanding their access to the battlefield. Marianne and Caroline Estcourt visited harems in Constantinople, where they assessed the appearance and customs of their Turkish hostesses and their homes. They frequently went shopping in the bazaars, where they noted the customs and exotic wares of the stall holders. They also went to see the Hagia Sophia, which in many ways met their expectations of "Eastern" mysticism, as Marianne described it as a 'fairy-land'.[15] The free movement of these British women through Turkish domestic, public, and religious spaces, and their assessment of these spaces as "other"—at once mysterious and yet exactly satisfying

[14] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 3.

[15] GA, Marianne Estcourt, Manuscript Diary, 1853–1854, D1571/F557, 1 June 1854. Such views of scenes throughout Turkey—considered as it was part of the wider "Orient", or "the East"— were heavily informed by the stories of the Arabian Nights. As an article in *Household Words* exclaimed in April 1855, 'Every body [*sic*] is acquainted with that enchanting collection of stories, the Thousand and One Nights, better known in England as the Arabian Nights' Entertainments'. See 'A Thousand and One Humbugs', *Household Words*, vol. XI (1855), p. 265.

preconceived ideas of the "Orient"—signifies the Estcourts' gaze as Orientalist.[16] It also highlights the sense of entitlement that they felt to these spaces, and the authority they assumed over them. This is particularly clear in their encounters with Turkish women in the harem. After a visit to the harem of a Pasha's widow in October 1854 with Caroline Estcourt and another friend, Marianne Estcourt wrote about the widow in her diary. She noted that the widow had taken great pleasure in pointing out to the Englishwomen the people walking freely in the street beyond her garden. Estcourt wrote 'poor old soul . . . I could have cried to think what a wretched pent-up life these poor Turkish women lead'.[17] Frances Duberly also testified to Turkish women's confinement. Planning a visit to a harem in December 1855, after the war had concluded and the regiment had removed to Ismid (the Turkish name for Smyrna), she wrote to her sister, 'fancy me in a harem. I shall feel frightened to death & long to get out, like a caged bird'.[18] On a later occasion, she wrote

> I went to call on an Armenian last week & they had congregated a lot of Turkish women to see me . . . they asked me all sorts of questions whether I was allowed to go out of doors every day, whether gentlemen spoke to me if I met them in the street . . . What I did all day – & when I told them I read, worked, wrote, rode & drew they said

[16] E. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York, NY, 1979). See particularly pp. 1–28. Said outlined the ways in which "the West" discursively constructed and conquered "the East" or "the Orient" from the late-eighteenth century, by configuring it as an inverse mirror image of the West. The East was exotic, backwards, and irrational. From the nineteenth century, Britain and France dominated the production and manipulation of this discourse. Said states that, 'as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West' (p. 5). It is this 'cultural enterprise', the result of interconnected 'academic' and 'imaginative' constructs of the Orient, that shaped the Estcourts' views of Turkish spaces. See, for example, the importance of the Arabian Nights, discussed above.

[17] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F557, 1 October 1854.

[18] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 25 December 1855, fols 117–18.

"Mashallah!" to me for the first time – & thought I was bewitched.[19]

Estcourt and Duberly imagined and experienced Turkish spaces as highly gendered, in a way that was oppressive to Turkish women, but not to themselves as English women. As Mary Roberts has argued, different motivations for travel and differing degrees of familiarity with Ottoman domestic life produced a diverse, yet 'sustained feminine response to prevailing Western fantasies about the exotic harem' in mid-nineteenth-century women's travel writing.[20] Women generally 'dismissed the more lurid masculine sexual fantasies of the harem while emphasising it instead as a respectable domestic space to which they alone had access', constructing their visiting in terms of 'bourgeois visiting etiquette', while still imbuing the harem with elements of fantasy.[21] This stringent gendering, the implicit orientalist gaze, and the reconfiguration of the harem in terms of familiar English social practices granted Estcourt and Duberly access by virtue not only of their gender, but also of their whiteness and class status. Their experiences with Turkish women legitimised their own white, British womanhood, which in turn had bearing on their presence in the war zone, and at the battlefield. These women did not consider the Crimea only as a war zone—as military or strictly masculine. It was simultaneously military, yet socially familiar and touristic. Populated by networks of family, friends, and acquaintances from the middle and upper classes of society—who held greater military and social power within the microcosm of British and European society in the war zone—the Crimea was rendered a space where middle- and upper-class women could integrate, gaining access through the same trinity of their gender, whiteness, and class.

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[19] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 15 January 1856, fol. 130, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx. "Mashallah" is an Arabic phrase used to show appreciation of a person or event and is translated as "what God has willed".
[20] M. Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (Durham, NC, 2007), p. 60.
[21] Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders*, pp. 62–63.

Just as for men, women's experiences of tourism across the war zone inherently included both leisure and danger, but different conceptualisations of the space—and gender roles in it—gave rise to conflicting interpretations of women's presence. Marianne and Caroline Estcourt experienced military hazards on an outing to Alupka soon after their arrival in the Crimea. Their party of officers and ladies made its way around the coast in the *Telegraph*, and there were:

> A good many people about on the shore, & after looking at us & being frightened at the Telescopes that were lifted at them, they fired at us 2 shots, whether the muskets were loaded with ball who knows. Captain Keppel decided at once that we ladies should go upon the hurricane deck, & show that we were *pacificas* [peaceful] they fired no more but looked at us with great curiosity & as we came back cheered us, waved their caps.[22]

Captain Keppel used the presence of women to signify that the party did not have military intent, and to show that they were in fact beyond the scope of the battlefield. In writing about the episode, however, Marianne Estcourt focused on its curiosity, implying the incident as something that could only happen in the war zone. She even demonstrated a degree of subdued delight at the affair, for the following Sunday she wrote in her diary that, after they attended a church service, Mr Hayward, the chaplain, had reprimanded her and Caroline for this outing: 'when I told him we had been fired at, he said "I'm glad then that today I did not say anything in my sermon about the sin of putting oneself in the way of being shot! I think it so very wrong, so very wrong"'.[23] The men clearly believed that women did not belong in militarised space, while for the women—who were cognisant of the disapproval directed towards them—such

[22] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 20 May 1855. Captain Henry Keppel commanded the HMS *St Jean d'Acre.*
[23] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 27 May 1855.

touristic encounters with danger could add excitement to their experiences. The war zone was conceived as a space where they could ostensibly move unproblematically alongside other members of their class. These antagonistic views of the war zone were a continual feature of the campaign, and women consciously navigated them in relation to the battlefield through different cultural traditions, personal relationships, and sometimes by sheer force of personality. What is clear is that amid these competing constructions of space, women accessed an albeit problematic degree of freedom in their movement and action, that both relied upon and challenged aspects of popular conceptions of femininity.

Cultures of Viewing

The nature of women's touristic interest in the battlefield and their encounters with it could take different forms, but the centrality of the battlefield's spectacle to women's experiences is undeniable. The subject of the battlefield's spectacle—in the Crimean War specifically and nineteenth-century conflict more generally—is well-trodden ground in the historiography.[24] It is, however, necessary to raise the discussion here for two reasons: to contextualise the ways in which middle- and upper-class women were predisposed to view the battlefield and their access to it; and to identify instances when individual motives add nuance to our understanding of this privileged outlook. The practice of visiting battlefields was well established by the mid-nineteenth century. Visitors often represented a great variety of witnesses, such as local residents, those with personal connections to the army, government officials, and recreational tourists from both the upper and middle classes.[25] Conceptualisations of the battlefield, and a

[24] Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle*; Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*; E. M. Spiers, 'War', in F. O'Gorman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 86–87; M. Samuels, 'Regarding the Crimean War: History, Spectacle, Modernity', *Dix-Neuf*, 6/1 (2006), pp. 26–41; H. B. Franklin, 'From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America's Wars', *Georgia Review*, 48/1 (1994), pp. 47–64.
[25] Seaton, 'War and Thanatourism', pp. 130–33.

civilian presence at it, were largely shaped—even in anticipation of personal experience—by the elevated language of the sublime and the picturesque. Susan Matthews, for example, has written about Charlotte Malkin, a middle-class woman who toured the battlefield at Waterloo in 1816, as part of a family trip to the Continent.[26] Matthews argues that 'the Waterloo battlefield was accepted as presenting the visitor with a form of the sublime comparable to that offered by nature'.[27] The language of aesthetic experience served a dual purpose, connecting Malkin's femininity with her patriotism and her mourning for her countrymen, while also framing her anti-war politics. Civilian curiosity about the battlefield and the trend towards aesthetic language was also evident in popular culture. In Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, during the Battle of Borodino, an adjutant asked Pierre Bezukhov, one of the central characters, 'Why have you come here Count? . . . Still inquisitive?', to which Bezukhov replied, 'Yes, yes'.[28] Bezukhov's first impression of the battlefield of Borodino was characterised by the elevated language of the sublime, which framed the spectacle of military activity:

> Pierre looked at the scene before him, spellbound by its beauty. It was the same panorama he had admired from that spot the day before, but now the whole place was full of troops and covered by smoke-clouds from the guns, and the slanting rays of the bright sun . . . cast upon it through the clear morning air penetrating streaks of rosy, golden-tinted light and long dark shadows . . . These puffs of smoke and (strange to say) the sound of the firing produced the chief beauty of the spectacle.[29]

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[26] S. Matthews, 'Charlotte Malkin's Waterloo Diary and the Politics of Waterloo Tourism', *Literature Compass*, 11/3 (2014), pp. 218–31.
[27] Matthews, 'Charlotte Malkin's Waterloo Diary', p. 228.
[28] L. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, L. Maude and A. Maude (trans), A. Mandelker (ed.), (Reissue edn, Oxford, 2017), p. 849. *War and Peace* was set in the early nineteenth century, was first published in its entirety in 1869, and was first translated into English in 1899. Tolstoy himself had been a young officer stationed inside the besieged city of Sebastopol throughout the Crimean War.
[29] Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, pp. 846–47.

The aggrandising language of the sublime provided a lexicon particular to the middle and upper strata of society, which could portray the full sensory and emotive experience of military spectacle. Through this, women could reconcile their own curiosity about the battlefield with support of the military mandate, even as fighting unfolded before them. Frances Duberly, for example, greatly looked forward to her first experience of conflict. Duberly had not been permitted to cross the Black Sea with the troops in September 1854 and had been en route from Varna during the Battle of Alma. However, she eagerly and frequently rode to the front to watch the firing after her arrival on 4 October. Only two days later, she wrote to her sister of the preparations for the first bombardment of Sebastopol: 'I have been up to the camp and when they open the fire of the siege I shall be close to the Lankester [*sic*] guns – which range at 5,000 yards. It will be a magnificent sight'.[30] True to her word, she and her husband witnessed the bombardment on 17 October and Duberly wrote to her sister about it a few days later. The event certainly lived up to her expectations:

> At 3.10 o' Clock a magnificent sight presented itself. The magazine in the Mud Fort (a battery of 27 guns erected entirely while we have been dawdling before the walls) took fire from one of our shells and the explosion was a sight more appalling & magnificent than I can describe – "All down the line one deafening shout, Cheer after Cheer" for all our men – & then the smoke curled away into the serene heaven & 25 out of 27 guns were silenced.[31]

[30] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 6 October 1854, fol. 50. Duberly meant Lancaster guns, new long-range cannons which fired a sixty-eight-pound shell. These guns were volatile, and their accuracy was erratic, but they could inflict immense damage.
[31] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 October 1854, fol. 59,

Duberly's letter invoked a language of spectacle that foregrounded visual and aural examples of military grandeur as the most striking aspects of her battlefield experience.[32] It signalled her pride in British military proficiency. The grandeur of the scene and rousing response also reflect another trend in the consumption of military display, for in the mid-nineteenth-century members of the leisured classes often conceptualised war as theatrical in terms of its conduct, sensory display, and cultural significance. This had civilian roots in the popularity of military reviews and in the actual theatrical reconstruction of battles, as well as their popularisation in print, song, and art.[33] The depiction and consumption of war as theatre was also a self-conscious display of social and military power dynamics. William Russell, *The Times*' war correspondent, described officers watching the Battle of Balaklava from the heights around the field 'as though they were looking on the stage from the boxes of a theatre. Nearly every one [*sic*] dismounted and sat down, and not a word was said'.[34] This way of conceptualising war was reflected in war literature, often targeted at an interested and leisured home audience. One writer who published a three-volume account of the Crimean War in 1857 concluded the first

[32] As such, this construction of the battlefield reflects articulations of viewing that have been identified in nineteenth-century women's writing. Sara Suleri, for example, has used the idea of the 'feminine picturesque' to interrogate women's relationships to colonial India. Women used the language of romantic sentimentality and mediums such as sketching and watercolours to 'produce both visual and verbal representations of India that could alleviate more shattering aspects of its difference, romanticizing its difficulty into the greater tolerability of mystery'. The feminine picturesque was a subversive strategy, providing a means for women to engage with masculine projects, such as British colonialism, but it was also co-constitutive of dominant gender ideologies, in that it followed the 'strictures of sentimentality' expected of women. S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, IL, 1992), pp. 75–78. However, framing war in such terms was not a practice undertaken solely by women, suggesting that such sentimentality provided a strategy for rationalising bloodshed in the name of patriotism more broadly.

[33] This was a trend that pre-dated the Crimean War. See, for example, M. Füssel, 'Emotions in the Making: The Transformation of Battlefield Experiences during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763)', in E. Kuijpers and C. van der Haven (eds), *Battlefield Emotions 1500–1800: Practices, Experience, Imagination* (London, 2016), pp. 149–72. See also Cardoza, *Intrepid Women*, particularly chapter 5 which includes a discussion of French military spectacle and cantinières' involvement in it during the nineteenth century.

[34] 'The War in the Crimea: The Operations of the Siege', *The Times*, 14 November 1854, p. 7.

instalment with the lines, 'with the Battle of Inkerman the first act of the great drama may be said to have closed'.[35] It is in this vein that Ulrich Keller and Fiona Wilson have argued that battlefield spectators, including the writers of such wartime narratives, were akin to theatre audiences, blurring the boundaries between the martial and the media.[36] They transformed scenes of conflict into theatrical spectacle through the acts of viewing and listening. As Wilson states, 'distance was nothing if not a mark of social elevation: a privilege accorded only those with the social pedigree to occupy the higher levels of military command, or those non-combatants who had the means to travel to the front as observers'.[37]

Duberly's consumption of military grandeur during her first encounter with scenes of fighting does reflect a degree of physical and emotional distance that accompanied her and her husband's relative safety: Henry, a paymaster, was a non-combatant. He was at Duberly's side throughout battlefield excursions such as this, which they, like the staff officers, conducted from the heights around the valleys where the fighting took place. In addition, the patriotic undertones in the account written to her sister signal Duberly's presence at the battlefield in terms of her inclusion in the military community, which she perceived through the military femininity that she proudly claimed. Her published *Journal* was more explicit in this regard, highlighting the need to overtly justify her presence at the battlefield in these patriotic terms to a wider, and perhaps less understanding public.[38] Narrating the same event, she elaborates in her *Journal*, 'officers and men were carried away with the enthusiasm, and I felt myself half

[35] *Scenes in the Camp and Field, Being Sketches of the Crimea, Part I* (London, 1857), p. 131.
[36] F. Wilson, 'Operatic Battlefields, Theater of War', in G. Williams (ed.), *Hearing the Crimean War: Wartime Sound and the Unmaking of Sense* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 189–91; Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle*, pp. 4–6.
[37] Wilson, 'Operatic Battlefields', p. 191.
[38] For more on Duberly's writing for a home audience, see 'Frances Duberly: A Failed Heroine' in chapter 4.

cheering too . . . We left at dusk, and rode slowly down to Balaklava, our hearts and ears filled with the magnificent din of war'.[39]

Both Marianne and Caroline Estcourt displayed this same cultural predisposition to view warfare as spectacle throughout their time in the Crimea. Even months before, while they had been living in Therapia, they had heard about the battlefield's visual appeal. On 30 October 1854, five days after the Battle of Balaklava, Marianne Estcourt wrote in her diary that an officer, Captain Glazebrooke, told her 'our skirmishing was "the most beautiful and picturesque sight" the red coats & Russian green had a very picturesque effect'.[40] When the Estcourt women arrived in the Crimea on 12 May 1855, being reunited with James did not erase their interest in the campaign, nor did it hamper their appreciation of the wartime terrain. The battlefield, after all, did not necessarily represent a discreet event. A wide area around Sebastopol was populated with a sprawling and evolving network of trenches, redoubts, and batteries, which engaged in fighting of some scale—whether skirmishing, or strategically coordinated attacks—throughout the eleven months of the siege. Furthermore, conflict was not strictly geographically confined. Firing was both visible and audible throughout the wider war zone and could frequently be seen and heard from the heights and harbour at Balaklava, some seven miles away from the besieged city. In this way, the battlefield penetrated the everyday lives of military personnel in the camps, and civilians residing aboard transport vessels. It was with this sense of the battlefield as an ongoing process that Caroline Estcourt wrote about the sight that greeted them from Balaklava harbour:

> Miles of French & allied tents or huts as background to a large Bay, magnificently full of Men of War & Steamers of English & French & other assisting nations. Forts & war cannon visible through a glass & little clouds of white smoke successively

[39] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 108.
[40] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F557, 30 October 1854. Original emphasis.

> appearing & floating away on the opposite crests of heights Russian & allied. At night flashes & rockets succeeded these but without sound, the wind being the wrong way.[41]

Marianne similarly enjoyed their arrival, writing on 14 May, 'spent a quiet comfortable day, sitting in the stern gallery so fresh & pleasant, a delicious cabin to retire into, & good glasses to look at Sebastopol with'.[42] A principal pastime during their time in the war zone was to enjoy the sensory spectacle of scenes of battle. The use of "glasses"—likely opera glasses—to do so reiterates the Estcourts' physical distance from the battlefield and the privilege of their class status that enabled them to watch. James Estcourt also partook in this same practice as a staff officer. At the Battle of Alma, he had watched through a telescope as the fighting played out, writing shortly afterwards to his brother, 'conceive about 45 or 40,000 men marching down in contiguous columns but at intervals which admitted of deployment – It was a wonderful spectacle & exceedingly imposing'.[43]

It is important to note that officers and middle- and upper-class women were not the only spectators at the battlefield, nor were they the only ones capable of experiencing it in terms of its spectacle and emotion. Mary Seacole, for example, documented her first experience of the battlefield in very similar terms to Duberly and the Estcourts:

> It was very pretty to see them the Turkish infantry advance, and to watch how every now and then little clouds of white smoke puffed up from behind bushes and the crests of hills, and were answered by similar puffs from the long line of busy skirmishers that preceded the main body. This was my first experience of actual

[41] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 12 May 1855.
[42] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 14 May 1855.
[43] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, copy letter from James Bucknall Bucknall Estcourt, 29 September 1854.

> battle, and I felt that strange excitement which I do not remember on future occasions, coupled with an earnest longing to see more of warfare, and to share in its hazards.[44]

Seacole's relationship to the same class cultures of viewing is complicated by her socio-economic status and by her race. While she had the independent means to travel to the Crimea and establish her business, she also laboured as a sutler and faced bankruptcy by the conclusion of the war. Moreover, as a black woman, she was excluded from the same class networks that women like Duberly and the Estcourts inhabited. However, in her narrative—written shortly after the war with the aid of William Russell and the support of prominent men like Lord Rokeby, commander of the 1st Division, who had valued her military role—Seacole was attuned to the wartime and post-war sentiments of this social strata.[45] As Sarah Gunning has stated, it was this awareness of 'the ways in which class and gender contradictions might be manipulated to reframe her iconoclastic behavior in ways that could be translated into British patriotism' that Seacole cemented her military reputation.[46] Elsewhere in her memoir, Seacole wrote of the assaults on the Malakoff and Redan in June 1855 that 'if I do not pray God that I may never see its [the battlefield's] like again, it is because I wish to be useful all my life'.[47] Seacole's account diverges from the touristic nature of the middle- and upper-class gaze, in the significance that she attached to the battlefield as a space in which she could participate among the soldiers by tending to them, rather than as a space for leisured spectatorship. Elizabeth Evans and Margaret Kerwin likewise recalled instances when they had been witnesses at the

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[44] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 129.
[45] General Henry Robinson-Montague, 6th Baron Rokeby fought in the Crimean War as the commander of the 1st Division. Upon its conclusion, he made public calls for military men to support Mary Seacole. See, for example, 'Mrs Seacole', *The Times*, 29 November 1855, p. 12, in which a letter from Mary Seacole to Lord Rokeby was published, thanking him for his efforts on her behalf; also 'The Seacole Fund', *The Times*, 20 July 1857, p. 1, which listed Lord Rokeby as Chairman and Treasurer of the committee overseeing the organisation of the Seacole Festival at Royal Surrey Gardens.
[46] Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes', p. 977.
[47] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 138.

battlefield. Kerwin wrote that when William Russell lent her his telescope to see the French attack on the Malakoff, the sight of men bayoneting each other was too disturbing, and she looked away quickly.[48] Evans stated that while 'it was wonderful to look down . . . and see the big guns bursting into lurid fire and hear their solemn booming in the gloomy hills', there was also no pain 'so poignant as that pain which I endured when I watched my husband march across the far-stretched field during the Battle of Alma which was being ploughed by the merciless cannon-balls and pitted with the rifle bullets'.[49] For these women, their close relationship to the rank-and-file soldiery, particularly the knowledge that their husbands numbered among the fighting men, rendered the battlefield a space of intense personal anxiety, inherently suffused with the very real risk of personal loss amid such bloodshed.

Likewise, the spectacle of the battlefield did not always prompt patriotic or reverential reflection for members of the middle and upper classes. Frances Duberly often glossed over the more lurid details of the battlefield, except where they concerned crucial military engagements or officers, and she lost interest in the battlefield when it did not meet her expectations of grandeur. In the days after witnessing the first bombardment of Sebastopol, she wrote to her sister, 'our casualties (army) have been very few today – about 8 men killed & wounded. Captain Rowley of the guards killed. Also Assistant Surgeon 68th . . . I am sick of the siege & the noise of the guns – pray write to me all of the news and gossip you can think of'.[50] In her attention to the casualties of the higher ranks, Duberly replicated mid-nineteenth-century conceptions not only of social hierarchy, but of the value that social standing attached to individuals.[51] In her frustration with the swift monotony of the battlefield, she betrayed her position as a woman with little other discernible role in that space, other than that of spectator.

[48] Kerwin, 'In the Crimea', pp. 95–96.
[49] Evans 'A Soldier's Wife', pp. 270, 268.
[50] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 October 1854, fols 59–60.
[51] It has been argued that it was only during the Crimean War that views of the rank-and-file soldiery began to change, as the letters of rank-and-file soldiers were published in the press,

Similarly, it is a feature of both Caroline and Marianne Estcourts' diaries that, rather than acting as a highly personal or contemplative record of their experiences in proximity to the battlefield, the entries often lack reflections on the pathos of war. Take, for example, Caroline Estcourt's account of a visit through the war zone to the field of Inkerman. On 24 May 1855, James Estcourt took his wife and his sister there for an outing. Caroline Estcourt wrote that he showed them

> All the interesting spots of that fearful day's history at leisure. First the spot where William brought him James his luncheon then the place where General Strangeways was killed. How far the Russians came up how far the allies went down the hill – where the most fearful struggles took place where the batteries from which they fired at us [*sic*] – and the interest of the story was heightened by our having here for the first time the shrill whistle of cannon balls passing through the air.[52]

The multisensory nature of the spectacle remains an integral feature of the account, but much else is left unsaid. Did her heart race as she heard the cannon balls? Was the sound alarming? As her husband escorted her around, did she imagine gallant, crimson clad officers charging for Queen and country? Or did she think about the rank-and-file soldiers—and of the suffering of fighting men? She saw the spot where General Strangeways was killed—by a shell that exploded in close proximity to her own husband as he watched the battle with the staff. Did it dawn on her that her husband may have had a near escape from death on that same spot? These

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and the scale of loss resulting from perceived military mismanagement alerted public attention to the plight of the common solider and his family. See O. Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain', *The English Historical Review*, 86/338 (1971), pp. 46–72.

[52] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 24 May 1855. Marianne Estcourt recounted the same event in her journal in similar terms. See GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 24 May 1855. William was likely a soldier-servant. Brigadier General Thomas Fox Strangeways lost his leg when a shell exploded nearby and died before the surgeons could attend him.

questions cannot be answered, but that does not mean that they should not be considered. When so many potential aspects of women's personal or felt experiences of the battlefield are lost to silence and omission, we can be left with almost glib accounts that appear to downplay the battlefield's realities, and are only too tempting to read as a narrative of detached tourism. In the best case, Duberly's and Estcourt's apparent absence of compassionate concern might be taken to reflect Piekarz's 'cocktail traveller', for whom war heightens the experience of place; at worst, they might be considered in terms of the mawkish 'rubberneck'.[53]

Certainly, there was an element of cool collectedness to these accounts. For Duberly, who had already been with the army for six months, these instances of apathy appear to be the result of disillusionment with the relative hardships of army life, and desensitisation to scenes of suffering. During the winter of 1854 to 1855, her letters assumed a sombre and disgruntled tone as she criticised the government and military command. She longed for home and for comforts that were unavailable, though she cheered dramatically in the spring as she began to frequently partake in the officers' social engagements. Several times throughout the campaign, however, she commented to her sister that she felt she had become 'callous' while with the army, and at times hardly noticed such humdrum occurrences as the daily sound of firing and exploding shells.[54] Whether this self-professed hardening of character was a genuine response to the war, or whether it represents a conscious attempt on Duberly's part to assimilate herself into the military community it is impossible to say. It was, however, a phenomenon that was often noted. Elizabeth Evans also 'got quite used to dodging the shot and shell from the Russian

[53] Piekarz, 'Hot War Tourism', pp. 164–65.
[54] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 14 November 1854, fol. 70; 27 November 1854, fol. 76; 18 May 1855, fol. 164. See also 13 October 1854, fol. 52: 'The day before yesterday I was up with the 4th Light Dragoons and dined with Bob Portal. The shells were coming about one every two minutes – we heard them whizzing by – or saw them (generally) burst in the air; but before dinner was over we got so accustomed to them that we did not hear them'. Original emphasis.

batteries'.[55] Captain Jasper Hall, an officer in Evans' regiment, wrote to his father after the capture of Sebastopol in September 1855, 'all those scenes there is no use describing, they are too horrid tho' it is astonishing how soon one is perfectly familiarised with it all'.[56]

For Caroline Estcourt, her seeming detachment was rooted, far more so than for Duberly, in her distance from the battlefield—both physically and temporally. Caroline and Marianne Estcourt had arrived in the Crimea well after the infamous series of battles had been fought in the autumn of 1854, with the intention of a relatively brief stay to visit James Estcourt during the slow progression and comparative safety of the siege. Indeed, it became fashionable not only for other officers' wives and families, but for civilians more generally to make the same voyage over to the Crimea when the weather turned more pleasant during the spring.[57] Shipping companies even ran tours to the battlefields from England.[58] The Estcourts' clear touristic intent established their detachment from the everyday work of warfare, allowing them to frame the battlefield as a curiosity and signifying their gaze as predominantly leisured or touristic. However, in spite of this leisured interest, the Estcourts were also attuned to the significance that such sites and sights as Inkerman held for them as relatives of a high-ranking British officer. By the time of their visit in the summer of 1855, the battles of the previous autumn occupied a place in the narrative of war that was somewhat of a grey area. The Battle of

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[55] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.
[56] J. Hall, *Letters from the Crimea*, *Captain Jasper Hall of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot to his sister and father*, King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster (ed.), (3rd edn, Lancaster, 2000), p. 19.
[57] Frances Duberly wrote that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, also visited the camp with his wife and daughters in May 1855. She often mentioned officers' relatives who were residing at, or travelling to Constantinople, speculating whether they would come to the Crimea. See BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 9 February 1855, fol. 112; 6 May 1855, fol. 154. In May 1855, Major Fiennes Cornwallis wrote to his family from Scutari that 'It is becoming quite the fashion to come out here as a show. I have met a good many men and some ladies; in fact, it will be a perfect Chobham next summer I believe, with the exception that there were no bullets at Chobham', F. Cornwallis, *Letters Written from the Crimea to Several Members of His Family*, H. E. Wykham Martin (ed.), (London, 1868). See also Galt, *The Camp and the Cutter.*
[58] Bamfield, *On the Strength,* p. 70.

Inkerman in particular had been touted by William Russell as a failure at the time of its occurrence.[59] Though technically an allied victory, it was remembered as a day of excessive bloodshed and, like the battles of Alma and Balaklava, was muddied by the subsequent failure to take Sebastopol and by the mismanagement of the army over the following winter—the blame for which was planted solidly at the door of the government and the staff officers, including James Estcourt.

Both the battlefield and the wider war zone were, therefore, places of personal interest to the Estcourts by virtue of James Estcourt's presence there. Moreover, their interest signalled the unceasing support he received from his wife and sister in the face of public criticism. While it might ostensibly seem unfeeling to move across a battlefield viewing, in one moment, the place where James Estcourt took his lunch and in another, the place where another high-ranking officer received a fatal wound, this reflected James Estcourt's lived experience of the battlefield; information that was of interest for his family. The Estcourt women's accounts are clear on this point, for their diaries were not solely personal objects. As accounts of a significant travel event, they also served as a means for networks of close family and friends to access their experiences upon their return home.[60] In light of this personal investment, the Estcourts' fascination with seeing ongoing fighting, particularly the fact that for Caroline the "interest" of the story of Inkerman was "heightened" by the nearby cannon fire, acquires new

[59] See 'The Battle of Inkermann', *The Times*, 23 November 1854, p. 6: 'We have nothing to rejoice over in the battle of Inkermann [*sic*]. We have defeated the enemy, indeed, but have not advanced a step nearer towards the citadel of Sebastopol . . . we have suffered a fearful loss, and we are not in a position to part with one man'. Henry Duberly considered this an accurate account in a letter to Frances Duberly's brother-in-law, Francis Marx. See BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 12 December 1854, fol. 83.

[60] Marianne Estcourt wrote in her 1855 diary on 7 December, after eleven days of silence, that 'Elly has had this book so that I have not written lately'. See GA Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 7 December. "Elly", or Eleanor, was her and James Estcourt's sister. Both of Marianne Estcourt's diaries and Caroline Estcourt's diary also contain pencil notes, adding details to events that were likely inserted later than the original ink entries, as they reflected on what they had written. See GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F557 and Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503.

significance. The battlefield was rendered simultaneously past and present, their interest in it dispassionate and yet highly personal. It is not difficult to imagine that the continuation of fighting around Inkerman must have vividly recreated at least some of the dynamism of the battle—and James Estcourt's own memories of it—while their shared participation in a more leisurely observation of the siege imbued the novelty of the battlefield with a degree of familiarity or cultural routine. The battlefield served as a site where the boundaries between the quotidian and the dangerous, even the deadly, became indistinct not only for the military participant, but for female observers.

The Authority of Close Encounter

Distance, however, did not function as an absolute boundary rendering the battlefield a space of tourist interest. While watching could be reconciled within the context of middle- and upper-class cultures of tourism and spectatorship, it is a striking fact of women's accounts that curiosity about the spectacle of war was not only rife, but also acted as a compelling lure even in the heat and midst of fighting. The thrill of immersion in the battlefield could in fact constitute one its principal attractions. Ellen Palmer, for example, was a young woman whose brother, Roger Palmer, was an officer in the 11th Hussars. Her parents had inherited wealth, lands, and a baronetcy in Ireland but, due to their own more modest backgrounds, the family was never fully accepted into the upper-class society of the landed gentry.[61] With her brother's departure, Ellen Palmer was left managing her father's estates, as he was in poor health. She persuaded him to travel to the Crimea to visit Roger in August 1854. Palmer, her father, his medical man, and an aunt arrived in Balaklava at the end of December, after several weeks of travel across Europe and a prolonged stay in Constantinople. On one occasion, her brother and

[61] Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary*, pp. 14–15.

Captain William Peel, commander of the *Diamond,* took Palmer—at her insistence—to visit the Diamond Battery. She wrote:

> We dismounted and went into the battery on foot and where the parapet was low we were obliged almost to crawl on all fours to avoid being picked off by Russian riflemen who were posted about in all directions. One poor fellow was killed by them just before we came in. We walked through the whole battery regardless of the shot and our cannon balls flying about and shells bursting in all directions.[62]

Later on, Palmer recorded that they 'got home safe enough after all our risks, perfectly delighted to think that we had seen the trenches and been the first visitors to the celebrated "Diamond Battery". It is actual fact that nobody ever ventured there unless called to it by duty'.[63] Since she had no "dutiful" reason to enter to such a dangerous point of the battlefield, Palmer's interest certainly stemmed from curiosity. The battlefield was still perceived as a spectacle upon close inspection, reinforced by the ultimate safety with which women like Palmer encountered it, despite the startling and very real risk they took in doing so. If distance signified leisure, such close encounters with danger were a proclamation of entitlement, authenticity, and authority over the battlefield.

Frances Duberly in particular exemplifies this position. On the morning of the Battle of Balaklava, her husband sent a message from the camp down to his wife in the harbour that said, 'the Battle of Balaklava is begun & promises to be a hot one. Come up without delay. Do not wait for breakfast'.[64] Duberly had intended to remain in the harbour that day, as she felt unwell, but at her husband's note she hurried to the camp. Having travelled with the army for six months in anticipation of a swift allied victory over the Russians, this was not an event to be

[62] Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary,* pp. 236–37.
[63] Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary*, p. 237.
[64] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218, A, 27 October 1854, fol. 62; Duberly, *Journal*, p. 116.

missed—even in the face of warnings from a commissary officer that she risked not reaching the camp alive, so heated was the fight already.[65]

The Duberlys settled themselves in a vineyard overlooking the field. First, they watched the Russian charge against the now famous "thin red line" of Highlanders. Duberly wrote to her sister:

> Oh! What a glorious moment! Not a man stirred – they stood like rocks till the Russian horses came within about 30 yards then one terrific volley – a sudden wheel – a piece of ground strewed with men and horses . . . ten minutes more & not a live Russian was seen on that side of the hill . . . I cannot pain you with a description of the sights I saw that hour – One poor horse shot thro' [*sic*] the nose came sobbing up to Bob & then fell down – another magnificent Black with a round shot in the haunch galloping mad with pain – but in the excitement of such a moment these things affect one very slightly.[66]

As a skilled horsewoman and a keen animal lover, Duberly's concern for the horses is typical of the content of her letters and *Journal* more generally. Her pronouncement that the excitement of the event suppressed the horrors of the scene is perhaps slightly disingenuous, given the detail she included, but it nevertheless reiterates her position in remarkably close proximity to the fighting. She and her husband continued to watch, and witnessed 'the disaster of the day', the 'glorious and fatal' charge of the Light Brigade.[67] In both her letter to her sister and her *Journal*, Duberly noted how 'sick at heart' she was when she thought of the bloodshed.[68] In both documents, she gave a long list of officer friends and acquaintances who had been killed

[65] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218, A, 27 October 1854, fol. 62; Duberly, *Journal*, p. 117.
[66] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 October 1854, fol. 63.
[67] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 119.
[68] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 119; BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 October 1854, fol. 64: 'Ah even now my heart turns sick'.

and wounded. She went into some graphic detail in her letter, noting for example that 'Colonel Morris had a sword cut that opened his brain, he still lives'.[69] She also recounted the ride back to the ship, across ground where fighting had occurred that morning. In addition to vast numbers of dead and dying horses, Duberly saw the bodies of Russian and Turkish soldiers. She ended her *Journal* entry with an acknowledgement of the 'lurid' dreams that followed the day's scenes, while in her letter she wrote, 'I cannot tell you how I got through that day as I did. I felt no horror no fear – no pain – until after I reached the ship & then the reaction was like what I should fancy occurs after suspended animation'.[70]

In blurring the boundary between distanced observation and immersive viewing of the battlefield, both Frances Duberly and Ellen Palmer exposed themselves to the stark contrast between the preconceived spectacle of war and its savage realities. But spectacle and savagery were not mutually exclusive. Duberly experienced the horror of battle first-hand, but as with the death of a soldier just prior to Ellen Palmer's arrival at the Diamond Battery, close encounter with death and danger testified to the authenticity of her battlefield experiences. Yuval Noah Harari has argued that by the nineteenth century, understandings and experiences of war had been heavily influenced by the rise of sentimentalism throughout the Romantic period. Through a Romantic understanding of experience as the route to knowledge, the battlefield came to represent 'the ultimate experience'. Harari notes that combatants' narratives of war came to include several key elements, one of which was 'the maxim that "those who weren't there can't understand anything."' Harari terms this the 'authority of flesh-witnessing', a profoundly personal and emotional mode of observation unlike the more factual process of eye-witnessing, in which knowledge gained is easily transmissible.[71]

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[69] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 October 1854, fol. 65.
[70] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 October 1854, fol. 65.
[71] Y. N. Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450–2000* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 240. See also pp. 7–8, 231–33. However, Harari's argument that flesh-witnessing developed and supplanted eye-witnessing in

Duberly's assertions that that she could not describe the horrors she witnessed, or could not explain how she withstood the sights of battle reflect this common narrative device as part of her attempts at integration with the army, and they were certainly used here to signal authority.[72] Her *Journal* functions in similar ways, for while lacking in such personal exclamations, the volume was dedicated 'to the Soldiers and Sailors of the Crimean Expedition . . . by an eye witness of their chivalrous valour and their heroic fortitude, Frances Isabella Duberly'.[73] However, Holly Furneaux has questioned the supposed incommunicability of the Crimean War combat experience between combatants and civilians suggested by Harari in two regards. First, flesh-witnessing could be used as a strategy for soldiers to navigate trauma, by referring loved ones to the extensive press coverage of the war. This reconstructed many key events of the war for the public at home, thus allowing soldiers to avoid narrating personally traumatic experiences of the same events. Second, soldiers created a shared experience of war with those in Britain, through tactile battlefield objects that they sent home as supplements to their letters. In both instances, lines of continuity were forged between the emotional frameworks of combatants and civilians.[74] As a civilian herself, Duberly's proclamations of the incommunicability of the war and her claims to an authority derived from flesh-witnessing, understood solely in Harari's terms, sit uneasily amid the wealth of material in Duberly's letters

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combatant narratives from the early modern to modern periods is widely considered controversial. Lisa De Boer, for example, has argued that in early modern Dutch art representing the battlefield, eye-witnessing and flesh-witnessing functioned simultaneously as rhetorical devices, each capable of communicating emotion. L. De Boer, 'The Sidelong Glance: Tracing Battlefield Emotions in Dutch Art of the Golden Age', in E. Kuijpers and C. van der Haven (eds), *Battlefield Emotions 1500–1800: Practices, Experience, Imagination* (London, 2016), pp. 209–12.

[72] See K. McLoughlin, *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (Cambridge, 2011), particularly the chapter 'Credentials', in which 'autopsy' or first-hand experience is taken as a crucial element in the construction of 'authority', which is taken to render accounts of war 'credible'.

[73] Duberly, *Journal*, dedication page.

[74] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling,* pp. 152–56, 163–75. See also Füssel, 'Emotions in the Making', pp. 156–57 on the affective significance of battlefield objects collected by soldiers in the Seven Years' War.

and *Journal* in which she does attempt to reconstruct for her sister and the wider public not only the events of the war as she bore witness to them, but also her response to it—particularly to the battlefield—as a wife, a friend, and a middle-class British woman. As Furneaux suggests, flesh-witnessing does not strictly denote the incommunicability of war between combatants and civilians. However, neither is flesh-witnessing solely constructed in relation to modes of communication between distinct combatant and civilian networks. Rather, the authority of flesh-witnessing could be as much a forceful self-perception on the part of the narrator of war, by virtue of the personal and powerful nature of war experiences, as it was a trope or strategy of the narrative through the omission of the same by soldiers. Indeed, Duberly was acutely self-aware, and proud, on this point, as she perceived similarity between her experiences and those of the soldiers. In the summer of 1855, she gleefully revealed that she was in fact endeavouring to obtain a medal:

> There has been the devil's delight here – in consequence of an application made by our Col[onel] for the Balaklava clasp for me – there is no doubt as to my being entitled to it – as I was driven from my tent by Cossacks and was under fire repeatedly during the day. There appears some difficulty about my getting it <u>officially</u> – I being a woman – but Col[onel] Poulett Somerset has written to Col[onel] Phipps and to the Duchess of Gloucester to beg them to lay it before the Queen – I was for so long the <u>only woman out</u> here (<u>except</u> my <u>maid</u>) that there is no doubt about the <u>medal</u> – but now that so many women are out here – it is thought that if <u>I</u> get the medal they will be clamouring for one too – tho' [*sic*] they who have wrought but one hour, ought not be made equal to those who have borne the burden & heat of the

day.[75]

Duberly perceived her own authority on a number of levels. Her superiority to lower-class women such as her maid, a soldier's wife, is all but proclaimed. The "other women" she refers to in the war zone were, therefore, middle- and upper-class women like herself, but who had ventured to the Crimea belatedly, possibly for leisure or fashion, like Ellen Palmer or the Estcourts.[76] Duberly evidently considered that they and their motives stood in contrast to her own prolonged travels with the army and her dedication to her husband, the wider forces, and the campaign. Her belief in her own exceptionalism is once again evident, but Duberly also relied heavily upon her military femininity in other ways in her claims to both textual and experiential authority. She constructed the battlefield as a space to which she was entitled, where she was accepted, and where she alone was commended by military men for her presence. In doing so, she emphasised the dichotomy that she perceived between the freedom of the war zone and the confines of English society.

To an extent, this reflects individual personality. Both Palmer's and Duberly's inquisitiveness about the battlefield, and their evident glee at their ability to witness it at close

[75] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 4 June 1855, fols 174–75. These final lines are a reference to the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:12. In a very selective reading, Duberly does not include or reflect upon the subsequent lines of the text, in which the disgruntled workers are reprimanded for their jealousy. The Crimea Medal was approved in December 1854, to be issued to both officers and soldiers who had fought in the war. Clasps engraved with the names of the key conflicts were awarded to those who fought in them. For members of the army, these were Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, and Sebastopol. Those who fought at Balaklava or Inkerman also received the Sebastopol clasp. The Colonel of the 8th Hussars was Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick George Shewell. Colonel Sir Charles Beaumont Phipps was, at that time, Keeper of the Privy Purse. Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester and Edinburgh, was Queen Victoria's paternal aunt.

[76] There is no evidence that Frances Duberly and Ellen Palmer ever met, though they had many mutual acquaintances. Duberly did, however, meet Palmer's brother, Roger. See Duberly, *Journal*, p. 60. Frances Duberly did meet the Estcourts on several occasions, but she only mentioned James Estcourt in her *Journal* (see pp. 223–24) and only once referred to his wife and sister in passing in her extant letters. Both Caroline and Marianne Estcourt briefly recorded their meetings with Duberly in their diaries.

quarters, demonstrated—if not relied upon—an active rejection of the restrictions they experienced as young middle-class women in British society. Ellen Palmer declared this openly to her future husband, Archy Peel, the cousin of the Captain Peel who showed her the Diamond Battery. In her diary she referenced an argument they had regarding marriage and authority, in which she 'said plainly that if I ever married him I could never submit to be dictated to on any subject, I had been accustomed to act independently and I could not give up the habit'.[77] Her rejection of the social constraints commonly placed upon women precisely echoes Duberly's statement from the opening of the previous chapter, namely her conviction that she should 'suffocate' if she returned home, after being 'free as air' in the war zone.[78] Although her husband's encouragement of her presence at the Battle of Balaklava and the Colonels' subsequent efforts to secure a medal on her behalf appear to substantiate Duberly's claims of acceptance, this was not unequivocal. Another friend, Captain Lushington, did not shy away from telling Duberly jocularly that he thought her 'wilful and wayward', suggesting her presence was still considered a transgression in military circles, but one tolerated or indulged among friends.[79]

Through their sense of freedom and the authority with which they accessed the battlefield and narrated their leisured encounters with it, Duberly and Palmer constructed a hierarchy in which their ability to exploit the liminality of the war zone through their military lifestyles and class privilege set them apart from—even above—other civilian women. In doing so they also disrupted military authority. Palmer's entry to a battlefield no military man could access unless posted there, Duberly's privately and publicly shared presence throughout the campaign, and, above all, her claim to a medal on the same terms as military men, foregrounds their non-conformity to masculine and military conceptions of the battlefield. It is striking that these

[77] Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary*, p. 250.
[78] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 March 1855, fol. 126.
[79] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, letter begun 27 January 1856, fol. 132.

middle- and upper-class leisure and civilian social practices saw military men collude to a degree in facilitating Palmer's and Duberly's navigation of the battlefield. Duberly was often self-aggrandising in these terms, drawing upon her acquaintanceship with officers to emphasise the respect accorded to her, precisely because of her position as a young and sociable middle-class woman. Omar Pasha, the Turkish commander, invited Duberly and her husband to dine several times and accompanied them on outings—including, on one occasion, to lounge overlooking the Russian camp, while their party of officers 'amused' themselves by 'potting' at the Russians.[80] Duberly 'sat on a high stone & Omar – sat at my feet – and we talked, of all his wondrous warfare'.[81] He even invited Duberly and her husband to Eupatoria when he was posted there: Henry Duberly applied for leave especially for this planned trip, and his wife was disappointed when it was refused.[82] For Duberly, the battlefield was a space of gallantry and patriotic expression. She perceived her ability to comment upon the battlefield as an act of respect to the officer community in particular, while her leisured access to the battlefield which facilitated that commentary signified her participation—in print and society—in the same matrices of class, militarism, and British patriotism that influence officers' wartime experiences. For her, and for Palmer, the battlefield was a space of excitement and opportunity.

A Clash of Spheres

The issue of military men's collusion in women's presence at the battlefield can be considered from a different perspective, as highlighting a significant and far more traditionally gendered trend running through women's experiences. It seems that if there was one essential for a lady

[80] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 24 April 1855, fol. 152, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[81] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 24 April 1855, fol. 152, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[82] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 14 May 1855, fol. 162, letter from Henry Duberly to Francis Marx; 18 May 1855, fols 163–64.

to have at the battlefield, it was a tour guide. James Estcourt adopted this role towards his wife and sister. Marianne and Caroline Estcourt did not venture beyond the route from the harbour, where they resided, to the military headquarters, where General Estcourt lived, without his escort. Similarly, whether she was at the front or enjoying the officers' races, Frances Duberly was rarely without the company of a male companion. Most often, and particularly during their excursions to live battlefields when most men were engaged in the fighting, this was her husband. She missed witnessing the Allies' assault on the Rifle Pits on 19 April 1855 because Henry was ill. Duberly wrote to her sister, 'I could not go to the Front myself today . . . as Henry has been ill for some days and I have been, therefore, a prisoner'.[83] The need for a male guide was implicit, but unquestionable. On other leisure excursions, when her husband could not join her, Duberly was escorted around the wider war zone by close acquaintances—Colonel Poulett Somerset, Captain Steven Lushington, and Captain Robert Portal often among them.

Gender relationships functioned here in ways that vividly expose the limitations of the battlefield's opportunities as perceived by women, by highlighting conflicting constructions of space and femininity. Military men set parameters, albeit strikingly liberal ones at times, to middle- and upper-class women's freedom in the war zone by supervising their excursions. They acted as both protectors and chaperones across the dangerous space, safeguarding and policing women's movements. In doing so, they also exhibited their own privilege as high-ranking officers, with the authority to act in terms of leisure despite the war zone constituting a site of military work. This was a point of some annoyance for other military officers, who felt that women had no place in the war zone because domestic affairs interfered with men's military duties. Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Cooper Hodge, commander of the 4th Dragoon Guards, shared a hut with his second in command, Lieutenant-Colonel William Forrest. Forrest and his wife began making plans for her to travel to the Crimea in May 1855. Hodge was

[83] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 21 April 1855, fol. 149.

displeased and wrote 'I trust that Mrs Forrest will not come up here. He William Forrest is not a very active officer at any time, and should she come here, the regiment may go to the dogs, for all that he will do for it'.[84] His suspicions were proven to be justified, as soon after her arrival Forrest began spending his nights with his wife in the harbour, rather than with his regiment in the camp. Hodge remarked 'how true it is we cannot serve two masters!'[85] He was later disgusted that Mrs Forrest came to live in her husband's half of their shared hut and went out of his way to avoid her whenever possible.[86] Similarly, Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Coningham Sterling of the Highland Brigade wrote in a letter on 15 June 1855, criticising Frances Duberly and Caroline Estcourt by name:

> You are quite right in thinking this is no place for ladies. Yet there are some here. Lady G. Paget; Mrs. Duberley [*sic*], wife of a paymaster of Dragoons; and Mrs. Estcourt lately. These fair dames usually stop on board ship in Balaklava or Kamish Harbour, and seduce their husbands to run there after them, as many a weary Staff Officer has found to his sorrow.[87]

Despite the unproblematic narration of battlefield tourism in women's accounts, and particularly Duberly's self-construction in her letters and *Journal* as an accepted member of war zone society, these same women were criticised across the very echelons of military society that they cultivated, and through which they accessed the battlefield.

However, these women could not only be acutely aware of the fact that they were a distraction, but they could even exploit this fact for their own ends. Caroline and Marianne

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[84] E. C. Hodge, *Little Hodge: Being extracts from the diaries and letters of Colonel Edward Cooper Hodge written during the Crimean War, 1854–1856*, G. C. H. V. Paget (ed.), (London, 1971), p. 106.
[85] Hodge, *Little Hodge*, p. 111.
[86] Hodge, *Little Hodge*, pp. 112, 116, 117, 132, 133.
[87] Sir A. C. Sterling, *The Story of the Highland Brigade in the Crimea: Founded on letters written during the years 1854, 1855, and 1856* (London, 1897), p. 276.

Estcourt went to watch the firing during the third bombardment of Sebastopol, 'hoping that the care of us would be a safe occupation' for James Estcourt. They even arrived late to the opening of the firing, 'thinking it was so much danger avoided for him'.[88] A week beforehand, Caroline Estcourt had documented a story in her diary that was told to her by a friend, Charles Cocks. A Mrs Armitage had been to see the Queen before travelling to the Crimea to see her husband. As Cocks told Estcourt, 'Her Majesty said to her Mrs Armitage that she approved of ladies coming to see their husbands, and should certainly do the same in the same case'.[89] Caroline drew upon the ideas and ethos of the domestic ideology of the time as a way to legitimise her presence and gain access to the battlefield. Not only did she, as a wife, provide support to her husband in the war zone, but in a reconfiguration of gender roles and through an exploitation of the apparent dichotomy between domesticity and military duty, she became a source of protection through her own battlefield tourism. However, James Estcourt remembered the third bombardment of Sebastopol very differently. He wrote, 'I took them [Caroline and Marianne] to see the firing yesterday which has nothing alarming in it seen from the front of our Division. I think it in a manner satisfied them that they need not be uneasy. The reality is less horrible than the idea'.[90] While Caroline Estcourt perceived her presence at the battlefield as a source of protection for her husband, James Estcourt believed that by showing his wife the realities of the firing, he would allay her anxieties. Women's presence at the battlefield, and the ways in which military authority and power dynamics between men and women operated there, could be constructed in oppositional terms. Those constructions could exist simultaneously, in parallel, though the fact that they were articulated from very different perspectives set boundaries to women's participation at the battlefield that could only exist in tension.

[88] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 6 June 1855.
[89] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 31 May 1855.
[90] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, copy letter from James Bucknall Bucknall Estcourt to his brother, 7 June 1855.

More broadly, women's presence could be rationalised as a source of emotional comfort. For Frances Duberly, proximity to her husband was a boon for the both of them. She stated on many occasions that she believed herself to be her husband's 'only comfort', and she could not abide the thought that she might not be close to him, should he be killed or wounded.[91] The two had been separated during the Battle of Alma, as Duberly had not been permitted to disembark in Eupatoria and march towards Sebastopol with the troops. Her anxiety upon hearing of the fighting was great. She wrote in her *Journal* on 26 September 1854 'Oh this suspense! How could I be so weak as to allow myself to be separated from my husband? A life-time of anxiety has been crowded into these ten days'.[92] Caroline Estcourt noted the relief she felt at being closer to her husband, since she and her sister-in-law would hear of any news much more quickly. She wrote on 6 June 1855 'we are very thankful to be here in the Crimea – how different from the Bosphorus & still more from the poor people who hear by Telegraph that fire has opened a fortnight before they can hear of their relations' safety'.[93] Ellen Palmer, on the other hand, wrote of the comfort her and her family's presence brought her brother: 'the actual comfort he experiences in thinking we are so near is worth all the toil and trouble of our joining him ten times over'.[94]

In this respect, women's battlefield tourism could be intimately connected with familial connections—not merely as a means of access to the military, as outlined in chapter 1, or to the battlefield for leisure, as discussed above. Rather, such bonds of affection re-cast travel in terms of familial duty; the activities of the traveller were curbed by the militarised nature of their destination. In simple logistical terms, the battlefield provided a source of shared leisure

[91] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, letter begun 11 November 1854, fol. 69.
[92] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 88.
[93] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 6 June 1855. While official despatches reached England quickly once a telegraph had established in the Crimea, letters would take at least two weeks to reach England.
[94] Wagner, *Miss Palmer's Diary*, p. 206.

and interest during times of reunion, in a foreign space that was dominated for miles around by the military presence, and in which only limited respite could be granted to serving officers. Touristic experiences of the battlefield and the wider landscape of the Crimea were dependant on circumstances, and things were slightly different for women who lacked these military connections. Alicia Blackwood, for example, had volunteered her services to Florence Nightingale, and had spent the duration of the war overseeing the Free Gift store and the care of soldiers' wives at the Scutari Barrack Hospital. When the war came to an end, she, her husband Reverend Doctor James Blackwood, and their two travelling companions went to the Crimea. Blackwood wrote in her memoir, 'it was very improbable that we should ever again be in the Crimea, especially under circumstances such as the present, which enabled us freely to go whither we listed'.[95] They took the opportunity provided by the proclamation of peace to travel beyond the war zone, visiting the Palace of the Khans at Bakhchiserai, the home of the Karaite Jews at Tchoufout Kaleh, and the city of Simferopol.[96] Mary Seacole, who had a degree of independence in the absence of marital or other familial connections to the military, did likewise. She joined a large party who also visited Simferopol and Bakhchiserai after peace had been declared.[97] Frances Duberly, by contrast, was restricted by her military connections during the conflict. She remained within close proximity to the military camps throughout her

[95] A. Blackwood, *A Narrative of Personal Experiences & Impressions during a Residence on the Bosphorus throughout the Crimean War* (London, 1881), p. 264.
[96] Alicia Blackwood went on to publish two volumes comprising 24 lithographs, depicting scenes across Constantinople and the Crimea. While often depicting battlefield spaces and other sites within the war zone (such as the Castle Hospital in Balaklava), the military presence here is signified by uniformed men, military paraphernalia, and the aftermath of conflict rather than scenes of conflict themselves. In most images, however, the military is absent. The focus is placed upon the vista, especially in several panoramic depictions, and upon Turkish and Crimean subjects, such as veiled women, men in traditional Turkish and Tartar dress, and an Orthodox priest. The volumes were sold to raise money for the Irish Church Missions, the Moravian Church Missions, the Vaudois Schools, and the Turkish Missions. See London, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), *Scutari, the Bosphorus and the Crimea: 24 Sketches, by Lady Alicia Blackwood* (Ventnor, 1857), H01/ST/NCPH/A/IV/021–023.
[97] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 162.

time in the Crimea and travelled to Ismid with the regiment when the war ended. Ellen Palmer and her companions left the Crimea at the end of January 1855, having spent several weeks with her brother in the war zone. They spent several more months enjoying Constantinople, before finally turning for home on 4 June. Marianne and Caroline Estcourt's travels came to a tragic end later that month, when James Estcourt died of cholera on 24 June. They attended his funeral the next day and left the Crimea on the 27 June. They spent the next few weeks making arrangements for their passage home and left for England at the end of July; with no more reason to stay close to the war zone, their departure was swift. For these women, their interest in the Crimea during the war stemmed from the British presence within the war zone, which in turn was its chief attraction; native populations and destinations beyond the boundaries of the military's occupation make minimal appearances in their accounts. While by no means universally accepted as justification for women's presence among military officers, domestic relationships could provide a familiar rationale for women to account for their actions privately and publicly. Military men's own investment in these relationships—which saw some permit their wives and families to visit them and accommodate or even privilege domestic affairs alongside their military duties—attests to the ultimate instability of the battlefield as a space of military activity alone.

Material Encounters with the Post-Mortem Battlefield

As middle- and upper-class women inserted themselves into military space through cultural, touristic, and domestic discourses and practices, they signalled their investment in the battlefield as a site of spectacle, of patriotic endeavour, and of personal significance. As well as navigating the battlefield in their writing and in society, that investment was rendered tangible through the act of collecting objects from the battlefield as "mementos", "relics", or "remembrances"; terms variously used to denote souvenirs. Susan Stewart's *On Longing* is a

seminal text in this regard, particularly her emphasis on the inscribed and re-inscribable narrative relationships between objects and their origins, and the inherent domestication of personal experiences within the souvenir.[98] The battlefield was a space constructed through personal experiences in ways that produced similar and divergent interpretations, existing simultaneously across the social relationships that constituted that space. So, too, were battlefield souvenirs given multiple affective and symbolic meanings, not only by virtue of the narratives constructed around the places and events that they were taken to represent, but by the experiences of the collector and the articulation of those experiences across their own social relationships. As Stewart has stated, the souvenir 'distinguishes experiences', in particular those events which are not 'repeatable', but which are 'reportable'.[99] Souvenirs of war are, therefore, intimately linked to an expanded definition of flesh-witnessing, in terms of the communicability of war through channels other than the textual. Holly Furneaux has demonstrated that the range of small objects sent home in soldiers' letters during the Crimean War, including bullets, sketches, and objects taken from the dead, communicated some of the soldiers' tactile experience of the conflict. They created 'thickly textured lines of two-way communication' with home, distancing and domesticating the battlefield.[100] But souvenirs from the battlefield also exemplified soldiers' emotional responses to war, as particular affective meanings were encompassed in objects that represented some personal experience of the war and were articulated in accompanying letters.[101]

This was no less true of the objects collected and sent as souvenirs by women. However, women's participation in the practice of collecting souvenirs of war, particularly those taken

[98] S. Stewart, *On Longing; Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC, 1993), p. 134: the souvenir 'domesticates on the level of its operation: external experience is internalised; the beast is taken home'.
[99] Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 135.
[100] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling*, p. 152. See also Stewart, *On Longing,* p. 134.
[101] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling*, pp. 156–57.

directly from or explicitly signifying the battlefield, has received little attention. The meanings articulated in relation to women's battlefield souvenirs, and their participation in the very practice of collecting, expose the problems associated with the liminality of battlefield space and the resulting parallel—even antagonistic—understandings of women's presence there. That women considered objects from the battlefield to be souvenirs cannot be doubted, but it was a term that covered a great range of materials connected with sites of fighting, and the different meanings attached to them. As Kate Hill has stated, the souvenir is not a category of objects, or a stable means of labelling them. It is 'more a mode of signifying or meaning, which an object can take on in certain contexts or for certain people'.[102] Collecting battlefield souvenirs was a practice conducted by women across classes. It does not, therefore, merely epitomise a touristic gaze over the battlefield, though it certainly catered to a middle and upper-class touristic interest in the war and battlefield spaces. In the objects that were selected, it was a practice that often mimicked the military tendency to claim souvenirs as trophies from the battlefield. It was a practice that could also represent an impulse—or even a need—to commemorate the battlefield and fallen men. As such, the collection of battlefield souvenirs by women located them and battlefield space at a complex juncture between tourism, martial glory, and remembrance.

One of the more innocuous types of souvenirs to be collected widely was flowers. Indeed, Furneaux has described pressed flowers as a 'staple of soldiers' letters', providing an inexpensive and readily available means through which they could 'share at least part of the feeling, emotional and tactile, of war'.[103] Women shared in this practice. After their visit to Inkerman, Marianne and Caroline Estcourt 'gathered orchids as "*souvenirs de la boule*"

[102] K. Hill, 'Souvenirs: Narrating Overseas Violence in the Late Nineteenth Century', in K. Hill (ed.), *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Texts, Images, Objects* (London, 2016), p. 177.
[103] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling,* pp. 152, 164.

Canterbury bells, wild rose, thyme, sweet william, forget me not, everlasting, & other unknown beauties from the field of Inkerman'.[104] Frances Duberly would often send pressed flowers to her sister. She wrote on 6 May 1855,

> I send you some flowers – at least parts of some – the plain is enamelled with them – we gathered these on the neutral ground between the French and Russian camps, over the Tchernaya looking with an opera glass into the Russian lines all the time, while the horses grazed – strange contrasts? Flowers and exploded shells – rotting horses – bleaching bones and the terrible memories, which peopled the ground – before the time of flowers came.[105]

What is evident in both of these accounts is the stark contrast drawn between the bloody connotations of battlefields, and the beauty that could spring from them. In signifying such a contrast, flowers served particularly well as a vehicle for conveying the sentimental expression that can otherwise be lacking in written texts. They represented connections between the individuals collecting them and battlefield space in an extension of the flesh-witnessing proclaimed in and through those texts; but they also represented a connection to the soldiers who fought and fell in those spaces.[106] As Stewart states, 'the souvenir is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia'.[107] The nineteenth century was an era in which a sentimental culture foregrounding emotional connections was particularly embraced by the middle classes, and saw society

[104] GA, Caroline Estcourt, D1571/F503, 25 May 1855.
[105] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 6 May 1855, fol. 156.
[106] See Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling* on flesh-witnessing in soldier's accounts and souvenirs. Flesh-witnessing was not exclusive to combatants, but was 'extendable and shareable', pp. 152–56.
[107] Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 135.

broadly attribute new significance to rituals of mourning as a result.[108] Flowers in particular could represent 'the preservation of an instant in time through a reduction to physical dimensions and a corresponding increase in significance supplied by means of narrative'.[109] It was through narratives of loss, linked to the site of their collection, that flowers were rendered a potent symbol of remembrance that signified battlefield space as a site of mourning. Through such narratives, women's collection of flowers—and other objects—could be understood in commemorative terms. Indeed, commemoration became part of women's self-perceived role at the battlefield. Frances Duberly also endeavoured to collect the belongings of officers who were killed, in order to send these tokens back to their families in England. On one occasion, Duberly wanted to send a lock of hair belonging to a young officer, Ensign Richard Grenville Deane, of the 30th Regiment, who had been killed in the attack on the Redan during the final bombardment of Sebastopol. Duberly described him as 'quite a lad' and indeed, he was only 18 years old when he died. Consent to send a lock of hair was refused, however. Deane had been shot in the head; his hair was clotted with blood and was, therefore, unfit to send to his family. Duberly ultimately sent his epaulettes and buttons to his mother.[110]

In a similar vein, flowers provided a tangible connection to sites of burial which, in the context of the war, connoted an extension of the battlefield and served as a reminder of personal loss and patriotic sacrifice. On 21 April 1856, a letter signed 'Sister Mary Clare' was sent from the Scutari Barrack Hospital to Sister Mary Anastasia, one of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy who had gone to work at the Balaklava General Hospital.[111] The letter specifically

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[108] K. H. Grenier and A. R. Mushal, 'Introduction', in K. H. Grenier and A. R. Mushal (eds), *Cultures of Memory in the Nineteenth Century: Consuming Commemoration* (London, 2020), p. 6.
[109] Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 138.
[110] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, fol. 53, 11 September 1855.
[111] Sister Mary Anastasia, née Sarah Kelly, was a Sister of Mercy from the Bermondsey convent in London. She had gone to Scutari with Florence Nightingale's first party of nurses. She went over to the Crimea in early April 1856, after the resignation of Mother Francis Bridgeman and the departure of her Irish nuns from the Crimean military hospitals. "Sister

directed Sister Anastasia to collect battlefield objects: 'now mind you get some things to bring home as memorials of Sebastopol & the Crimea'. A postscript added, 'mind you get some bullets &c &c &c & some flowers off all the battlefields & graves & if you can get some off Mr Sheahan's & Wheble's graves – I'm quite in earnest in this request & so is Mother'.[112] Flowers were malleable in their affective meanings. They could be perceived to hold sentimental personal significance in relation to the narratives constructed around, or attached to, scenes of conflict and individuals' own graves. They could take on patriotic and nationalistic, even democratic undertones, particularly given the lack of marked gravesites and memorials for common soldiers.[113] As Gavin Hughes and Jonathan Trigg have noted, memorials in the Crimea such as those commemorating the Charge of the Light Brigade were often made to events, rather than to individuals; where individuals were commemorated, these were most often officers.[114] Like Frances Duberly, Mary Seacole endeavoured to send tokens

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Mary Clare" appears to have been Mother Clare Moore, mother superior of the Bermondsey nuns and the only Bermondsey nun who worked in the hospitals to bear that name (while there were two Irish nuns named Sister Mary Clare, the Irish and Bermondsey nuns worked and were kept entirely separate by Mother Francis Bridgeman). Mother Clare Moore could not go to work in the Crimean Hospitals due to poor health, which would prompt her return to England at the end of April 1856. This poor state of health was referenced in this letter, as were letters from Bermondsey that said the other sisters prayed for her recovery. In this case, it is possible that the postscript was added by Sister Mary de Gonzaga, née Georgiana Barrie, who had remained to care for Mother Clare Moore and who would accompany her back to England. Sister Mary de Gonzaga was also mentioned in this letter as being with "Sister Mary Clare"; she may even have penned the letter on Mother Clare Moore's behalf.

[112] London, Wellcome Library (WL), Letters held by University of British Columbia, to and from Sisters of Mercy who served with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, MS.9104/4. Mr Sheahan and Mr Wheble were both chaplains who died from disease in the Crimea. See J. M. Hagerty, 'A Catholic Chaplain in the Crimean War', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 82/329 (2004), pp. 21–31.

[113] Memorials to officers were erected on Cathcart's Hill, a gravesite in the Crimea named for General George Cathcart, who was buried there after his death during the Battle of Inkerman. Most soldiers were buried in mass graves across the Crimea, or near to the military hospitals in Turkey.

[114] G. Hughes and J. Trigg, 'Remembering the Charge of the Light Brigade', *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 4/1–2 (2008), p. 47. See LMA, *Scutari, the Bosphorus and the Crimea: 24 Sketches, by Lady Alicia Blackwood* (Ventnor, 1857), H01/ST/NCPH/A/IV/021, 'Frontispiece' depicting the grave of eight officers of the Coldstream Guards on Cathcart's Hill. Memorials

back to individual soldiers' relatives in England. She went to the military cemeteries in the Crimea before her own departure, where she reflected on her 'friends', not identified by rank or regiment, 'sleeping well after a life's work nobly done'.[115] She 'picked up pebbles, and plucked simple wild-flowers, or tufts of grass, as memorials for relatives at home'.[116] Such tokens functioned as a material connection to these battlefield spaces and retained their commemorative meaning as such over time. In 1883, General James Conolly, Captain Samuel Henry Harford, and Lady Emily Cathcart collected flowers from around James Estcourt's grave and sent them to his wife.[117] Today the pressed flowers still exist, preserved inside their folded paper packet in the Gloucestershire Archives. The knowledge of their origins renders them a poignant reminder of loss to this day.

Collecting and sending flowers from the battlefield provided a way of creating a tangible connection between the battlefield and home, not only in terms of remembrance, but also to satisfy the curiosity of broader networks of friends and relatives. In this way, they carried more implicit imperial messages that complicate the meanings attached to flowers, presented as they often were as tokens of remembrance and commemoration.[118] Frances Duberly's sister Selina,

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could be made to other soldiers in places such as local parish graveyards and churches in Britain.

[115] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 166.

[116] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 166.

[117] GA, Papers on the life of James Bucknall Bucknall Estcourt, D1571/F495, pressed flowers in a tied paper packet dated 1 October 1883; Letter to Caroline Estcourt from General James Conolly, 26 October 1883; Letter to Caroline Estcourt, from General Samuel Henry Harford, 28 November 1883. Lieutenant-General James Conolly had served in the Crimean War as Brigade-Major of the Heavy Brigade. Captain Samuel Henry Harford had served in the Crimea as a Lieutenant in the 56th Regiment of Foot. In 1883, he was serving as a British Consul in Sebastopol. Lady Emily Cathcart was the daughter of General George Cathcart. Emily Cathcart was in the Crimea renewing her own father's tomb. Captain Harford and General Conolly updated Caroline Estcourt on the condition of the grave site. They also oversaw the removal of James Estcourt's monument from the original burial site at the British military headquarters to the British military cemetery on Cathcart's Hill, as a safeguard against Cossack desecration.

[118] See, for example, M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (2nd edn, New York, NY, 2008). In particular, see part I, 'Science and Sentiment', which traces the rise of a pervasive scientific discourse in European writing about the world in the eighteenth-

for example, was a keen gardener. In addition to pressed examples of familiar and unknown varieties, Duberly attempted to procure seeds and bulbs from the battlefields in the Crimea and sites across Turkey, for her sister to cultivate in her own garden.[119] Flowers from the Crimea and the wider "East" could represent British conquest over these spaces, denoting as they did possession of the exotic. Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, with the rise of scientific discourse, many travellers indulged in amateur scientific collecting. This was no different among military men. Simon Harrison has studied military officers' collection of human skulls as battlefield souvenirs over the course of the British military presence across southern Africa. He has argued that the collection of skulls from African bodies stemmed from an ideology of racial superiority, and was intimately linked to developments in scientific fields such as phrenology and craniology, including amateur interest in these subjects.[120] As Stewart has stated, 'to have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as exterior and foreign, on the other it must be marked as arising directly out of an immediate experience of its possessor'.[121] Though presenting less explicit evidence of military supremacy—and arguably a more emotive, innocent, or even feminine symbol of military sacrifice—flowers nevertheless performed a similar function as symbols of British conquest. In addition to being tokens of mourning, flowers collected from battlefield sites that women had themselves visited signified their investment in the nation and its imperial project.

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century, which saw Europeans impose their own orders of knowledge over non-European spaces and peoples.

[119] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 7 December 1854, fol. 81; Add MS 47218 B, 9 April 1856, fol. 157.

[120] S. Harrison, 'Skulls and Scientific Collecting in the Victorian Military: Keeping the Enemy Dead in British Frontier Warfare', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50/1 (2008), pp. 285–303.

[121] Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 147.

A form of souvenir that was more problematic for women to collect, in that the objects had far more obvious implications of military violence, was conflict debris and military paraphernalia. On 23 February 1855, Frances Duberly sent a parcel to her husband's mother. It contained:

> A hussar jacket (Russian) captured at MacKenzie's farm – and a piece of shell which burst outside our tent at "Balaklava" and some of the wreck of the *Prince* – which I begged to be sent on to you – thinking you might like them – a Cossack pistol, a picture, and a few reliques [*sic*] – I keep as I could not send them home – not having a box.[122]

These items were quite clearly examples of material evidence denoting battle and bloodshed. The narratives surrounding such material were forged on two interconnected levels: that of personal experience, and that of public consciousness. On a personal level, these items could hold significance for individuals as battlefield trophies. Henry Duberly's tent had come under fire as the British hastily packed up their camp at the onset of the Battle of Balaklava; Frances Duberly had arrived at the camp prior to going to watch the battle as this happened, and the fragment of shell she sent home represented this proximity. After the final attack on Sebastopol in September 1855, Mary Seacole similarly collected a piece of a shell that had exploded so close to her as she tended to the wounded, that she thought the blast would kill her.[123] Sir Charles Russell, of the Grenadier Guards, listed his own 'trophies' from the Battle of Inkerman, in which he had fought at close quarters, in a letter in November 1854. They included a 'rifle,

[122] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 23 February 1855, fol. 120. The HMS *Prince* had sunk in Balaklava harbour during a storm on 14 November 1854. It had been carrying much-needed winter and medical supplies.
[123] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 147.

a sword & lots of bullets – indeed, one can get them by sackfulls & of all sizes'.[124] Materials connected to personal experiences of danger and combat on the battlefield provided a lasting reminder of one's ultimate survival. However, the ubiquity of such material suggests the availability of the battlefield—central to both personal and collective memories of conflict—as a space for mass consumption.

Indeed, martial material came to occupy an important place on a public scale, notably with the transportation of captured Russian cannons and bells to England, their display throughout Britain and its empire, and their distribution among Britain's wartime allies, France and Sardinia, after the war. Roger Bartlett and Roy Payne have argued that, despite some official ambivalence to such war trophies in London, they constituted important symbols of dominance and alliance. The decision to keep them saw guns and bells distributed to towns and cities, as well as military and naval establishments, or else melted down for war memorials and for the production of the new Victoria Cross medals. In all these uses, the captured guns represented the 'nationalistic patriotism of the Victorian age'.[125] Natalie Houston has observed that during the war, 'for most of Britain's population, the Crimean conflict existed as a discursive text, rather than as material reality'.[126] For the British public, souvenirs like Roger Fenton's widely reproduced photographs of war zone landscapes and of military officers provided an anchor between the public and private narratives circulating about the war, and forged a collective memory of the conflict across private spaces.[127]

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[124] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, copy of a letter from Sir Charles Russell Grenadier Guards, 7 November 1855 presumable sent to James Estcourt. Sir Charles Russell, 3rd Baronet, received the Victoria Cross for leading a charge against the Sandbag Battery during the Battle of Inkerman. He recounts this episode in his letter.
[125] R. Bartlett and R. Payne, 'Britain's Crimean War Trophy Guns: The Case of Ludlow and the Marches: Britain's Crimean War Trophy Guns', *History*, 99/337 (2014), pp. 652–69.
[126] N. M. Houston, 'Reading the Victorian Souvenir: Sonnets and Photographs of the Crimean War', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14/2 (2001), p. 370.
[127] Houston, 'Reading the Victorian Souvenir', pp. 369–70.

The events and locations that battlefield objects signified were, therefore, central to these narratives, particularly in light of the sharing of martial material. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in the Crimea many months after the series of battles that took place in the autumn of 1854, and it is highly likely that the direction to Sister Anastasia to collect bullets and flowers from 'all the battlefields' referred to Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman. It is unlikely that Duberly collected the Russian hussar jacket herself. MacKenzie's Farm was located between the Tchernaya and Belbek rivers, on the road to Bakhchiserai. Lord Raglan's British forces had come upon the flank of a Russian division here, while the latter were marching to Bakhchiserai on 24 September 1854, a few days prior to the Battle of Alma. Firing ensued, and the Russians fled, though a number of prisoners of war were captured, along with the Russians' ammunition and stores.[128] Duberly had not arrived in the Crimea until after the Battle of Alma, but MacKenzie's Farm was often mentioned in news reports as a recognisable landmark for the British public reading about the war. Similarly, the *Prince* had sunk just outside Balaklava harbour during a storm on 14 November 1854. It was a widely reported disaster for the British, as the vessel had contained much needed medical supplies, ammunition, and the bulk of the troops' winter clothing. Duberly had experienced this from on board the *Star of the South* inside the harbour, and from the shore where she went to view the numerous wreckages.

The locations and events that Duberly commemorated with her family through materials directly connected to them were all significant within the public narrative of the war, in addition to her own personal experiences. For those in the war zone, the conflict was no less discursively constructed than for those at home. In their preconceptions about the battlefield and in their consumption of news coverage throughout their own presence in the war zone, women were receptive to these public narratives and catered to them in their collection of battlefield debris.

[128] 'London, Wednesday, October 11, 1854', *The Times*, 11 October 1854, p. 6.

As such, in the context of these intersecting narratives, they too became mediators rendering the battlefield as a site for public consumption.

Victors and Vultures

Women's claims to commemorative collecting sat uneasily within this context of the shared materiality of the battlefield and existed in tension with the particularly martial and masculine significance attached to battlefield objects by military men. These issues come to head when one considers the most problematic form of battlefield souvenir: objects taken from dead men, and from the city of Sebastopol after its capture in September 1855. These objects have remained contentious into the twenty-first century. In 2004 the British Legion expressed its concern over the removal of objects from the Crimean battlefields: licences are needed to remove regimental badges, weapons, and personal items buried with the soldiers, but there were concerns that these were being "plundered", fuelling a potentially illegal trade in military relics.[129] Stewart has argued that such relics, as 'souvenirs of death . . . mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning'.[130] The issues of plunder and relics do not only constitute modern-day ethical or legal dilemmas, for they also presented problems in their associated origins that women consciously tried to navigate throughout their presence at the battlefields during the Crimean War.

The plundering of Russian bodies and of Sebastopol, both for objects of value and for smaller trophies, was widespread. British soldiers commonly used the terms "plundering" or "looting" to describe the actions of soldiers from the Russian, Turkish, and even French armies. Attributing violent and disrespectful acts to the Russians in particular was a common way for

[129] 'History in the Media', *History Today*, 54/12 (2004), p. 8.
[130] Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 140.

British soldiers and observers to frame their own war ethics, despite their hypocritical similar collection of objects. William Russell wrote on 28 October that the Russians 'stripped our dead' after the battle of Balaklava[131], but the right to plunder was one that has historically been the victor's to act upon. Captain Jasper Hall wrote to his father that he intended to furnish his entire hut with glass windowpanes, oak window frames, and 'splendid' white marble slabs taken from the conquered city of Sebastopol.[132] For women, the negotiation of the issue of plunder rested substantially on the value they perceived—both monetary and sentimental—in the objects that they took. Those that they acknowledged collecting were notably lacking in the former. On 4 June 1855, Frances Duberly wrote to her sister that she and her husband had been several times to the field where the battle of Balaklava was fought. They had only ever seen the remains of horses, but on their most recent visit:

> We found two 4th Light Dragoons – one lying on his back with his head blown off – and with the arms & knees bent as if he had just fallen back from the saddle he was a perfect skeleton except the thighs – which the ants were fast finishing – near him a comrade – part of whose dress protruded from the lightly shrivelled earth. I have two buttons &c & a small revolver bullet which fell from among his bones.[133]

A month later, she sent these same objects home to her sister for safekeeping:

> Enclosed are sundry reliques [*sic*] – a part of a 4th Light Dragoon jacket distinguishable by 2.0 (Queens own) on the button – & a bullet which tumbled from among his bones . . . You must keep the 4th Dragoon's Jacket for me, in case I come home – as I value it – If I shouldn't happen to come home – you can keep it

[131] 'The Siege of Sebastopol', *The Times*, 18 November 1854, p. 6.
[132] Hall, *Letters from the Crimea,* p. 25.
[133] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 4 June 1855, fols 173–74. Original emphasis. The 4th Light Dragoons had participated in the Charge of the Light Brigade.

yourself.[134]

Duberly, or at the very least her editor—her brother-in-law, Francis Marx—had more tact than to publish these episodes in her *Journal*.[135] The image of a middle-class lady picking through the bones of a fallen soldier—particularly a British one—on the field of the battle is shocking to ideas about the treatment and commemoration of the war dead. The image of a lady amidst the gruesome aftermath of conflict, even many months later, was one that was antithetical to the expectations of middle-class femininity. Duberly was in fact aware of this. In a letter written on 16 September 1855, a week after the fall of Sebastopol, she wrote that her husband had gone to see the city after it was evacuated, but she had stayed behind, 'as a woman stalking about sight seeing [*sic*] among the dead & dying is very like a vulture, or any other unclean bird of prey'.[136] However, this did not prevent her from entering the city herself the following days, and she wrote about her own visit in the very same letter; an account, repeated in her *Journal*, which gives a graphic idea of the post-conflict scenes that women, like all spectators and combatants, were met with:[137]

> The town as we rode down to it – is a mere crumbling heap of mines – The desolation & destruction are distressing to see . . . Turning the corner my fat pony shied violently – it was at two dead Russians, almost in a state of decomposition, and a third who had fallen in an angle of the wall – & was sitting looking at us with open eyes, so life like that we turned to him to see if he was dead . . . I met Sir Edward Lyons & Admiral Bruat, who shewed [*sic*] us the way to General Windshaw's office where we were to

[134] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 2 July 1855, fol. 2.
[135] For more on the writing and publication of Duberly's *Journal*, see 'Frances Duberly: A Failed Heroine' in chapter 4.
[136] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 16 September 1855, fol. 55.
[137] In her *Journal*, Duberly documented this event on 13 September 1855, four days after the city was captured.

> lunch and to go there we rode along the dry docks . . . What a fearful smell! What can it be! . . . turning sharp round the corner by the custom house – we came upon the cause – 750 dead bodies in every stage of discoloured putrefaction lay heaped against a wall – In looking over the houses previous to clearing them out for troops – Windshaw came upon this – which had been a hospital – and where the wounded had been all suffered to die of neglect & starvation & there left to rot. These must have been dead several days to be so corrupt.[138]

The scenes that Duberly encountered were appalling, but even amid such horror she still gathered objects covertly throughout the day:

> We are not allowed to carry outward and visible signs of plunder, but I filled my habit pockets and saddle pockets with various small items, as reliques [*sic*] of these famous batteries and the famous town—lasts, buttons, and grape shot from the Redan; cards, a glass salt-cellar, and English fuzee, and the screw of a gun from the Malakoff; a broken bayonet from the Little Redan; and rifle bullets from the workshop in the town.[139]

Duberly presented the items taken from the bodies of the Dragoons and those taken from Sebastopol as insignificant trinkets, useless to most people but saturated with sentimental meaning and the memory of the conflict for her. This was a common theme. Elizabeth Evans took a 'charm', a Russian religious icon shaped like a cross with the image of Christ upon it, from around the neck of a deceased Russian soldier. She still had the charm when her account of the war was documented and published in 1908; it remained an important keepsake. She

[138] BL, Duberly Letters, Add Ms 47218 B, 16 September 1855, fols 56–57. Original emphasis. See also Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 280–288, where Duberly relates all these same experiences of the day.
[139] Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 287–88.

wrote that it was 'one of my little mementoes of the war . . . It is one of the things I could keep—one of the small remembrances that could not be taken away from me, because it was no use to anybody'.[140] Despite her claims about the insignificance of the charm, her actions precisely echo the practice among military men of collecting trophies from enemy soldiers. In addition to the military paraphernalia he claimed after the Battle of Inkerman, Sir Charles Russell also counted a religious icon, a rococo pendant taken from a Russian officer, as one of his 'trophies'. It contained images of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph on small tablets.[141] Furneaux has argued that these objects, worn close to the body, represent a range of emotive responses on the part of the soldier-collector, including a sense of kinship with the Christian Russian soldiers, discomfort, remorse, and grief, in addition to their representation of aggressive masculinity that is an inherent part of their possession, when taken from a corpse.[142] It is impossible to reconstruct Evans' own affective response to the charm she took, but it is possible to identify her navigation of these martial and masculine undertones. In her narrative, she stated that she initially took the Russian soldier to be sitting wounded on the road, only to find that he had in fact been killed by his own countrymen to prevent him 'falling into our hands'.[143] Evans shifted the blame and moral responsibility for the death from the British to the Russians, and the charm takes on connotations of senseless loss. Evans' long possession of it renders it a highly personal reminder of the loss she bore witness to. Mary Seacole explicitly addressed this tension between commemorative value and military practice in the way that she framed her collection of objects from the dead:

> I picked up some trophies from the battle-field, but not many, and those of little value.

[140] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.
[141] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, copy of a letter from Sir Charles Russell, 7 November 1855.
[142] Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling*, pp. 173–74.
[143] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 270.

> I cannot bear the idea of plundering either the living or the dead; but I picked up a Russian metal cross, and took from the bodies of some of the poor fellows nothing of more value than a few buttons, which I severed from their coarse grey coats'.[144]

All three women presented the objects they collected from men and the conquered city of Sebastopol as unobtrusive. They trivialised their souvenirs as a way to reject the idea of plundering, with its connotations of monetary value, greed, and violence. They also minimised the fact that they not only encountered battlefield corpses, but took from them, by emphasising their sympathy towards the dead and the sentimental significance of the objects. Each of their actions nevertheless sat uneasily within military interpretations of trophy collecting and plundering. It is striking that an officer, Temple Godman, a Captain in the 5th Dragoon Guards, drew upon the same likeness to vultures that Duberly herself invoked in his explicit criticism of her actions. He wrote in a letter:

> You ask me if I know Mrs Duberly, I do by sight very well, and should like to see her book, though I would not give a pin for her opinions. She is known in the camp by the name of Vulture, from the pleasure she seemed to take in riding over fields of battle. I should think her feelings (if she has any) cannot be very fine, and she is certainly more fit to follow a camp than to live in an English drawing room.[145]

Godman set up an important dichotomy here. By contrasting Duberly to women in the middle-class drawing room—which was charged with connotations of a genteel, domestic femininity—and likening her to lower-class camp followers, a common term for soldiers' wives, Godman's criticism was suffused with unspoken expectations about Duberly's gender

[144] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 167
[145] T. Godman, *The Fields of War: A Young Cavalryman's Crimean Campaign*, P. Warner (ed.) (London, 1977), p. 200.

and class status. She was judged not merely to fall short of these, but to stand in direct opposition to them. By the same token, he condemned the actions of soldiers' wives like Elizabeth Evans, implicitly demonstrating the contempt often directed towards them, based on the assumption that as lower-class women, they could not be expected to act with dignity. However, these women's actions were not only notable in terms of class and gender expectations, but also in terms of their presence in militarised space as civilians. Staff officer Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Sterling wrote about the actions of civilians generally after combat in a letter on 21 August 1855, which is worth quoting at length:

> What do you think of two wives of some of the *employés* at Balaklava riding about the field of battle on the Chernaya among the corpses; and two Army-Chaplains going all over the field plundering, that is, stripping the bodies of anything they fancied—arms, I suppose, as trophies . . . No person with humane feelings can go to see a field of battle, while the dead are lying about, without horror. Officers go professionally, to study how the battle was fought; but some and chaplains can be neither tender nor pious who go to such a scene. A dead body, composed and decent, is not to me a horrid sight; but on the battle-field—where the poor bodies are torn about by frightful wounds, legs and arms shot off, twisted into strange attitudes, exposed by the abstraction or derangement of their clothes, swelled up by the sun, blackened by the blood, while all the preparations are going on for burial in a great ditch—it is truly shocking. To-morrow, for what we know, our own bodies may be scattered about, a spectacle for these harpies.[146]

The practice of collecting battlefield souvenirs was not inherently gendered, nor confined to men of the military, but it was interpreted in very different ways depending on the social and

[146] Sterling, *The Story of the Highland Brigade in the Crimea*, p. 319. Original emphasis.

cultural position of the collector. The battlefield was a site of bloodshed, but also one of victory. By participating in the collection of battlefield souvenirs, women implicitly inserted themselves into the narrative of military success, and openly demonstrated their perceived entitlement to the material battlefield as a result. The particular ire evoked by Duberly's participation in the practice, and the gendering of civilians implied in Sterling's likening the wives and chaplains—both civilians—to "harpies", however, shows a very different interpretation of the battlefield's boundaries.[147]

It is notable that Sterling classified the stripping of bodies for trophies as plunder, for it describes Duberly's, Seacole's, and Evans's own actions. However, his account deeming such civilians to be unfeeling contrasts sharply with the sentimental significance that these women attached to objects taken from the men, and implicitly condemns soldiers who participated in the same practice. Harrison has argued that British soldiers were selective in representing their own practices in terms of a civilised military masculinity. Though they could at times emulate savage actions on the battlefield and in their own collection of battlefield trophies, this was rationalised in terms of hyper-masculine practices that signified their ultimate combative, racial, and scientific power and superiority.[148] Furthermore, Kate Hill has observed that this masculinity was 'separated spatially from and in tension with the masculinities appropriate to London and the company of women'.[149] The presence of civilians at such scenes represented a transgression of this military masculinity, destabilising the social and spatial boundaries of the battlefield and of British military identity. This is all the more so for the lack of distinction drawn between *which* enemy dead were being plundered. Sterling's anxiety that his own British, male, military body might become subject to such treatment—as the Dragoon's body did while Frances Duberly collected his jacket and buttons—obscures the military distinctions

[147] A harpy is traditionally depicted as a bird of prey, with a woman's head.
[148] Harrison, 'Skulls and Scientific Collecting', pp. 285–303.
[149] Hill, 'Souvenirs', p. 184.

drawn between enemy and foe, victor and vanquished that framed the principles of military plundering and the remembrance of the dead.

Conclusion

On the battlefield, civilian and military practices clashed in ways that situated women at a thorny and complicated junction between military violence and conspicuous consumption in a literal sense—the observation of battlefield spectacle and the claiming of battlefield debris. The effect was that different understandings of battlefield spaces exposed points of contention within women's relationships to the military community; they revealed competing constructions of femininity; and they complicate our understandings of women's relationships to the gendered ideology often assumed to underpin nineteenth-century Britishness.

The distinctions that were evidently drawn between military and civilian constituted a socially significant, and yet ultimately uneasy dichotomy. Middle- and upper-class women were able to navigate the battlefield as a tourist space amid the nebulosity resulting from such attempts to impose fixed boundaries onto that space, though their ultimate success in doing so is debatable. That women in the Crimean War could share distanced and appreciative views of the battlefield's sensory spectacle as tourists, implying the danger of the space as both an added thrill and mundane fact, demonstrates important negotiations of space, gender, and threat through middle- and upper-class practices. Though heavily inflected by personal relationships and intent, class cultures of viewing the military nevertheless gave rise to shared imaginative geographies of the battlefield, with which middle- and upper-class women's presence and spectatorship could to some extent be reconciled.

However, social relationships and the principles upon which British society traditionally functioned became unstable on the battlefield. It was a space where civilian and military customs existed in tension, which was conceptualised in very different terms—by men and

women, across social relationships, and in relation to individuals. Women's touristic encounters with the battlefield provided the scope for them to test those traditional boundaries. The privileged social position enjoyed by women like the Estcourts, Duberly, and Palmer provided them with the social and rhetorical means to command some authority among "polite society" at the battlefield, and over that same space.

And yet, in addition to its spectacle and the potential for some liberation, the battlefield was also constructed across social relationships spanning military and domestic affairs in more traditionally gendered terms. The figure of the emotionally supportive wife or female relation provided women with an important point of entry to the battlefield, signalling their interest not only in terms of curiosity, excitement, and adventure, but familial and even patriotic duty. In a reconfiguration of that role in relation to battlefield space, women could even perceive a subversion of military authority, assuming the role of protector and positioning themselves centrally within domestic and patriotic issues. Such perceptions, however, were limited in scope. The contradictory framework of gendered power relations that the same ideology gave rise to among military men, and the restrictions that military movements ultimately placed on the travel itineraries of the women most closely connected with the army, renders the battlefield an important example of the 'simultaneous multiplicity of spaces' outlined by Massey.[150] The social relationships which penetrated that space shaped it in very personal ways for individuals, in terms of the classed, gendered, and martial dogma that those very relationships reflected and sustained.

The participation of women from different backgrounds in the practice of collecting battlefield souvenirs reveals a much more detailed understanding of the battlefield as a contentious space for women more broadly. It was suffused with issues of private and national status and remembrance that transcended class, in addition to its spectacle and the opportunities

[150] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 3.

it provided for feminine authority. The physical presence of women at battlefields gave rise to severe criticism which indicates that their inclusion in the military community had limitations, despite women's own attempts to navigate such boundaries. Their collection of battlefield souvenirs highlighted the incompatibilities between civilian and military value systems. Women's attempts to navigate these differences, located as they were at the junction between the two, sat in tension with the practices and outlook of military men who were more determined to uphold such divisions, which legitimised their own military masculinity. As a result, women's military and civilian claims to feminine behaviour were destabilised on the battlefield, and their access to it, though possible, remained problematic.

Part II: Women and the Crimean War in British Discourse

Chapter 3: Crimean War Nursing in Social Context

The year 2020 marked the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth and was designated the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife" by the World Health Organisation. It was also a year in which global healthcare services were pushed to their limits with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2020, Britain was just past the first peak of the pandemic when the British Army launched a new television recruitment advertisement. To the sounds of cannon fire and pipe music, a black screen read 'In 1854, there came a lady with a lamp'. An animation opened with Florence Nightingale's famous lamp swinging and creaking in the darkness, before the lady herself was depicted walking through a darkened ward to the bed of a wounded man; she held his hand to comfort him in his fitful sleep. The screen then panned, so that the beam of her lamp functioned as a projector, depicting footage of the British Army's efforts to assist the National Health Service at the emergency Nightingale hospitals during the 2020 pandemic. The on-screen narrative continued, '166 years later, she shone again. When the worst happens, the best step up'.[1]

It is unsurprising that Nightingale was featured in this advert, given both her relevancy and the publicity dedicated to her life and work in 2020 in particular. It is nevertheless telling that she was chosen as the forebear and representative of combined medical and military service efforts. While the advert celebrated the history of cooperative efforts between the army and healthcare services by looking back to the Crimean War—a time of mutual crisis—it relied entirely on the imagery of the "Lady with the Lamp", never mentioning Nightingale or the

[1] 'Army Nightingale – The Best Step Up', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9KemZF9Pp4, accessed 25/08/2020.

conflict by name. The "Lady with the Lamp" remains the predominant image of Nightingale and one of the dominating images of the Crimean War and of nineteenth-century nursing in British popular culture, but it is one that emerged almost immediately during Nightingale's lifetime. After the deplorable state of the sick and wounded was reported at length in *The Times* in October 1854 following the Battle of Alma, the government arranged to send a number of female nurses to assist the overstretched, understaffed, and ill-supplied army medical department. On October 15, Nightingale was asked by her friend and Secretary at War Sidney Herbert to lead a party to Scutari. He believed her to be the 'one person in England that I know of, who would be capable of organising & superintending such a scheme'.[2] She had a great interest in sanitary reform, three months' training in nursing practice at the Kaiserswerth Institute of Deaconesses in Germany and had spent a year as Superintendent at the Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness in Harley Street. It was undoubtedly throughout these experiences that she demonstrated the value of those qualities that Herbert most admired in her: her 'personal qualities', 'power of administration', and her social standing.[3] Nightingale's experience was more than most upper-class ladies possessed and complemented the inherent suitability Herbert perceived in her background and character. After hastily recruiting a mixture of Roman Catholic and Anglican nuns, secular sisters, and hospital nurses, Nightingale and her party of thirty-eight women left England on 21 October. On 8 February 1855, after only a few months of work, another article in *The Times* referred to Nightingale as a 'ministering angel', to be 'observed alone, with a little lamp in her hand, making her solitary rounds'.[4] Nightingale continues to stand as an icon of British history, nursing care, and military service.

[2] Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale*, p. 206.
[3] Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale,* p. 206.
[4] 'The Sick and Wounded Fund', *The Times*, 8 February 1855, p. 8.

However, healthcare efforts in the Crimean War were the work of many. The scale of loss demanded it. It is estimated that the British army lost 20,000 of its roughly 100,000 strong force over the course of the conflict through fighting, illness, and disease.[5] In 1854, it was not only the "Lady with the Lamp", but a far broader array of individuals who came to the assistance of overwhelmed medical services to help the suffering army. Eight further parties of nurses followed Nightingale between December 1854 and August 1855 comprising a further 179 women, 218 in total. The idea of sending female military nurses was a novel one in Britain, though female military nursing was well established in France through the Roman Catholic sisterhoods. A letter by "A Sufferer by the Present War" printed in *The Times* in early October 1854 lamented, 'why have we no Sisters of Charity?' and is commonly held to encapsulate the public mood in response to the army's lack of preparation for the medical care of its sick and wounded.[6] The writer continued 'there are numbers of "ablebodied" and tender-hearted English women who would joyfully and with alacrity go out to devote themselves to the nursing of the sick and wounded . . . Women are, after all, the best nurses'.[7]

The reasons behind Nightingale's popularity have been well traversed, and the importance of her legend will be explored more fully in chapter 4. Crimean War nursing and the public's captivation with Nightingale were, and are, intimately connected with gender ideologies, class hierarchies, and the expectations and prejudices that these promote throughout society.[8] Her interest in public health issues has ensured her continued reverence as a modern nurse and reformer in popular history and scholarship, but in the nineteenth century, women

[5] Figes, *Crimea,* p. xix.
[6] A Sufferer by the Present War, 'Hospital Assistants in the East', *The Times*, 14 October 1854, p. 7.
[7] A Sufferer, 'Hospital Assistants in the East', p. 7.
[8] For a discussion of the flexibility of Nightingale's legacy in popular culture and nursing subcultures, see E. Whittaker and V. Olesen, 'The Faces of Florence Nightingale: functions of the heroine legend in an occupational sub-culture', in R. Dingwall and J. McIntosh (eds), *Readings in the Sociology of Nursing* (London, 1978), pp. 23–26, 29–33.

were assumed to innately possess the abilities of a nurse. Though variously understood to mean a clinically experienced attendant or menial domestic servant, this was considered to be a caregiving role.[9]

In its medical and hospital contexts in Britain, nursing had long been viewed as a branch of domestic service and the nurses themselves were considered highly immoral. They were often from the very poorest strata of urban society, they were housed and recompensed poorly, and they were treated with much contempt. There had been some attempts at reform in the 1840s, particularly as the value of religious sisterhoods and their training programmes were recognised.[10] The establishment of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy in Ireland and Bermondsey in the 1830s, the founding of the Park Village and Devonport Anglican sisterhoods in 1845 and 1848, and of the secular training institution St John's House marked significant developments in the history of nursing. Though they differed considerably in their approach to the relationship between doctrine and social care, they had in common clear programmes that placed new emphasis on raising nurses' respectability through spiritual training and formal nursing experience.[11] They also offered a way for middle- and upper-class women to enter into nursing work by assuring their respectability, spiritual purity, and Christian charity, which work with these institutions implied.[12] Their work was viewed in terms

[9] It should be noted, however, that nursing was not only constructed as women's work. Hospital orderlies were generally men, and in military hospitals, orderlies were recruited from the ranks and from among convalescent soldiers. They did much of the same work as nurses, from feeding and cleaning patients, to dressing wounds and carrying out doctors' orders. Recent scholarship has emphasised that at mid-century, it was not a foregone conclusion that nursing would develop into a profession dominated by women. See Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling*, pp. 187–216; A. Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Mid-Victorian England* (Montreal, QC, 2019), pp. 40–44; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, pp. 50–57.

[10] Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale,* pp. 67–84.

[11] Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale,* pp. 67–69, 72–75; Summers, *Angels and Citizens*, pp. 19–22.

[12] M. Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850–1920*, (London, 1985), pp. 49–61.

of a self-sacrificing duty, emphasising the moral superiority of women of social standing. As an upper-class woman herself, Nightingale was praised precisely for her self-sacrifice and moral purity. She was easily adopted as an example of ideal, patriotic womanhood and was lauded for raising the standard of nursing in these classed and gendered terms.[13]

This myth of Nightingale perpetuates an unrealistic view of Crimean War nursing, but emphasis on her individual fame also upholds an oversimplified image of mid-nineteenth century society. It privileges the social function of classed and gendered ideals which produced the moralistic lady and the lower-class drudge in the popular imagination, obscuring the diverse society that the other Crimean War nurses represented. If it is true that "when the worst happens, the best step up", the array of women who volunteered their labour and worked to meet the needs of the healthcare crisis during this conflict ought to be considered in the narrative of civil contribution, particularly as they represented the broad spectrum of British society.

Some efforts have been made to recover these alternative narratives of Crimean War nurses. Ronald Roxburgh used the letters of Martha Clough, a lady volunteer, to highlight her experiences of nursing and her conflicts with Nightingale, framed by her personal motives for travelling to the war zone—to visit the grave of her lover.[14] Maria Luddy edited and published the journals of three Irish Catholic Sisters of Mercy, which challenge and expand the English and Anglican perspectives of Crimean War nursing.[15] More recently, Carol Helmstadter incorporated a wide range of individual nurses, ladies, and nuns into her analysis of British military nursing in a comparative study of nursing among the five Crimean War armies.[16] These works represent trends towards personal recovery, diversification, and contextualisation

[13] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp. 166, 169–70, 178–81.
[14] R. Roxburgh, 'Miss Nightingale and Miss Clough: Letters from the Crimea', *Victorian Studies*, 13/1 (1969), pp. 71–89.
[15] Luddy, *The Crimean Journals of the Sisters of Mercy*.
[16] Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale,* pp. 64–76, 81–96, 103–28.

in historical research. Increasingly there is a combination of these elements, but scholarship has consistently focused on the place of Crimean War nursing in the nineteenth-century development of military and civilian nursing practices.[17] Although there is increasing reference to the broader social, cultural, and economic conditions that nurses and reformers faced across the nineteenth century, this is often framed by the politics of institutional medical contexts.[18] In contrast, this chapter will foreground Crimean War nursing's links to mid-nineteenth century society, to examine social power relationships and women's broader engagement with the idea and realities of war through nursing at this distinctive junction of gendered, civilian, military, and medical concerns.

To that end, this chapter will focus on the organisation of the nursing mission, by foregrounding a prosopographical analysis of Crimean War nursing applicants, a body of women (and men) who have not been incorporated into the narrative of Crimean War nursing in a significant way, in conjunction with the nurses—nuns, ladies, and trained hospital nurses—who have begun to receive more recognition. Public pressure for better medical arrangements provided a major impetus behind the sending of government-funded female nurses, but the recruitment of nurses was also intimately connected to the representation of military nursing in the press and was rooted in familiar classed and gendered ideas. Recruitment was not confined to trained hospital nurses but was thrown open to a far broader pool of applicants through advertisement. News of Nightingale's venture was immediately printed in the papers. On 19 October, *The Times* reported that Florence Nightingale would lead a number of nurses,

[17] See Summers *Angels and Citizens*; E. Taylor, *Wartime Nurse: One Hundred Years from the Crimea to Korea, 1854–1954* (London, 2001); J. Brooks and C. E. Hallett (eds), *One Hundred Years of Wartime Nursing Practices, 1854–1953* (Manchester, 2015).
[18] See S. Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour: The Quest for Independence* (Oxford, 2010); Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale*; B. C. Hacker, 'Reformers, Nurses, and Ladies in Uniform: The Changing Status of Military Women (c.1815–1914)', in B. C. Hacker and M. Vining (eds), *A Companion to Women's Military History*, History of Warfare, vol. 74 (Leiden, 2012), pp. 137–87; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*.

selected by her, to the military hospital at Scutari at the cost of the government, to work 'under her directions . . . subject, of course, to the authority of the chief medical officer of the establishment'.[19] On 24 October, after Nightingale's departure, a letter from Sidney Herbert was published in *The Times*. It stated that applications from women hoping to be included in subsequent parties were to be made to Mary Stanley, who later led the second contingent, or to his wife, Elizabeth Herbert.[20] Selina Bracebridge, Lady Charlotte Canning, and, later, Lady Laura Cranworth were also involved in the selection. These were women of social standing with important political connections. Stanley was the daughter of the Bishop of Norwich and a friend of Nightingale's. Bracebridge and her husband were also Nightingale's close friends: they accompanied her to Scutari and worked with her in administrative roles until July 1855. Herbert, Canning, and Cranworth all served on the Ladies' Committee of the Establishment for Gentlewomen During Illness; Herbert was the wife of the Secretary at War, Canning was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria, and Cranworth was the wife of the Lord Chancellor.

Sidney Herbert's letter was clear about the kind of women who were wanted. It stated that 'the duties of a hospital nurse, if they are to be properly performed, require great skill as well as strength and courage . . . Persons who have no experience or skill in such matters would be of no use whatever'.[21] It explicitly discouraged ladies who, driven by benevolence but with no nursing experience, were more likely to be a hindrance since they could have little idea of the hardships and horrors that the work would entail. They were unlikely to be able to submit to orders. Nevertheless, applications came pouring in for the ladies' attention and their scrutiny. Elizabeth Herbert received 117 answers in two days following the announcement.[22]

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[19] 'Latest Intelligence', *The Times*, 19 October 1854, p. 6.
[20] 'Nurses for the Wounded', *The Times*, 24 October 1854, p. 9.
[21] 'Nurses for the Wounded', *The Times*, 24 October 1854, p. 9.
[22] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/5 (Elizabeth Herbert Correspondence), Letter from Elizabeth Herbert to Lady Canning, 4 April 1855.

That the experiences of nurses and applicants and the social tensions that were reflected in the nursing endeavour have been absent in the memory of Crimean War nursing is perhaps due to their diversity, which cannot be easily represented and is thus lost amid the dominant Nightingale narrative. The lack of sources by working-class women in particular presents obstacles to social history enquiries, but the study of nursing and society "from below" is both possible and important to the construction of historical narratives.[23] Applicants and nurses aimed to "step up" in the face of the immense challenge of military nursing, but what did it mean for them to do so? While military nursing reflected many of the hierarchies and tensions of British society at large, the documents that survive by and about the women involved facilitate a greater understanding of the nuances of social relationships, power, individual agency, and collective action at the junction of medical, military, and civilian contexts. Their own words and individual stories highlight women's keen engagement with the war across British society. Their understandings of their own potential contribution through nursing exposes areas of compliance, tension, and divergence from nineteenth-century ideals which, in turn, demonstrate how gendered expectations, class, views of women's labour, and race shaped Crimean War nursing from within and without.

Parameters

Applications, character references, and "Testimonials Forms" (see Appendix 1) for over 600 hopeful women are held at the National Archives in Kew. They do not constitute the full array of nursing applicants: some documents are missing, other correspondence may be housed in other collections that have been beyond the scope of this study, and many more women were seen in person. They do provide an informative and often very personal supplement to the

[23] S. Hawkins, 'From Maid to Matron: Nursing as a Route to Social Advancement in Nineteenth-Century England", *Women's History Review*, 19/1 (2010), p. 126.

information contained on the Register of Nurses sent to the Military Hospitals in the East (hereafter referred to as the Register), which was compiled by the lady organisers and superintendents, and which is now displayed at the Florence Nightingale Museum. These documents have been used in scholarship only scarcely or minimally.[24] I have combined these applications and the Register into a database, with information supplemented by documents from the British Library's collections of Florence Nightingale Papers and Charlotte Canning Papers, the London Metropolitan Archive's Nightingale Collection, published and unpublished diaries and memoirs, newspapers, and source collections—in particular Lynn McDonald's *Florence Nightingale: The Crimean War* (2010) from her series, Collected Works of Florence Nightingale, and Maria Luddy's *The Crimean Journals of the Sisters of Mercy, 1854–1856* (2004). Through this database, I have been able to disaggregate elements of women's lives, including their age, work history and nursing training, "character" as professed by themselves or judged by others, family life, personal (financial) circumstances, and their motives for wanting to join in the nursing mission. This database, therefore, forms the basis of the analysis in this chapter.

Given the huge dataset that this provides, the complex hierarchies within the organisation of military nursing, and the ambivalence that characterised understandings of mid-nineteenth century nursing, it is necessary to clarify the parameters of my analysis, outline my use of key terms and themes, and identify the limitations of the data. First, this chapter will not include an

[24] See Summers, *Angels and Citizens*. Summers references the collection of testimonials only a handful of times, most often drawing upon letters written between the lady organisers, rather than letters from applicants; J. Robinson, 'Supporters or Subversives? Mixed Messages from Women Travellers in the Theatre of War', in B. Bijon (ed.), *In-Between Two Worlds: narratives by Female Explorers and Travellers 1850–1945*, Travel Writing Across the Disciplines, vol. 14 (New York, NY, 2009), p. 13. Robinson uses several examples of 'unconventional applicants' from the collection of testimonials, stating that most nursing applicants were turned down; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 49. Helmstadter acknowledges that letters from 617 women are extant among the testimonials but does not go on to use this source base.

analysis of religion among the nurses and applicants, though the religious context was significant and needs to be outlined. Religious motives and concerns have consistently been raised as a key influence on both Crimean War nursing and the development of modern nursing practices in works on this period. Lady Canning noted on the application of Mary Ross, a Catholic applicant, that 'religion makes no difference whatever, as the nurses are selected solely for their efficiency in nursing', but nurses and nuns of different faiths were included in the nursing parties partly out of political concerns to accommodate the religious diversity among the soldiers, the nurses' patients.[25] Although the incorporation of the Irish Roman Catholic perspective into the British and Anglican historiography has been sporadic, the conflicts caused by contemporary prejudices between these groups in the war zone—particularly that between Florence Nightingale and Mother Francis Bridgeman, superior of the Irish Roman Catholic nuns—are by now a familiar part of the military nursing narrative.[26] Women's religious beliefs were occasionally outlined in their applications or recorded on the Register. Consequently, we know that one of the lady nurses, Miss Tebbutt, was a Unitarian, most of the Scottish nurses were Presbyterian, and some other ladies and nurses converted between religions.[27] However, the impact of denominational differences on experiences of Crimean War nursing are difficult to ascertain. Women's own writings about their nursing experiences are largely confined to ladies and, as a politically charged topic, religion and religious conflicts are rarely discussed in depth. Amid rumours of proselytising, Nightingale did attempt to prohibit ladies, nurses, and nuns from discussing matters of religion with any soldiers—even those of the same faith—but this proved difficult to implement, not least due to further conflicts about the extent and nature of her jurisdiction over both nurses and hospitals.

[25] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle R, fol. 3000.
[26] Wells and Bergin, 'British Icons and Catholic Perfidy', pp. 45–49; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, pp. 103–28.
[27] LMA, Register of Nurses sent to the Military Hospitals in the East, H01/ST/NC/08/001.

This issue of Nightingale's authority was a significant point of contention between the government, individual nurses, and medical men and officials. Nightingale desired control over all of the nurses, but the wide geographic spread of hospitals (see maps 2 and 4) and the different mandates under which parties of nurses were sent out were just some of the issues that made this impracticable. Florence Nightingale had no control over the nurses in the civil hospitals of Renkioi and Smyrna and was only given formal authority as superintendent over the Turkish *and* Crimean military hospitals in March 1856. The Register, however, includes all nurses sent to both military and civilian hospitals in Turkey and the Crimea throughout the conflict. It is a record of government-directed Crimean War nursing broadly rather than of Florence Nightingale's direction of military nursing specifically, and the data will be interpreted as such.

Despite this, Florence Nightingale wrote several reports on the work and conduct of nurses at the Scutari, Koulali, and Balaklava Hospitals which have informed much of what is known about women's personal characters, conduct, and labour in these spaces. Other lady superintendents of the military and civil hospitals wrote similar reports, parts of which were incorporated into the Register. Middle- and upper-class men and women—doctors and officers, "lady nurses", and officers' relatives—wrote much of the extant correspondence and many of the diaries and memoirs that provide commentary on the nurses' work. Furthermore, while many women wrote their own applications, a number relied on men and women of higher social standing to make applications and enquires for them—particularly soldiers' wives and women working as domestic servants, who were possibly illiterate or who feared that their own word and standing would not be sufficient to gain employment. While testimonials from medical men and clergymen were preferred, these were also provided by employers or prominent figures in applicants' communities. Consequently, class hierarchies saturate these documents. While these sources can reveal useful data, such as applicants' and nurses' ages, which can be

used to interrogate trends that cut across the restrictive social framing implied by these class hierarchies, other aspects, such as statements of and judgements on lower-class women's characters, are more problematic. Middle- and upper-class individuals undoubtedly controlled the organisation of military nursing.

The resulting anxieties and challenges were made all the more significant by the ambiguity surrounding women's nursing labour. Crimean War nurses were not all nurses as we understand the term today—as trained to give medical attention and care to the sick and wounded. All nurses had their expenses paid by the government, but there was a distinction between lower-class "nurses", who were paid for their work, and middle- and upper-class "ladies", who volunteered their services as superintendents and matrons. Of the paid women, some were cooks, laundresses, housekeepers, or servants, while most had at least some of these duties incorporated into their nursing work. They have been included in the analysis that follows here, first, because their specific duties are often difficult or impossible to discern and separate, and second, because the inclusion of cooks, housekeepers, and laundresses on the Register indicates that women who performed these roles were still connected to the project of female nursing. Women on the Register will be referred to collectively as "nurses", to distinguish those employed from the "applicants", who applied for similarly diverse roles. While the majority applied to be nurses with varied understandings of what the role involved, some middle-class women explicitly applied to be superintendents or matrons, while some lower-class women applied to be cooks or servants—roles that they had often worked in before. This accentuates the class and gender hierarchies that encouraged an imitation of familiar domestic and labour arrangements in hospital spaces, where labour and domesticity were somewhat conflated, but where new clinical and professional needs challenged those familiar matrices.

There are large enough numbers of nurses and applicants, with sufficient data available, to draw conclusions about a number of trends. In addition to the 218 women listed on the Register (including Nightingale herself), eight more women have been identified in correspondence and memoirs as working at the military hospitals in some capacity. Several of these were soldiers' wives or recent widows who had travelled with the army and found employment in the hospitals, separate to the official nursing parties. This gives a total of 226 "nurses". From the collection of applications and testimonials held at the National Archives, 627 individuals have been identified in addition to a small number who were accepted and are thus listed on the Register. Four more have been identified from correspondence in the Charlotte Canning Papers. Eleven applications were from men applying to go to the hospitals as nurses, chaplains, doctors, apothecaries, and cooks. One woman applied explicitly to be a scripture reader rather than to undertake nursing work—her application was denied, as the lady organisers had 'no authority to send such'.[28] Disregarding these twelve for the purposes of this study gives a total of 619 female nursing "applicants". It is possible that there is a minor amount of duplication in this database. Where third parties made enquiries and applications on behalf of unnamed women these have been entered as separate unnamed applicants, though it is possible that correspondence later took place under their names. However, as there are only nineteen unnamed applicants, such instances of duplication are likely to be minimal.

Women Conceptualising Military Nursing

Louisa Patterson applied to be a nurse in October 1854. She was the widow of a medical officer to the Bengal Army, had travelled the world with her husband, spoke French and 'Oriental languages', and declared that she was 'capable of undergoing great fatigue, and not a stranger

[28] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 3889.

even to the battle field'.[29] Her application was marked 'for future consideration' and, while she was ultimately not selected, she was clearly considered a promising candidate.[30] She understood that the work would be difficult and gruesome. Men arrived at the Scutari hospitals throughout the autumn of 1854 with gunshot wounds and missing limbs that hadn't been tended since they left the battlefields in the Crimea several days before. Others suffered from frostbite, bedsores, and disease, including cholera and typhus. All these men required careful and constant care.

The conditions that the army faced were reported in detail in the public press. *The Times* sent reporter William Russell as their "special correspondent" to cover the conflict first-hand, and many of the nursing applicants read his and others' similar accounts. One-hundred-and-seven nurses and applicants mentioned seeing advertisements in newspapers when writing to apply. Thirty women explicitly referenced advertisements in *The Times*. Despite this engagement with the war through the press, many other women seem not to have appreciated what working in such circumstances would be like. War correspondents and the nursing advertisements referred to the soldiers as the "sick and wounded", presenting them not as a strong fighting force under military leadership, but as vulnerable bodies in need of care. As such, the work of nursing them could be understood by others in very varied terms. Catherine Redmayne, a 28-year-old woman from Liverpool, applied with no previous hospital experience. Instead, she trusted that 'through a wish to aid the sufferings of my fellow creatures, and a willingness to undertake such a task, I might not be deemed incapable for such an undertaking'.[31] Another applicant, Mary Ann Chamberlain, was a nurse at the London Fever Hospital. George Buchanan, the resident medical officer, stated that she was 'more than usually

[29] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle P, fols 2829, 2826.
[30] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle P, fol. 2830.
[31] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle R, fol. 2949.

fitted for these Eastern Hospitals'.[32] However, she applied despite convalescing from typhus fever and her ill health almost certainly assured her rejection.

Many women applied whose only experience was domestic nursing. This could mean a servant taking on nursing responsibilities for her employer, a woman nursing her own siblings, parents, or other relatives, or even women nursing boarders in a home that they shared. This type of nursing was common practiced in cases of illness, injury, or infirmity. Where a servant, daughter, or sister could act as a nurse, the expense of a private nurse—which many could not afford—could be spared, and admission to a hospital or other institution, which was generally undesirable, could be avoided.[33] Such a duty could involve considerable practical nursing in serious or prolonged cases. Miss Hedger applied for herself and her sister. They had seen much illness in their family and they had another sister who was an Anglican Sister of Mercy in Wantage. Both were practiced at sitting up through the night, lifting and manoeuvring their patients, and applying leeches and blisters.[34]

However, the indistinct nature of domestic nursing and the reliance on unpaid female labour throughout minor as well as severe ailments meant that other candidates such as Miss Hutchinson could only profess to have undertaken nursing 'such as falls to the share of most women'.[35] Framed in these terms, it is not surprising that applicants came from all levels of society, with very different motives. Jane von Gumpach stated in her application that although nursing was 'a situation below her own station' which she sought only out of necessity, she nevertheless felt that 'the duties of a nurse are peculiarly those which I think befit a woman of

[32] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 547a.
[33] See R. Dingwall, A. M. Rafferty, and C. Webster, *An Introduction to the Social History of Nursing* (London, 1988), pp. 6–7. Dingwall et al identified four categories of nursing care providers in the early nineteenth century: members of the sick's own household, lower class handywomen who nursed among the poor, private nurses who worked for social superiors, and male medical attendants.
[34] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fols 1570–73.
[35] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fol. 1841.

any rank in life'.[36] One applicant, 35-year-old Emily Mary Hall, had lived her whole life in 'luxurious idleness', suggesting a boredom with her middle-class lifestyle.[37] She saw the notice of Nightingale's departure in *The Times* on 19 October and stated that she considered 'long and calmly' before writing to Nightingale (a mere two days later), wishing to be 'useful'.[38] Another, Mary Gower, had for twelve months lived and worked at the Distressed Needlwomen's Home, an institution providing lodging and employment for poor and impoverished women.[39]

These applications demonstrate that as an untried form of female labour, military nursing in the Crimean War was an indistinct concept to those in Britain and, as such, it could be imagined and claimed by women across society. Due to both the gendered domestic ideology and the gendered, hierarchical organisation of labour in medical contexts, at one time or another women were likely to have occupied a place within what Wendy Marsden has called a 'health providers continuum', with paid and trained nurses at one extreme, and unpaid, untrained, domestic carers at the other.[40] The popular ideology of separate spheres emphasised a woman's innate caregiving ability, but the language used by applicants to frame military nursing and relate it to their own lives and circumstances highlights the flexibility of this concept across classes.

Similarly, nursing appealed to women over a broad geographical spread. Applicants came from all over Britain and Ireland, and even beyond, though this fact has gone unrecognised in scholarship. Figure 1 shows the distribution over English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish historic counties of 515 applicants for whom an address or work location was given, while

[36] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle G, fols 1429–30.
[37] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle, fol. 1483.
[38] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fol. 1482.
[39] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle G, fols 1337–38, 1342–45.
[40] W. Marsden, 'The Age of Transition: Nursing and Caring in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 27/78 (2003) p. 39.

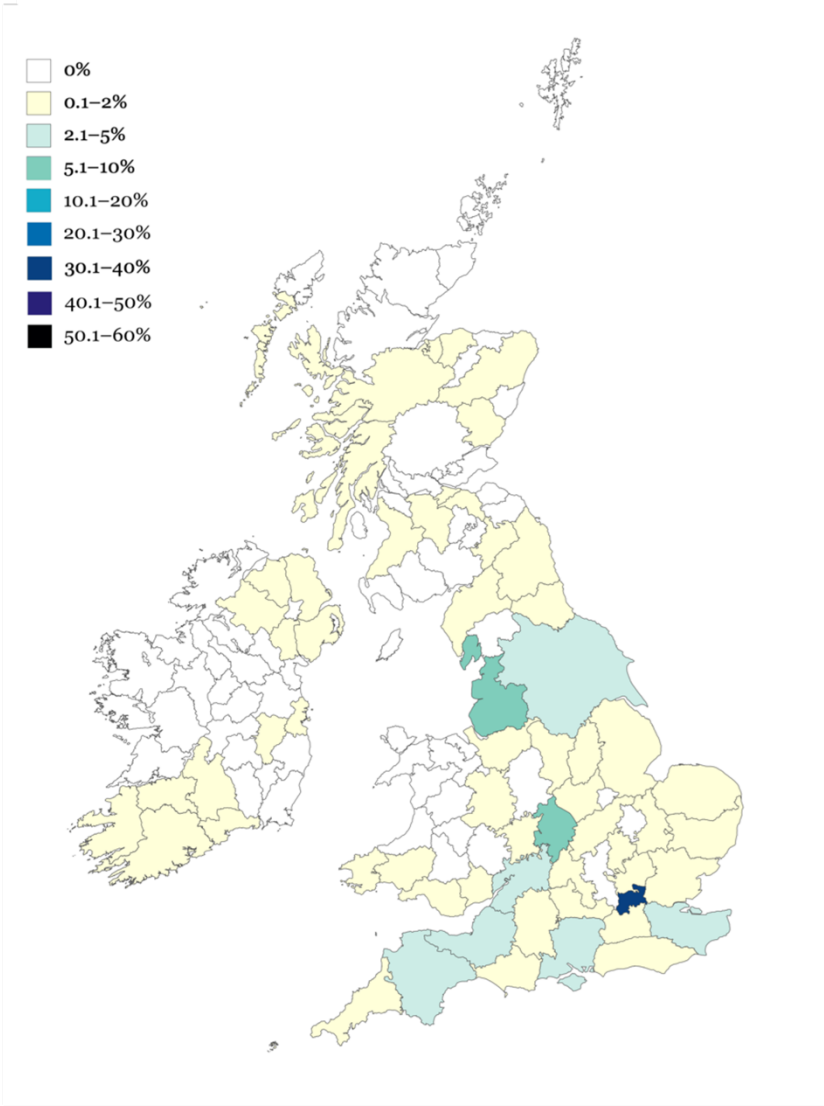


Figure 1: Location of Applicants

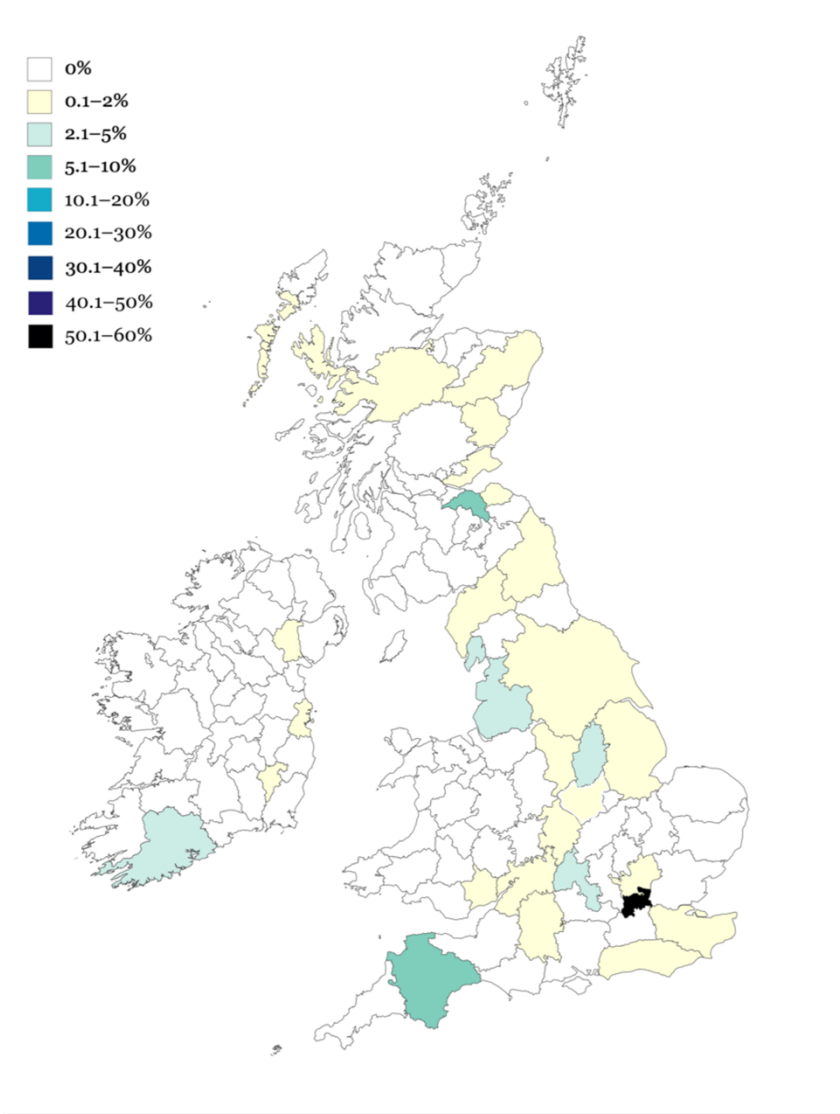


Figure 2: Location of Nurses

Figure 2 shows the same for 168 nurses.[41] While the majority of both nurses and applicants were from London, the proportion of London applicants was significantly less than the proportion of London nurses: roughly 38 per cent in comparison to approximately 54 per cent. It can be seen from areas with higher concentrations of nurses that these were primarily accepted from urbanised areas with large hospitals or other training institutions where most women had gained some experience, namely London, Nottingham, Oxford, Liverpool, Manchester, and Edinburgh. The relatively high concentrations of nurses from Devon and County Cork reflect the locations of the Anglican Sisters of Mercy, based in Plymouth, and the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy from convents at Cork, Kinsale, and Charleville. Applicants, by contrast, came from both urban and rural areas across the British Isles. For example, seven women applied who were nurses in Birmingham hospitals, while H. Mason applied from Sandbach, a Cheshire market town. Given that she was 'entirely ignorant as to what preliminary step is requisite' to become a military nurse, it is possible she had no real experience to draw upon.[42]

Nevertheless, the evident interest that such applicants had in the work had some precedent. Linda Colley has framed women's participation in charity and subscriptions for wartime causes during the Napoleonic Wars as evidence of women's investment in military and patriotic issues. 'Large-scale and protracted warfare', Colley stated,

> had something of the paradoxical impact on the British home front that it would have to a much greater degree in the twentieth century. It accentuated the functional differences between the sexes, while at the same time widening the scope of female

[41] This data was compiled based on the location where applicants lived and worked at the time of their application, not their place of birth. See Appendix 2 for exact numbers and percentages for each county.
[42] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2315.

activity and endeavour.[43]

A comparable trend occurred during the Crimean War. Indeed, most of these applicants were not the experienced nurses that the organisers advertised for. Only for a little over a third of the applicants was any explicit reference made or testimony given to their having trained or worked as a nurse outside of domestic nursing. The reasons they gave for making their applications suggest that they considered military nursing as a means to participate in the war, through duties that appeared to be an extension of both their paid labour and domestic roles as women. This did not only apply to applicants within Britain, but also beyond. In addition to the counties displayed in Figures 1 and 2, there were two applications from women on the Isle of Wight and five from Jersey; two British women applied from in or near Paris, and two from Brussels; one woman applied from Bermuda. Isabel Braide wrote all the way from New Orleans with passionate patriotism after seeing reports of Nightingale's work. She stated that she had thus far defended her 'beloved country' from 'venomous' stories about the British war effort in the American papers.[44] She wrote:

> How bitter have been my regrets, from the commencement of the war, that my tongue was the only weapon permitted by my sex in the noble cause of patriotism! – But when report brought hither the glad tidings that the gentle services of woman's hand were also available in this cruel struggle Hope suggested that the desire of my life might yet be fulfilled.[45]

Another woman, J. F. Barton, applied twice to be a nurse. Her first application to accompany Florence Nightingale to Scutari was rejected—she had no medical experience beyond nursing

[43] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (3rd edn, New Haven, CT, 2005), p. 262.
[44] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 140.
[45] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 141.

family and friends. Barton wrote again in late November 1854, after news of the battles of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman had reached England. She stated that such 'melancholy proof' that more nurses were surely needed had strengthened her 'desire to be useful to my fellow creatures'.[46]

References to soldiers as "fellow creatures" and "suffering countrymen" were made by lower- and middle-class applicants alike, and were frequently framed in terms of Christian duty. Eliza Sheridan, for example, praised the 'truly Christian nurses who volunteer their services in such works of mercy in this hour of need', and wished herself to 'alleviate the suffering of our noble but alas! stricken soldiers, and countrymen'.[47] Christian duty and philanthropic sentiment were accepted discourses of power and authority in mid-nineteenth-century class and gender relations. Although assumptions about men's and women's roles were rooted in perceived "natural" differences in the sexes, Evangelical beliefs in particular had been a driving force in the construction of the middle-class binary domestic ideology throughout the early nineteenth century.[48] The essay "Woman's Part in War", published in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, exemplified this position by framing the 'unfeminine' nature of past war heroines in opposition to the Christian duty, fundamentally rooted in 'human love', which, according to the writer, Nightingale embodied.[49]

The use of similar language in nursing applications helped to frame women's interest as vocational, rather than for pecuniary or self-interested motives. Many explicitly followed Nightingale's example in this. Both the efforts towards nursing reform over the previous decades and upper-class ladies' public involvement in the organisation of Crimean War nursing

[46] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fols 322–25.
[47] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle S, fol. 3107.
[48] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 74–78.
[49] L., 'Woman's Part in War', p. 250.

contributed to a more favourable view of military nursing among some members of the middle and upper classes. Elizabeth Hindle was the daughter of a surgeon. She had:

> read with deep interest the account of the readiness with which Miss Florence Nightingale has devoted herself to the arduous and noble undertaking & being persuaded there will be greater need for such self sacrifice I offer myself to become one of her staff or of any other Lady you may propose sending out.[50]

It is possible that many applicants would not ordinarily have considered nursing as a profession due to low pay and poor conditions, or as a vocation due to the poor reputation of hospital nursing. The war, however, was an important moment of crisis. Applications from soldiers' wives and relatives were particularly emotionally charged as they appealed for work that would bring them closer to their loved ones. Sophia Cotterill applied in November 1855. She was the wife of a private in the 97th Regiment. Cotterill had been instructed in nursing by her mother, a hospital nurse, and had been highly spoken of by Captain Hedley Vicars, an officer in the 97th who had become a widely respected war hero upon his death in March 1855. Since her husband's departure, Cotterill had given birth but the child had died. She struggled to claim support from the Central Association for the Aid of the Wives and Families of Soldiers Ordered to the East and wanted to be employed as a nurse at Scutari. She had probably heard by then that her husband had been severely wounded in the final assault on the Redan fortress on 8 September.[51]

It was common for soldiers' wives to combine their commitment to family with declarations of their own patriotism, in terms reminiscent of the military femininity constructed by Elizabeth Evans and Margaret Kerwin. Mary London was the widow of a non-

[50] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fols 1633–34.
[51] *Supplement to the London Gazette of Tuesday 25th September 1855*, No. 21790, 26 September 1855, p. 3600.

commissioned officer in the Scots Greys. She had worked as matron of the infirmary in Carrick-on-Suir for seven years since her husband's death, assisting in amputations and other surgical operations, but she had previously lived with the regiment. She had two sons, also non-commissioned officers in the Scots Greys, serving in Sebastopol; a fact of which she wrote 'I am justly proud as I will have the honor [*sic*] of being the mother of Heroes'.[52] She not only wanted to be near to her sons, but to serve the regiment. She submitted references from a number of officers who had supported her even after her husband's death, and she believed that 'if I could by any personal sacrifice alleviate their suffering I would only be repaying a deep debt of gratitude I owe to that Brave Regiment'.[53] Another soldier's wife, M. A. Lewis, explicitly stated that, while she wanted to be near to her husband, it was also her 'wish to serve my country'.[54] James Crossland has argued that, through the actions of Florence Nightingale and other, often upper-class civilians who intervened in military medicine—not only in the British, but also in the French and Russian armies—the Crimean War marked the beginning of a slew of humanitarian interventions in war which reveal an increasing and notably civilian desire to mitigate the violence of war.[55] In this context, it is evident that the desire to act ran far deeper than the upper echelons of society. While this group were far more likely to possess the resources and knowledge to enact or encourage change, civilian participation was motivated on a broader scale by many intersecting factors.

In many respects, the wives and widows of soldiers, officers, and military medical men were good candidates for military nursing. Those who had travelled with the army understood, more than most other women could, the hardships incumbent upon the military lifestyle. Often they had experienced testing climates in the West Indies or India, had seen suffering caused by

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[52] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle L, fol. 2101. Original emphasis.
[53] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle L, fol. 2105.
[54] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle L, fol. 2084.
[55] J. Crossland, *War, Law and Humanity: The Campaign to Control Warfare, 1853–1914* (London, 2018), pp. 3–6, 7–24.

both battle and disease, and had acted informally in a nursing capacity among their regiments or in military hospitals. Mrs Ellis, for example, had previously lived in India for twenty years where she had nursed the sick, including sick officers.[56] Catherine Lawford Kingston had travelled to India, the West Indies, and Canada with her husband, where she 'shared with him the "tented field" . . . with the various vicissitudes attending the life of a subaltern officer'.[57] They were also familiar with many qualities that would serve them well nursing in scenes of military action and heavy labour. Mary Jones, a naval officer's wife, stated 'I . . . am a light sleeper; and can bear broken rest – understand a little sick cookery . . . my strength is unimpaired . . . I am quite willing to place myself under the control of Miss Nightingale or any other party'.[58] However, only four women on the Register are known to have been soldiers' wives: Hannah Miller, Margaret Hallinan, Margaret Elmslie, and Mrs Brownlow, though the latter was taken on by Florence Nightingale at Scutari as a housekeeper. Notes on the application of Anne Adams, another soldier's wife, explain why there were so few: 'we have been obliged to decline sending soldiers' wives from the jealousy of their husbands and the quarrels it entails'.[59] Not having been able to follow the army as Elizabeth Evans and Margaret Kerwin did, these women sought to fulfil personal, militaristic, and patriotic aims through this new channel—organised military nursing—which they perceived as being within their reach, but from which they were almost immediately and entirely excluded.

Nursing, Labour, and Femininity

Florence Nightingale in particular stressed the importance of employing trained nurses in the military hospitals. Her first party consisted of six trained nurses from the lay nursing sisterhood

[56] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle E, fols 1034–35.
[57] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle K, fol. 1985.
[58] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle J, fols 1925–26.
[59] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle A, fol. 18.

at St John's House, eight Anglican sisters from the Park Village sisterhood and Devonport Sisters of Mercy, ten Roman Catholic nuns, and fourteen paid nurses. Helmstadter has argued that it was the lower-class hospital nurses who Nightingale relied upon the most in the military hospitals.[60] Some of these nurses were excellent. Others worked well under close supervision, which Nightingale was quick to implement, or were considered good nurses despite habits such as intemperance. Nightingale divided the nurses' work—clinical care and domestic chores—between nurses according to their conduct and character.[61] Some nurses turned out terribly: most of those who were sent home were dismissed for offences relating to intoxication, disobedience, and misconduct. These vices, however, were accepted as part of both hospital nursing and lower-class culture.[62] The lower-class nurses' familiarity with labour generally and hospital tasks specifically, Helmstadter argues, meant that it was they, rather than inexperienced lady volunteers or spiritually minded religious sisters, who conducted most of the clinical and skilled nursing tasks throughout the hospital, and demonstrated 'the core attributes of effective nursing'.[63] Anne Summers has placed greater emphasis on the different systems of nursing adopted by the nuns and lady superintendents at other hospitals, which instead took on mistress-servant, or even supervisor-penitent, models of control and moral instruction.[64] It is certainly the professionalisation of nursing among middle-class women that has dominated the focus in studies of the development of nursing in the second half of the nineteenth century.[65] Ellen Jordan has located the increasingly middle-class and training-

[60] Helmstadter, 'Shifting Boundaries', pp. 141–43.
[61] Helmstadter, 'Shifting Boundaries', p. 138. Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing before Nightingale*, p. 111; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 75.
[62] Helmstadter and Godden pp. 111; Helmstadter, 'Shifting Boundaries', p. 133.
[63] Helmstadter, 'Shifting Boundaries', p. 140, 143.
[64] Summers, *Angles and Citizens*, p. 58.
[65] An important exception is the work of Sue Hawkins. Through prosopographical analysis, Hawkins has argued that the middle-class domination of nursing in London teaching hospitals in the second half of the nineteenth century may have been overstated. Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour in the Nineteenth Century* and Hawkins, 'From Maid to Matron', pp. 125–43.

oriented focus of nursing in those decades in the religious heterodoxy of the period, which emphasised patriarchal control and female submission, but which also imbued the work with a philanthropic gentility and femininity exemplified by the lady nurses.[66] More recently, Arlene Young has conceptualised hospital nursing and nurses themselves as 'contested sites' of women's work.[67] Young has located the rise of professional nursing at the nexus of several nineteenth-century social and cultural trends: the demographic imbalance between men and women, the need for employment among single middle-class women in particular, changing views of middle-class femininity, and manipulations and renegotiations of the "Woman Question"—with very real and active involvement from women themselves.[68]

These debates on the practice and construction of military and, later, civilian nursing tend to overlook the organisation of Crimean War nursing, a process that highlights an important trend pertinent to these later developments. Nightingale had little influence in the selection of nurses for subsequent parties, as this was left to the lady organisers in England. Summers touched briefly upon this point, noting that the ultimate employment of nurses with inadequate hospital experience reflected the lady organisers' sympathy with lady superintendents, who wanted nurses who would work within familiar social and labour hierarchies.[69] However, the nursing applications offer significantly more insight into this shared outlook. Removed from the scenes of the military hospitals, the organisers were reliant on character references and the impressions nurses made in personal interviews, as much as upon testimony to their nursing abilities, to help them select women for all roles associated with female military nursing. While this process appears to tend towards the professionalisation of nursing, class prejudices and particular concepts of femininity remained significant deciding

[66] E. Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (2nd edn, London, 2001), p. 143.
[67] Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, p. 4.
[68] Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, p. 12.
[69] Summers, *Angels and Citizens*, p. 59.

factors for the lady organisers. Languages of labour, of femininity, and of class remained in tension throughout the war, as women were selected to perform an important labour supported (financially, if not absolutely) by the state.

Military nursing was quickly oversubscribed. Many candidates were rejected because the list was simply too long and there were more experienced women ahead of them.[70] However, while nurses with experience were certainly favoured, inexperience was not necessarily an obstacle. Despite the organisers' claims to only employ women with training, this could be very variable and sometimes only amounted to a few weeks at St John's House or in a hospital, arranged by the organisers with government funds. In April 1855, Nightingale wrote to Lady Canning:

> I cannot sufficiently thank you for all the trouble & care you have taken about my nurses – the seven penultimates whom you were so kind as to send are, I think, take them for all in all, the most respectable set we have had. They are not experienced nurses, but they seem to be all dependable women.[71]

In many ways, character was taken as an indication of both personal suitability and nursing ability, either in conjunction with hospital experience or, in some cases, even in lieu of hospital training. Mary Holmes was sent to Scutari as a nurse in March 1855. She had been a nurse at the London Hospital for three years and was recommended, along with another nurse, by the matron: 'I consider them well qualified to attend upon the sick & wounded in the Crimea, as they are sober, honest and skilful nurses'.[72] In contrast, Elizabeth Amy Edwards had no experience of nursing, having worked as a lady's maid. However, she was recommended by

[70] Before the end of 1854, there were over 300 women on the list of candidates. See quote from Parthenope Nightingale in Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale,* p. 236.
[71] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/2 (Florence Nightingale Correspondence), Letter from Florence Nightingale to Lady Canning, 22 April 1855.
[72] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fols 1657–58.

the committee of the Evangelical Association and was later described as 'zealous, anxious, and resolute' by the doctors during her brief period of preparatory training at St. Thomas' Hospital.[73] She was sent to the hospital at Smyrna, and later to Balaklava, where she proved an 'excellent nurse, respectable in her conduct, and kind and attentive'.[74]

The ambiguity that characterised Crimean War nursing from its inception, as it was related to different conceptions of nursing and femininity across society, resulted in applications from women across labour contexts whose references show a similar blurring of character and aptitude. Susan Chambers had at least fifteen years' experience as Head Matron of the Magdalen Charity and Domestic Superintendent of Marlborough College, both of which had included some nursing work. When she applied, she submitted a printed booklet of twenty-one references to the organisers, covering ten years of her employment history. Chambers was consistently praised for the manner in which she had conducted her duties—diligently, excellently, with care and attention—but also for the manner in which she conducted herself—with kindness, a sense of duty, and good temper.[75] For women lacking nursing experience, this link between personal character and labouring ability was even more pronounced. Martha Kaye applied in July 1855. She had been a housekeeper for Reverend George Armfield, Vicar of Armley, who wrote:

> I think her a very likely person for the situation she seeks, she is steady, honest & industrious, she has a good spirit & able to do a good deal of work, I consider her a very respectable woman & fit for a good situation.[76]

[73] BL, Nightingale Papers Vol. X, Add MS 43402, Florence Nightingale's Report, fol. 14; TNA, Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle E, fol. 1818.
[74] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[75] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fols 561–66.
[76] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle K, fol. 1946.

Employers were perfectly willing to laud the merits of their lower-class female employees, but they equated aspects of individuals' personalities with their suitability for labour generally, and for nursing particularly, by highlighting qualities that were compatible with physically laborious and more conventionally feminine caregiving aspects of work. This emphasis on the character of lower-class women was a product of society's concern for morality generally, as moral reform was a particular preoccupation throughout the nineteenth century.[77] Nightingale herself considered raising the characters of her nurses in the Crimean War to be her 'principal & dearest object'.[78] In terms of the employment of lower-class women, this scrutiny of their character by their social superiors was rooted in more specific constructions of classed and gendered femininities. June Purvis has argued that 'the objective conditions of the lives of lower-class people', such as poverty, poor hygiene, and unstable employment, 'became defined as the qualities of their personalities' for middle-class observers.[79] It is because of this that the lower-class nurses' character failings were both expected and, to some degree, tolerated in the hospitals.[80] Specifically, concepts of the "good worker" and the "good wife and mother" emphasised lower-class women's suitability for the manual tasks of domestic and other forms of labour, while holding them to middle-class standards of behaviour and allowing for middle-class intervention and instruction in lower-class moral and domestic habits.[81]

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[77] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes,* pp. xviii, See M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787–1886*, Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2004).
[78] Quoted in Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 96.
[79] J. Purvis, *Hard Lessons: The Lives and Education of lower-class Women in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 63.
[80] Nightingale later dedicated considerable thought to the ways in which hospitals and other institutions impacted their inhabitants and workers, for 'institutions became a way of shaping how people—especially power people—thought, behaved, and interacted': P. Crawford, A. Greenwood, R. Bates, and J. Memel, *Florence Nightingale at Home* (London, 2020), p. 109.
[81] Purvis, *Hard Lessons*, pp. 63–68. A. August, *The British Working Class, 1832–1940*, (Harlow, 2007), p. 70.

Nowhere is it clearer that this distinction between lower- and middle-class femininities informed the lady organisers' construction of military nursing than in the Testimonials Forms which women were required to submit. These forms asked for evidence of nursing experience, but they also emphasised the '*unexceptionable character*' expected of the nurses: they particularly requested testimony to applicants' sobriety, honesty, cleanliness, activity, intelligence, and good temper.[82] They requested that both health and character were certified by a medical practitioner. One version of the form even noted 'N.B.– This Form being general, some of the above questions will of course be inapplicable to Ladies volunteering to serve as Nurses'.[83]

The forms reflected the values of the "good worker"—the middle-class idea of what lower-class femininity ought to be—but it is also clear that the selection of nurses was underwritten by suspicions about a generally perceived lower-class character. Testimony to women's "honesty", "good temper" and, most tellingly, "sober" behaviour shows that the disruptive potential of lower-class difference consistently characterised class relations, underwrote employment culture and, in the case of Crimean War nursing, threatened the public respectability of the project. Susan Cator, for example, is frequently cited as one of Nightingale's best nurses, but her selection was not guaranteed. Cator was a head nurse at the London Hospital. She had been there for eleven years, and at Guy's Hospital before that, when she was chosen as a nurse in August 1855. Several excellent references were given to Mary Stanley and Charlotte Willoughby Moore, who was to lead the party as Lady Superintendent, and Cator was offered the position. However, when the hospital chaplain, Reverend Nixon, mentioned that there had been reports casting doubt on Cator's sobriety, the ladies asked to know the details. The period of correspondence that ensured caused Cator much distress, and

[82] See Appendices 1a and 1b. Original emphasis.
[83] See Appendix 1b.

even gave her the impression that she was no longer to be sent out.[84] It transpired that a year earlier, another nurse—whose own immoral conduct Cator had reported—had falsely accused Cator of drunkenness. The matron, senior surgeon, resident medical officer, and the Reverend wrote back in defence of Cator's sobriety and her skill, emphasising that she was 'an active, experienced & skilful nurse'.[85] Cator, was ultimately sent to the Palace Hospital as an officer's nurse. She went on to give 'the greatest satisfaction to everyone' and was described as having a 'first rate character'.[86]

The end note of the Testimonials Forms aimed at "ladies" offers further insight into the organisers' concerns. Despite the fact that Nightingale excluded untrained lady nurses from her first party, and despite the stipulation for experienced nurses laid out in the letter published in *The Times* on 24 October 1854, the organisers included a number of upper-class women as "lady superintendents" or "lady nurses" in six of the eight subsequent parties (the final two parties comprised three servants, followed by three Bermondsey nuns). By April 1855, they were actively looking for ways to recruit upper-class women. Elizabeth Herbert wrote to Lady Canning to propose further advertisements in prominent newspapers with Lady Canning's name attached, as 'unless you put in yours or mine, no ladies will answer such an appeal'.[87]

The organisers' desire to employ middle- and upper-class women certainly stemmed from the fact that their good character and respectability were assumed. Of the five parties sent between October 1854 and early April 1855, thirty-six women had returned home by the end of April. Eleven of these were paid nurses, dismissed for intoxication, misconduct, or disobedience, despite the organisers' vetting process. There is no simple explanation for this fact. It is likely, as Summers has noted, that the nurses required more escape from the horrors

[84] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 509.
[85] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 506.
[86] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[87] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/5, letter from Elizabeth Herbert to Lady Canning, 11 April 1855.

and misery of the hospitals than the lady superintendents would allow.[88] Nurses at Koulali were allowed one evening walk, chaperoned by a lady, and nurses' meals were similarly supervised.[89] Florence Nightingale did not allow any nurses—paid, ladies, or nuns—on the wards of the Scutari Barrack Hospital past eight-thirty at night, and did most night nursing herself.[90] She also re-assigned nurses she felt were forming close attachments—either to other nurses who were bad influences, or to the patients.[91] However, it is also possible that relatively inexperienced civil hospital nurses found it difficult to cope in the military hospital, within a medical hierarchy that did not easily accommodate them, encouraging behaviour that the ladies deemed unsuitable. It is testimony to both the suspicion against the paid nurses, and the sense of duty felt over them that Nightingale lobbied to put them under the control of the lady superintendents, rather than the medical officers, on precisely this point. Lady superintendents, she felt, were aware of the needs of their nurses. They would have the power and foresight to remove them from indecent situations, but they could also help to prevent such situations, for example by ensuring that nurses had spaces of respite and privacy in the wards—both of which Nightingale had to do, on occasions when medical officers did not think to.[92]

Indeed, Nightingale's caution in such matters was warranted to protect the integrity of the nursing venture, which was acknowledged to be an experiment. Instances of trouble with the lower-class nurses could not be kept private, and they threatened the reputation of the venture among the army and the British public throughout the war. Jane Gibson, a paid nurse, was dismissed in June 1855 for intoxication and theft.[93] Nightingale considered her 'one of the

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[88] Summers, *Angles and Citizens*, p. 59.
[89] F. Taylor, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses: The Narrative of Twelve Months' Experience in the Hospitals of Koulali and Scutari*, vol. 1 (London, 1856), p. 163
[90] Summers, *Angles and Citizens*, p. 51.
[91] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/2, letter from Florence Nightingale to Lady Canning, 9 September 1855; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 75.
[92] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/2, letter from Florence Nightingale to Lady Canning, 9 September 1855.
[93] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.

lowest description of nurses I have had' and was convinced that she had stolen from the hospital stores, as in the slightly later and better-known case of a lady nurse, Charlotte Salisbury.[94] Gibson was arrested for theft when she returned to England, after linen from the military hospital stores was found in her possession. A transcript of some of her court proceedings appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*.[95] She was acquitted, but narrowly, since the offence was deemed to have occurred outside of the jurisdiction of English law. Eventually, two ladies still at the hospital wrote letters confirming that Gibson had come by the linen honestly—there were so many public donations that the nurses were allowed to take older items for personal use.[96] Nevertheless, she had been reprimanded in court and a warning extended to other nurses:

> Public justice demanded this inquiry, when the soldiers who fought for their country were robbed by such profligate women who took advantage of their dying moments to plunder them of every article they could lay their hands on.[97]

The dichotomy drawn between women as angels and women as slatterns or drudges is stark here. So too is the fact that lower-class women could very easily be aligned with the latter and even vilified. This provides a vivid reminder that an obsession with "propriety" throughout the process of selecting and employing nurses was closely linked to the venture's success, which hinged to a great extent on a public opinion that could so easily turn against the nurses and organisers alike. Despite the patriotic overtones that characterised public support for the venture, Gibson and, by implication, other lower-class nurses were still suspected to act in

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[94] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/2, letter from Florence Nightingale to Lady Canning, 9 September 1855. Original emphasis; On Salisbury, see letter of 1 October 1855 and L. McDonald, *Florence Nightingale: The Crimean War*, Collected Works of Florence Nightingale, vol. 14 (Waterloo, ON, 2010), pp. 235–36, 280.
[95] "The Robbery at the Hospitals in the East", *Morning Chronicle*, 27 September 1855, p. 3.
[96] 'Police Intelligence: The Alleged Robbery by Crimean Nurse', *Morning Post*, 19 October 1855, p. 7.
[97] 'The Robbery at the Hospitals in the East', p. 3.

ways antithetical to the venture's noble cause. Another nurse who was sent home in July 1855, Mrs Disney, had been recommended on a list of nurses who Reverend C. P. Shepherd, the master at St John's House, thought qualified.[98] She had been sent to the military hospitals in December 1854, but was dismissed six months later for 'intoxication and violence'.[99] The circumstances of her dismissal, though unknown, fuelled gossip about the problems presented by the nurses. Marianne Estcourt wrote in her diary while visiting her brother in the Crimea that Robert Rawlinson, a sanitary commissioner, told her of Disney's being sent home to England. She wrote 'great difficulties with the nurses so disobedient to orders'.[100]

The need to maintain an appearance of respectability and to control the lower-class nurses was a priority after Nightingale left England, and it explains the employment of upper-class women such as Abigail McLeod and Anne Macoubrey. McLeod was considered 'untrained' when she was sent to Koulali hospital in December 1854.[101] She had stated when applying that she 'had long and trying experience in tending the sick & the dying', but it seems unlikely that this was in a hospital setting—her references from respectable ladies and physicians in Edinburgh were based more on her own social status as a lady and lieutenant's daughter than on personal testimony to her nursing abilities.[102] Though she remained in the military hospitals until the end of the war, McLeod was judged 'excellent but not useful'.[103] Macoubrey volunteered as a nurse in February 1855. She was sent to Koulali on 24 March, after only six weeks of training with St John's House and attendance at King's College Hospital.[104] She was sent home in December 1855, as 'good natured but unfit for hospital

[98] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Miscellaneous, fol. 3904.
[99] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[100] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 17 June 1855.
[101] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[102] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fols 2184–90, 2192.
[103] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[104] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2243.

work'.[105] Given the relative absence of professional work for middle-class women at this time, as Young has stated, many women 'imagined that they had the capability to take on work for which they had not trained'.[106] The perceived innate ability of women to provide nursing care exerted more influence than the relatively recent and nascent recognition that nursing in fact required specialised training. Consequently, military nursing in the Crimean War was constructed, in concept and practice, through unequal class relationships and was premised upon classed and gendered expectations that proved to be inadequate but resilient throughout the organisation of the venture.

It is notable that both McLeod and Macoubrey were two of the few paid lady nurses. McLeod and her mother, who also worked as a lady nurse, claimed that they needed the income to supplement the pension they received as the daughter and widow of an officer.[107] Macoubrey's circumstances are unknown. She had brothers—a doctor, a barrister, and a clergyman—but neither her motives, nor her family's response to her nursing, is documented in the correspondence.[108] For women reliant on their own labour for an income, military nursing offered relatively well-paid employment. Salaries began at between 10 and 14 shillings per week for lower-class nurses, rising to 18 or 20 shillings in accordance with length of service and good conduct, and all expenses were covered by the government. MacLeod was paid 18 shillings per week, and Macoubrey 16 shillings.[109] By comparison, salaries in London teaching hospitals started at between 6 shillings and 9 shillings and 6 pence, with room and some board.[110] A few military nurses were ultimately paid much more. Mrs Roberts, who had been

[105] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[106] Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, p. 69.
[107] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fols 2186, 2192, 2196; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 91.
[108] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001; TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2244.
[109] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[110] Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 66.

a surgical nurse at St Thomas' Hospital for twenty-three years and who nursed Florence Nightingale through her own severe illness, was paid £120 per year, or £2 6 shillings per week.[111] Mrs Newton, also well known to Nightingale, was engaged at the same rate.[112] Louisa Raynes, sub matron at Renkioi Hospital, received £75 per year.[113]

While salary information was not publicised, the advertisements for military nurses still attracted unemployed or otherwise poor or impoverished women. In spite of the prevalence of philanthropic language, many evidently saw military nursing as a way to earn an income. Mary Anne Brown not only applied to Lady Canning to be a nurse, but also appealed to her for assistance in finding work if she should be found to be unsuitable. She had recently left her husband, a post office clerk who was a violent drunk, taking their two young children to live with her mother, which had left them all in strained financial circumstances.[114] Elizabeth Cookson's father, a prominent government official, had lost his fortune prior to his death, leaving her and her sisters as ladies in poverty.[115] She wrote anxiously to many connections to ask for assistance to secure an interview with Lady Canning and a place as a nurse, either in the military hospitals or in a hospital in England: she had heard that some nurses earned £100 per year, while she could not afford the journey from Manchester to London.[116]

Like the McLeods and Macoubrey, it appears that neither Brown nor Cookson had worked as nurses before, but as Jordan has stated, 'work did not, in itself, threaten [a woman's] femininity if the conditions were appropriate'.[117] The McLeods were later challenged by

[111] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001
[112] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/5, letter from Elizabeth Herbert to Lady Canning, 26 June 1855; LMA, List of Nurses and Sisters who have ceased to be employed in the Hospitals of Scutari & Balaklava & Coolali November 1855, H01/ST/NC/08/004, fol. 2.
[113] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[114] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fols 159–62.
[115] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fols 682–84.
[116] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fols 704–706.
[117] Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment,* p. 60.

another lady volunteer on their acceptance of a salary, though Abigail McLeod replied that she 'accepted a *Salary for the sake of the work*, not the work for the sake of a salary'.[118] The organisation of military nursing around familiar social hierarchies—the upper-class employment of middle- and lower-class women, and the explicit virtues perceived in female caregiving—imbued the project with a gentility and femininity that made it an acceptable means of employment for Cookson, the McLeods, and Macoubrey in particular, as middle-class women.[119] That femininity and gentility remained a point of contention, and paid ladies complicated the boundaries between the lady volunteers and paid nurses within the hospitals, throughout the nursing venture. However, those boundaries were not as prominent, nor as contentious, to applicants whose very real and immediate personal circumstances could render such abstractions of secondary importance, though they continued to govern the social interactions necessary to secure employment. To such women, nursing represented an important opportunity, but one that was complicated by dominant middle-class social codes that they were expected to adhere to.

The unconcealed concern for respectability, the reliance on social relationships rooted in divisive femininities, and the requirements of military nursing that conflicted with the organisers' priorities with respect to class and character, reveal deep anxieties about classed and gendered individuals and their labour. While middle-class femininity and gentility was swiftly associated with military nursing through Nightingale, and was deemed a necessary element for its success, some of its key features had to be sacrificed in the process. In her application letter, Anne Macoubrey stated that 'no cause less urgent could have roused me from the comforts of home to brave the dreadful ordeal of going through the London Hospitals'.[120] Although the ideological integrity of the middle-class woman could be compatible with

[118] Quoted in Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, p. 91. Original emphasis.
[119] Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment*, p. 126.
[120] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fols 2239–40.

nursing, and although many of the ladies came to be employed in management roles that reflected middle-class domestic arrangements, the shift from home to hospital was nevertheless a significant one. Nursing in a civil hospital was a far cry from the conditions faced in the military hospitals, and even the brief preparatory training that lady nurses were offered could be a rude awakening. Anna Moore had been a governess but was given preparatory training at King's College Hospital. She was ultimately advised not to continue, as the medical officers and surgeons considered her inefficient and unsuited to nursing invalids: she had become highly emotional at a number of operations, including the amputation of a foot—occasions that she admitted to finding 'truly afflicting', and which caused her to 'weep bitterly'.[121] Nevertheless, she wrote to Lady Canning asking to be reinstated, believing that with time she would become accustomed to such aspects of the work.[122]

Expressions of determination were common, and they reveal another dimension to the social anxieties surrounding nursing. While distinctions in both character and femininity were rigidly drawn between lower- and middle-class nurses by those who had authority over military nursing, these concepts seemed more flexible to some applicants who perceived in themselves the suitable qualities of a hospital nurse. Mary Jones wrote 'I could make myself very useful . . . my strength is unimpaired, as I walked through Wilts, Harts and Surrey this summer for amusement at from 12 to 15 miles a day, though I am turned fifty'.[123] Mary Charlton had some experience in nursing and declared 'I am healthy, have great powers of endurance, am not at all nervous and have no fear of infection'.[124] She promised to 'prove useful' at the hospitals.[125] Mary Hand had lived with her uncle, a surgeon, and had assisted in his practice. She wrote that 'I could act in cases many females would not have nerve to see', and that she would submit to

[121] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2431. Original emphasis.
[122] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fols 2431–34.
[123] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle J, fols 1923, 1926.
[124] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 590.
[125] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle C, fol. 589.

the superintendent.[126] Finally, Emily Anne Oakes volunteered as a lady nurse. She had suffered from much illness herself, though it is unclear to what extent or in what capacity she had nursed others. She wrote that:

> I consider it a duty and one important too; to give up our time to these unfortunate creatures who have fallen in our country's behalf, in short 'tis a privilege which all who can and have the nerve ought to avail themselves of . . . I am not one to recoil from anything I've determined to do; when once my mind is made up, few can turn me particularly when in cases wherever resolution and firmness are so essential; I . . . am not afraid of being nervous at the sight of wounds . . . I am too fond of nursing; to be useless; I should be most willing to submit to all regulations.[127]

These applicants demonstrate understandings of women's abilities in labour generally and nursing in particular which foregrounded physical strength. This was particularly resonant with middle-class views of lower-class femininity, but strength was necessary not only for the physical demands of nursing, but also to withstand sickness. They also emphasise personal resilience, which jarred with expectations of women more generally. At the same time, these women framed their desire to nurse in terms of their utility and submission; concepts that spanned conceptualisations of women's roles as the "good worker" across labour contexts, and the self-sacrificing, Christian philanthropist. While the organisers adopted and perpetuated a language and practice of classed power relationships in their selection of nurses, which was later reflected in the military hospitals, the language and practices of nursing and women's labour had already begun to transcend these boundaries. The healthcare crisis of the Crimean

[126] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fol. 1512.
[127] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle O, fols 2727–28, 2729–30. Original emphasis.

War, which brought women's labour and duty into dialogue with national, public, and medical concerns, provided an opportunity for expression of this struggle.

Age, Bodies, and Families

The disparity between the appeal of military nursing work and the concerns of the lady organisers is thrown into further relief through a comparison of the ages of nurses and applicants. Age data was recorded or has been found for 103 of the nurses, while age was mentioned for 281 of the applicants. Due to some uncertainty in these records—applicants were "about 30", or "between 25 and 28"—this data has been collated into age groups to mitigate the impact of any inaccuracies.[128] Although these figures are incomplete, they do suggest some important trends in age variation among both nurses and applicants. Figure 3 shows that the greatest proportion of both nurses and applicants fell into the 30–39 age group at 46 per cent and 36 per cent respectively. The vast majority of the nurses were aged 30 and over; 95 per cent, compared to 69 per cent of applicants. Given the general preference for experienced nurses, this majority of more mature women is predictable. However, despite the public appeal for experienced women, it is a striking contrast that the second-highest proportion of applicants—29 per cent—fell into the 20–29 age group. This is compared to 6 per cent of employed nurses, which amounted to just six individuals whose training, along with their social

[128] If an individual's age was given as "between" two ages, or as within a stated range spanning three or more years, the median has been used. Where an individual's age has been estimated as between two consecutive ages, the higher value has been used. If only the year of birth was known, it has been assumed that the birthday has passed by the time individuals were sent out to the hospitals or by the time they applied, unless otherwise stated. If an individual's age was given as "above" an age, for example "above 30", the age has been recorded as one year above the given figure. Similarly, if an individual's age was given as "below", or "near" it has been recorded as one year below the given age. If an individual's age was given as "about", e.g., "about 45", that figure has been used. If the age recorded on the Register of Nurses conflicted with an age given in another source, usually the Nurses' Testimonials, I have used the age stated in those other documents, relying on my own copies and transcripts; the transcript of the Register of Nurses was provided by the Florence Nightingale Museum.

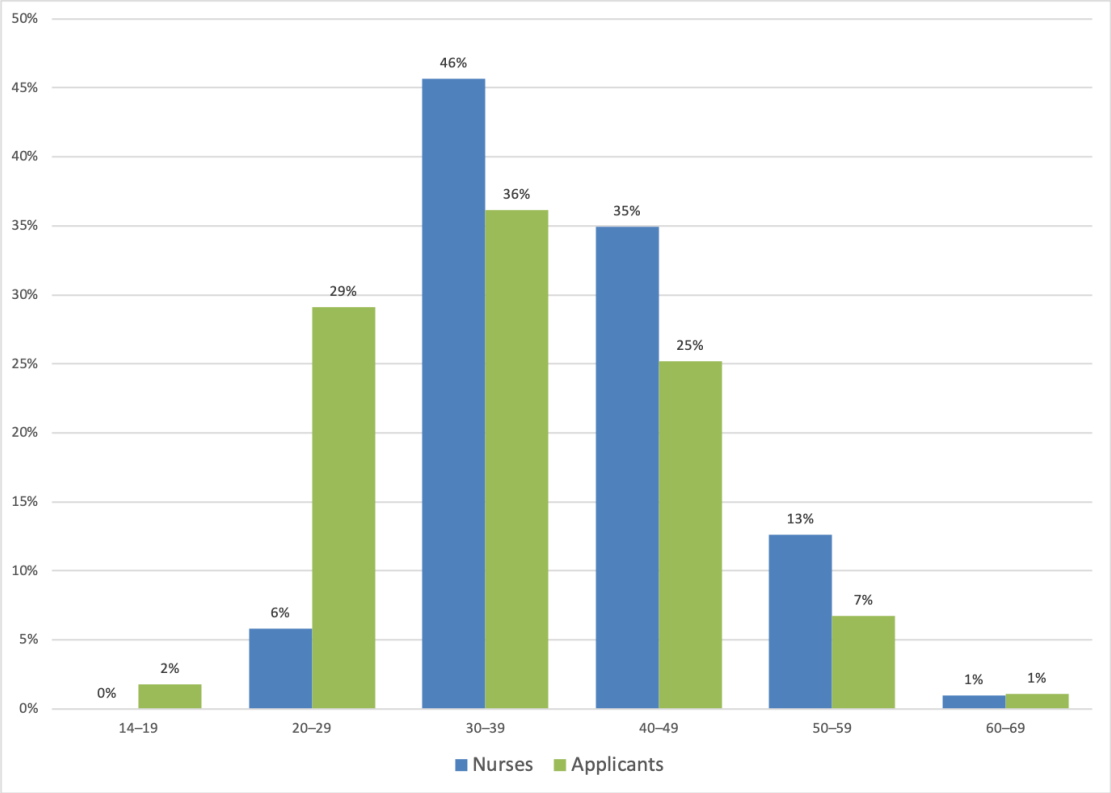


Figure 3: Age Demographics of Nurses and Applicants

standing or character, seems to have allayed concerns about their age. Two, sisters Frances (23) and Charlotte Taylor (29), were lady volunteers who had trained at Priscilla Lydia Sellon's Anglican sisterhood in Bristol as well as in hospitals. One, Sister Mary Joseph Croke (29) was an Irish Catholic Sister of Mercy while another, Emma Fagg (27) had been at St John's House since 1852. Mary Viney (29) was the widow of a colour sergeant. She had worked at Middlesex Hospital, possibly during training with the new Nurse's Home at 51 Upper Charlotte Street, which was recorded as her residence; she was employed as a laundress. Mary Tuffell (28) had spent two years working at King's College Hospital and was highly recommended by the doctor and surgeon; she was judged to be excellent.[129]

[129] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.

This disparity between the ages of nurses and applicants reflects the lady organisers' concerns to ensure that nursing met the requirements of the military hospitals, but that female propriety was also upheld. Very few of the applicants who fell into the 20–29 age group had the training to match those six women mentioned above. Five applicants were actually under the age of 20. Three had applications made on their behalf by their mothers, who themselves wished to go out as nurses. Two of these proposed their daughters—aged 17 and 14—as servants, in line with lower-class labour patterns among girls and women. Two other young hopefuls—Margaret Macaulay, aged 17, and a Miss Eldred, aged 18—explicitly applied to be nurses. Macaulay was the niece of lady nurse Anne Macoubrey, while Eldred's father applied to the Herberts on his daughter's behalf. He wrote that 'the object of her solicitude being of so noble a Character . . . I cannot reconcile myself to the task of thwarting her desire'.[130] None of these were accepted, in any capacity, being considered 'too young'.[131] Notes written on another application, that of 26-year-old Mary Wilson, help to contextualise and clarify concerns surrounding youth, as one of the lady organisers wrote 'in none but exceptional cases are nurses appointed under 30 (appearance & manner)'.[132]

Appearance may seem a curious concern, but it was an important one. The lady organisers exercised judgement not only over women's motives, training, and character, but over their bodies as well—particularly those of working women. Their appearance was charged with connotations of respectability, morality, and female sexuality, mediated through classed standards.[133] Judgements were given in references and correspondence about prospective nurses, suggesting that women's appearance was of interest and significance in employment matters generally, or else were later noted on the letters; many applicants were evidently

[130] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle E, fols 1025–26.
[131] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle E, fols 1028, 1062.
[132] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle W, fol. 3685.
[133] E. Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (London, 1987), p. 14.

granted personal interviews. A Miss Millington had a recommendation from a doctor as 'perfectly competent', but had no hospital training and at 22 years old, she was deemed 'too young & pretty & totally unfit' by the organisers.[134] Helen Bolton, aged 20, wished to be trained as a nurse but they considered her to be 'rather too young looking'.[135] Conversely, Anna Moore, the governess who was advised to leave her preparatory training, was 28 years old but was described in the ladies' notes as 'not young looking'.[136]

Young women were thought to be unsuitable particularly where their appearance betrayed their age, or where their attractiveness hinted at their potential frivolity or threatened demure femininity. In this respect, the lady organisers' concerns over applicants' appearance and manner centred on the same anxiety. Across mid-nineteenth-century society, age was closely intertwined with notions of appropriate female conduct and with marriage, specifically in relation to concepts of womanhood. Other stages of life—girlhood and adolescence—were geared towards preparation for that goal.[137] Women across classes tended to marry between the ages of 23 and 26, and attractive, young, single nurses who, according to the domestic ideology of the time, ought to be in search of a husband, might form relationships with soldiers.[138] This was a widespread supposition, for it was young women who carried 'the burden of purity and pollution, and indeed of projected male sexuality'.[139] But it was also young women onto whom the burden of accountability was placed in instances—real or imagined—of impropriety. One of the soldiers' widows who Nightingale employed as a servant was discovered to have a lover, a sergeant in charge of a military store, where they spent several nights together. Nightingale

[134] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2386.
[135] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 394.
[136] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle M, fol. 2427.
[137] L. Murdoch, *Daily Life of Victorian Women* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2014), pp. 154, 163, 197.
[138] Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*, pp. 30, 125–26.
[139] L. Davidoff, 'Class and Gender in Victorian England', in J. L. Newton, M. P. Ryan, and J. R. Walkowitz (eds), *Sex and Class in Women's Histories: Essays from Feminist Studies*, Routledge Library Editions: Women's History, vol. 30 (2nd edn, Oxford, 2013) p. 22.

petitioned the Commandant to punish the sergeant, but 'though the man was in direct breach of a military trust by admitting persons at night into a military store of which he was in charge— to say nothing of the moral offence—I obtained no redress— not even a reprimand to the man'.[140]

Such fears were publicly expressed from the outset of the nursing scheme. A satirical piece published in *Punch* on 11 November 1854, "Nurses of Quality for the Crimea", featured several fictional nursing applicants—all unmarried—and detailed their motives for wanting to be military nurses. One section read:

> Miss Piscina Copestole said that the ministry of surgical aid to the wounded by female hands was customary in the ages of faith . . . To attend the sick was one of the corporal works of mercy.
>
> Miss Wragley said she hoped it was sergeant as well as corporal.[141]

It concluded by stating that the government should not have left the task of military nursing to 'young ladies of rank and fashion, who knew not even as yet what it was to nurse a baby'.[142] Frances Duberly echoed this tone when she wrote to her sister about lady nurses soon after the arrival of the first party at Scutari. She wrote 'I have heard of Florence Nightingale. The first thing her principal assistant did – was to elope with a doctor!'[143] She confided that lady nurses were mockingly called 'the new Matrimony at any price association' and stated that 'still the intention is good. But they should all be married women. Now such people as fine young ladies of 26 or 28 is all Bosh'.[144]

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[140] McDonald, *Florence Nightingale*, vol. 14, p. 1027.
[141] 'Nurses of Quality for the Crimea', *Punch*, 27 (1854), p. 193.
[142] 'Nurses of Quality for the Crimea', p. 194.
[143] BL, Duberly Letters, Add Ms 47218, 11 November 1854, fol. 69.
[144] BL, Duberly Letters, Add Ms 47218, 20 November 1854, fols 74, 72. Original emphasis.

Neither the *Punch* piece nor the gossip that Duberly relayed are likely to be rooted in fact, given the small percentage of nurses sent under the age of 30 throughout the war, and the make-up of Nightingale's first party—the only one to have been sent out at this time—which was dominated by women from lay and religious sisterhoods. Duberly's report of an elopement is almost certainly based on rumour: she never recorded personally visiting the military hospitals, or meeting any of the nurses. However, both she and the author of the *Punch* piece expressed concern by drawing on discourses of gender and class that confined women to a trajectory of marriage and motherhood, while making clear that the fighting army was an unsuitable context in which to fulfil this role. This was highly ironic in Duberly's case, as a beautiful 25-year-old officer's wife, herself frequently in the midst of the conflict, but it echoes the anxieties of the organisers about the control and conduct of women in the military hospitals.

Comments on women's appearance were not only confined to younger women, though they took on different connotations in reference to more mature women. A Miss Tanner, aged 50, was thought 'very wild & odd looking', suggesting that the organisers predicted that Tanner would not live up to their expectations of respectability—in appearance or conduct—if she were selected.[145] Elizabeth Burton, aged 33, had excellent testimonials and had entered the nurses' training institution in Devonshire Square. She was described as 'stout & ruddy'.[146] Mrs Joyce, aged 39, a private nurse and previously a greengrocer, was similarly 'very stout and red face[d]'.[147] These comments drawing attention to women's bodies may have been a means of distinguishing and remembering particular candidates, but it is likely that they also indicated concerns about applicants' health and, thus, their suitability for nursing in the harsher climate of the war zone. By the end of the war, thirteen of the nurses listed on the Register—lower-class, ladies, and nuns—had died while working at the hospitals, and there was a near-constant

[145] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle T, fol. 3265.
[146] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 276.
[147] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle J, fol. 1939.

stream of others invalided home throughout the war.[148] Although a red complexion may indicate health, it could also be read as a result of exertion and a lack of gentility, while descriptions of stoutness could describe nineteenth-century perceptions of unhealthy excessive weight.[149] Lydia Notley was 40 years old and had been a nurse in London for fifteen years. Notes on her application explicitly read 'considered to be too stout to retain her health in the East; on w[hic]h acc[oun]t not desirable for future emp[loymen]t there, tho' a worthy woman'.[150]

Annotations and comments about women's complexions are far more explicit in other cases, making it clear that British military nursing in the Crimean War was envisaged as a *white* project. On 5 January 1855, Freeman Murray, the Governor of Bermuda, wrote to the War Office on behalf of Eliza Lusher, a 30-year-old 'coloured woman' who wished to go to Scutari as a nurse. She was experienced in the treatment of yellow fever and bore an excellent character, but her services were refused.[151] There is no explicit indication of racial prejudice in the two extant letters on this matter, but Mary Seacole pondered this state of affairs in her autobiography, recounting how her own nursing services had been refused during the war. After informing her readers that her offers to join Nightingale were rejected by various government departments, benevolent funds, and ladies, she asked 'was it possible that American prejudices against colour had some root here? Did these ladies shrink from accepting my aid because my blood flowed beneath a somewhat duskier skin than theirs?'[152]

Much has been written about race and nursing in the Crimean War, but this scholarship has focused exclusively on Mary Seacole and her complex identity construction as, variously

[148] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[149] D. J. Hutson, 'Plump or Corpulent? Lean or Gaunt? Historical Categories of Bodily Health in Nineteenth-Century Thought', *Social Science History*, 41/2 (2017), p. 292.
[150] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle N, fol. 2676.
[151] TNA, Despatches from Freeman Murray, CO/37/151/5, fols 20–21 and Letters from various government offices, CO/37/154, fol. 452.
[152] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 73–74.

and concurrently, a black, "creole", British, English woman, and as an author, entrepreneur, nurse, and "mother".[153] The lady organisers' notes in fact confirm that Seacole's suspicions were justified, as at least two other women were excluded from military nursing, partly because of attitudes towards the colour of their skin. Elizabeth Purcell, aged 52, was the wife of a soldier in the Royal Chelsea Hospital, and bore a reference from Captain E. Sutherland, the steward and storekeeper of that establishment. In his letter dated 10 April 1855, he considered her to have an '<u>exemplary</u> character' and to be '<u>in every respect</u>' suitable as a nurse in a military hospital.[154] Purcell also had her Testimonials Form filled out favourably by W. Wells, a chemist and druggist, and James Love, a surgeon and apothecary. Even in the "Remarks" column provided, no indication was given of Purcell's ethnicity and no reason was given why she may have been considered unsuitable by these men. However, she was deemed 'very dark . . . Too old & almost black' in notes later scribbled upon this form.[155] Upon Captain Sutherland's letter, notes read: 'almost bl[ac]k & on that ground rather objected to by Lady C[anning] & the Phys[icia]n'.[156] Correspondence about another applicant, Louisa Belgrave, a 33-year-old governess, documented concerns about Belgrave's ability as a nurse rooted in racist assumptions about her body. She was considered a 'promising' nurse by Rosa Spottiswoode, a lady who informally assisted the organisers by suggesting and vetting some candidates.[157] She was even referred to St John's House, to begin a period of training. However,

[153] See Robinson, 'Authority and the Public Display of Identity', pp. 537–57; Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes', pp. 949–81; Frederick, 'Creole Performance in Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands', pp. 487–506; Paravisini-Gerbert, 'Mrs Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit', pp. 71–87; Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning"', pp. 95–113; Rupprecht, 'Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands (1857)', pp. 176–203; Poon, 'Comic Acts of (Be)Longing', pp. 501–16; Howell, 'Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity', pp. 107–25; Chang, 'Creolizing the White Woman's Burden', pp. 527–57.
[154] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle P, fol. 2919. Original emphasis.
[155] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle P, fol. 2917–18.
[156] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle P, fol. 2921.
[157] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 244.

in another letter Mary Jones, the superintendent at St John's House, stated that 'a West-Indian constitution is not the one best able to bear the fatigue of nursing . . . and some English patients would object to a nurse being so nearly a person of colour'.[158]

Mary Seacole is exceptional: she reached the Crimea, was able to work there, and gained much respect and wide-reaching (if short-lived) fame as a result. But both she and these other women were excluded from organised nursing and thus from the military hospitals. There are other factors that likely contributed to their rejection. Their general lack of hospital training would have counted against them. Purcell's age may have been a factor. Only 14 per cent of nurses, or 14 individuals, whose ages were recorded were over 50. The government was also unlikely to fund travel for Lusher from Bermuda, when parties could be sent on troopships from British ports. However, the comments about Purcell and Belgrave cannot be ignored. They render Purcell and Belgrave visible in the archive, the nursing narrative, and broader British historical geographies as women of colour.[159] This is a visibility that is immediately juxtaposed by the absence of their own voices, as any letters that they wrote do not survive in the collection. It is also a visibility that was actively suppressed as racist assumptions excluded these women of colour—and potentially others—systemically from the nursing venture, despite the support they received from other parties.[160]

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[158] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 246. Original emphasis.

[159] See C. Bressey, 'Geographies of Belonging: White Women and Black History', *Women's History Review*, 22/4 (2013), pp. 542–43. For a summary of the erasure of black women in British history and a need to use archives imaginatively to highlight the continuous presence of minority groups in Britain, see C. Bressey. 'Forgotten Histories: Three Stories of Black Girls from Barnado's Victorian Archive', *Women's History Review* 11/3/ (2002), pp. 351–54.

[160] Jane Robinson has briefly alluded to the racial prejudice towards Elizabeth Purcell in the selection of nurses, which was comparable to the prejudice experienced by Mary Seacole. However, Robinson does not dwell on the wider context of racial thought in British society and its relationship to the selection of nurses, rather emphasising Seacole's simultaneous support for 'the British regime at war' and subversion of 'almost every cultural code' within that regime. See Robinson, 'Supporters or Subversives?', pp. 13–14.

The notes about Purcell are stark for their bluntness. The supposition that English soldiers would object to being nursed by Belgrave because of her colour, and that her "West Indian constitution" would prove a hindrance, show the specific ideas driving such racism in this context. Belgrave was an educated woman, a governess, and she seems to have had mixed-race parentage. Many other women who worked as governesses applied to be nurses, and at least three—Mademoiselle Ecuyer, Charlotte Salisbury, and Harriet Brooke—were accepted with little or no prior training.[161] Belgrave's visible difference from these ladies' whiteness was enough to subsume other aspects of her identity under white women's assumptions and anxieties about non-white women and their bodies.[162] Specifically, Belgrave's body was imagined by the middle- and upper-class commentators to be vulnerable under the stresses of hard work and objectionable to British soldiers. Laziness had long been held to be an attribute of black and mixed-race people in the white British imagination and, as Douglas Lorimer has stated, the 'colour prejudice' that pervaded British colonial and metropolitan cultures saw Victorians '[generalize] freely about the character of racial groups and [exhibit] few inhibitions about according commonplace prejudices the status of scientific fact'.[163] However, soldiers, particularly those who had served abroad, were in fact more likely to have been familiar with women of colour, though interactions were mediated through gendered, classed, and colonial power relationships. Mary Seacole had long worked alongside British soldiers in her mother's

[161] See TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle E, fol. 865; Bundle S, fol. 3029; Bundle B, fol. 188.
[162] See Paravisini-Gerbert, 'Mrs Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit', p. 76.
[163] See P. Fryer, *Staying Power* (3rd edn, London, 2018), pp. 7, 144, 192; Rupprecht, 'Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands (1857)', p. 184; See also Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 1: 'Many people have also traced to my Scotch blood that energy and activity which are not always found in the Creole race . . . I have often heard the term "lazy Creole" applied to my country people'; D. Lorimer, 'Reconstructing Victorian Racial Discourse: Images of Race, the Language of Race Relations, and the Context of Black Resistance', in G. Gerzina (ed.), *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), p. 194.

boarding house in Jamaica; more broadly, women of colour were frequently employed in service to officers and other white officials, entered into sexual and marital relationships with military men, and also suffered sexual and labour exploitation as a result of British colonialism.[164] However, this was a period when discourses of empire, Britishness, and Englishness, became increasingly racialised, while the language of race relations itself was the subject of debate between waning abolitionist sentiment, and rising "scientific" and colonial ideologies.[165] Encounters with non-white Britons were, therefore, socially, culturally, and politically loaded. The ladies organising military nursing projected their own anxieties over race onto nursing labour and nurses' relationships to the soldiery, in terms of these broader debates.

What the ladies objected to, then, was women of colour nursing alongside white British women who, from the start of Crimean War military nursing, were perceived to have followed Nightingale's example, as she and the lady nurses dominated the public narrative. As Britain's own "angels", working diligently in the service of God and the nation, the social and political instability posed by the presence of black women and women of colour was incompatible with the terms on which Crimean War nurses found acceptance in the Turkish and Crimean hospitals, and amid the wider public. The cultural iconography that validated military nursing depended upon publicly unambiguous images of womanhood and Britishness, which masked the contradictions inherent in those concepts and marginalised women who were perceived to destabilise these. It is for this reason that Seacole has been posited in competition with Nightingale, and it is how she was able to create a successful literary persona as "Mother

[164] For a summary of the debate on inter-race relationships and sexual exploitation in the British empire, see L. Bryder, 'Sex, Race, and Colonialism: An Historiographical Review', *The International History Review*, 20/4 (1998), pp. 806–22. See also A. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge in Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), and D. Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire,* Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society, vol. 13 (Cambridge, 2006), particularly chapters 1, 4, and 6.
[165] Lorimer, 'Reconstructing Victorian Racial Discourse', pp. 187–94

Seacole" and receive some public acceptance: she did not nurse in the hospitals, but fulfilled a self-consciously "hybrid" role at the intersection of racial, British, gendered, and military identities as "doctress", sutler, and "mother" in the military camp.[166] The hospitals, however, were not liminal military spaces in the way that the camp was; they were also tightly controlled medical ones. The organisers were highly conscious of the conditions of entry to that space. As a result, the act of nursing British soldiers and the hospital spaces in which that act was performed were constructed by the organisers of military nursing as sites of maturity, de-sexualisation, and whiteness.

The de-sexualisation of military nurses was epitomised by the dominant image of Nightingale, who came to represent female and Christian purity because of her unmarried, upper-class status. Lady nurses, many of whom were also unmarried, were incorporated into this popular image. However, the organisers' notes on Mary Wilson's application linking age with appearance and marriage draw attention to the fact that this image of asexuality was more complex in reality. It is difficult to establish statistics about nurses' marital status. One-hundred-and-eleven women were listed as "Mrs" on the Register, but this is misleading: housekeepers and cooks were referred to as "Mrs" though they were usually unmarried; widowed women were known by their married title; and the Mother Superiors of religious orders could be referred to as "Mrs" Bridgeman (of the Irish Roman Catholic nuns) and "Mrs" Emma Langston (of the Anglican sisters from the Park Village sisterhood). Notes of "widow", "separated", "single", or "spinster" appear on the Register with some regularity for women in parties sent from 24 March 1855 onwards, particularly lower-class women, but details of women's personal lives—such as their husband's occupation, their children's ages, how many times they had been married, or who their family were—were not consistently recorded. It is,

[166] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, pp. 12, 77 96, 101, 105, 111–27; Howell, 'Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity', p. 109, 112.

therefore, difficult to find many nurses in census and marriage records. It does appear, however, that widowed and unmarried women were at least a significant minority among the nurses. At least forty-nine of the nurses and ladies on the Register were widows, and Nightingale employed a number of soldiers' widows in domestic tasks at the military hospitals. Twelve women, all lower-class nurses, were explicitly listed on the Register as either "single", "unmarried", or "spinster"; many other lower-class nurses and lady nurses could doubtless have been described likewise. The majority of these women were over 30; the age that the lady organisers felt was appropriate for nursing.[167] Indeed, one nurse who was termed a "spinster", Marion Hepburn, was 30 years old when she went to Renkioi in July 1855.

It was typical of the "old" nurse of the early nineteenth century that she was a widow, usually in dire circumstances which had encouraged her entry into nursing, then an unskilled profession.[168] By the mid-nineteenth century, such women still constituted the majority of hospital nurses, but following the attempts at nursing reform in the large hospitals in particular, they were also the more experienced nurses that Nightingale wanted. The clear popular anxieties trained on young female sexuality doubtless also encouraged the recruitment of more mature women, but measures such as Nightingale's prohibition on night nursing and the extensive chaperoning of nurses show that there was still much anxiety about the conduct and sexuality of mature lower-class women. One woman, Mrs Michael, married a patient when they both returned to England. Martha Nicol, a lady nurse, wrote in her memoir that she helped to bring about their engagement while at the Smyrna hospital. It was 'Entered on in such an honest and proper manner; for the conduct of both was always such as to excite no sort of remark, and their proposed marriage was never made a topic of conversation, or known to any

[167] Age was recorded or has been found for 38 of the 49 widows. Of these, only Mary Viney, previously mentioned, was under 30. Age was recorded for 11 of the 12 other women noted as "single", "unmarried", or "spinster": all were over 30.
[168] Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale*, pp. 73–74.

one but myself'.[169] Nicol's mediation of the match may have rendered it more respectable to her reading audience. In fact, two lady nurses also became engaged. Catharine Leslie "Kate" Anderson was 30 years old, the daughter of a naval officer. She became engaged to a chaplain while working at the hospitals.[170] Emily Hutton, who was aged 33 and served as Lady Superintendent at Koulali, became engaged to a purveyor.[171] The secrecy surrounding Michael's relationship, however, harks back to the anxieties trained on the romantic and sexual potential of the nurse-patient relationship. The lady organisers took a stern view of such engagements among the paid nurses. They were told in February 1856 that six women at Scutari had become engaged to soldiers and orderlies while Florence Nightingale had been visiting the hospitals in the Crimea a few months before, one of whom was dismissed as a result.[172] Sexual impropriety was absolutely a dismissible offence. "Gross misconduct" was often used euphemistically to explain such dismissals.[173] In one case, however, Sarah Jones, a 37-year-old widow, was dismissed in May 1856 for 'flagrant' misbehaviour, namely 'clandestine meetings' with a lover.[174]

These contradictory attitudes reinforce the difficulties faced by single women who, Bridget Hill has stated, consistently had 'no acknowledged place' within the domestic ideology of the time, and who attracted much attention following the revelation in the 1851 census that there were more unmarried women than unmarried men.[175] Spinsterhood and widowhood could afford women some legal independence, but these labels also placed them 'outside the

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[169] M. Nicol, *Ismeer, or Smyrna and its British Hospitals in 1855* (London, 1856), p. 310.
[170] Rev W. F. Hobson. *Catherine Leslie Hobson, Lady-Nurse, Crimean War, and Her Life* (London, 1888), p. 51.
[171] Luddy, *The Crimean Journals of the Sisters of Mercy,* p. 238.
[172] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/4 (Correspondence with Laura Cranworth, Florence Nightingale and Parthenope Nightingale), Letter from Laura Cranworth to Lady Canning, 7 February 1856.
[173] Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale*, p. 109.
[174] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001; BL, Nightingale Papers, vol. X, Add MS 43402, Nightingale's Report, fols 4, 7.
[175] B. Hill, *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660–1850* (New Haven, CT, 2001), p. 11.

normative boundaries of womanhood'.[176] In conjunction with nursing, these boundaries functioned differently for women of different classes. For middle-class women, courtship and engagements could be perceived as romantic. It was commonly assumed that, among ladies who volunteered but who did not belong to a sisterhood, such work as they undertook in the military hospitals would not supplant their duties to home and family. Frances Taylor wrote in her memoir that one of the greatest obstacles to the employment of ladies as permanent nurses was the fact that nurses should seldom be changed, but that 'this is simply unavoidable when they are ladies possessing home ties and duties which they are only enabled temporarily to relinquish'.[177] Lady nurses' ultimate marriage to upstanding men could be reconciled with both the ideal of womanhood, and the expectation that middle-class women would undertake philanthropic duties. Instances of ladies' engagements also seem to have been so few and so respectably conducted that they could not substantiate the popular anxieties about frivolous, young, unmarried women expressed by the likes of *Punch* and Frances Duberly.

However, the poor reputation of nursing continued to hold sway for many, and the ambiguity surrounding military nursing presented a particular obstacle that prevented a number of middle-class women from furthering their ambitions to become nurses. A number of women applied anonymously, in secret, or ultimately withdrew their applications because they failed to gain their family's permission. Anna Nevins was 'over 30', the daughter of a country gentleman, but she did not tell her father about her application initially. She wrote that 'my mother I know does not wish to withhold me and I think if any thing definite were presented as a fixed thing, my Father will allow me to decide for myself'.[178] Jane Touchet, the 35-year-old daughter of the 20th Lord Audley, proved extremely promising as a superintendent but was

[176] J. Fink and K. Holden, 'Pictures from the Margins of Marriage: Representations of Spinsters and Single Mothers in the mid-Victorian Novel, Inter-war Hollywood Melodrama and British Film of the 1950s and 1960s', *Gender & History*, 11/2 (1999), p. 234.
[177] F. Taylor, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses*, vol. 2, pp. 268–69.
[178] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle N, fol. 2602.

not sent to any hospital. Her mother 'pointedly refused her consent'.[179] The same happened to another lady, Emily Browne, aged 32, who was from a wealthy and respectable family, as her parents would only allow her to go to the established hospitals at Scutari or Koulali. Browne felt that 'if I accept an appointment for an hospital not yet formed it would occasion them more anxiety than I feel I have a right to impose on them'.[180] It was not only nurses' bodies and hospital spaces that were located, as Alison Bashford has argued, amid a struggle between ideas of "purity" and "pollution"; contact with these groups and spaces was still perceived as risky to single, middle-class, female propriety.[181] For some applicants, that risk—specifically its implications for their home and family networks—was too great.

For lower-class women, the experience of lived and ideological paradigms was similarly contradictory. Their submissive status within military nursing and popular suspicions of their social strata and labour, which underwrote encounters with their social and professional superiors, were—and are—weighted against them in the absence of their own narratives. These prejudices rendered paid nurses' personal attachments highly transgressive in the social and moral contexts of the hospitals, even in the absence of explicit sexual impropriety: they were paid labourers, in positions of cautious trust, performing work widely praised as a Christian duty. Their steps towards marriage, which their social superiors were predisposed to read as unchecked sexuality, undermined that work. Yet, another aspect of the feminine ideal—motherhood—was, perhaps surprisingly, no impediment to being a military nurse. A number of the lower-class nurses had children. Some of these were grown and independent, but many women were evidently working to support their families, either as the sole breadwinner, or

[179] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, MSS Eur F699/2/3/9 (Correspondence & Other Papers Relating to the Recruitment and Deployment of Nurses, III), Letter from Mrs Robertson to Miss Hope, 25 May 1855.
[180] TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle B, fol. 225.
[181] A. Bashford, *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment, and Victorian Medicine* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 22.

alongside their husbands. Mary Lee was 47 years old. Her husband was employed at the Littlemore lunatic asylum, but they had two children in the workhouse. Lee's 12 shillings per week as a general servant were almost certainly needed to supplement the poor family finances.[182] Another nurse, Eliza Hawkins, sent money to help support her nephews; Florence Nightingale and her family helped to make such arrangements.[183]

Other women left their children with friends, relatives, or neighbours. Mrs Wilson, who was in Nightingale's first party, '[left] her child at Miss Randall's', though it is unknown if she was married or widowed. Others placed their children in schools. This was a matter in which Nightingale took a particular interest. Rebecca Lawfield, one of the nurses in the first party, had three children. She converted to Roman Catholicism and wished to put her daughter (who lived with an aunt) and her two sons (who lived with her father-in-law) into convent schools. Nightingale believed 'this is manifestly not right & should be prevented, if possible'.[184] Cornelia Lyas, the nurse accused of converting Lawfield, was a widow with two young daughters who were educated at a convent school. Lyas was thought to be an 'unprincipled woman' and was about to be dismissed for accepting a gift of money from a patient, and for proselytising.[185] There was some annoyance that her wages had been paid in advance, as she left the hospital to take up a position as a governess to an Armenian family, rather than return home. However, Lady Canning was consoled that the money had all been advanced to fund Lyas's daughters' board and education.[186]

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[182] LMA, Register, H01/ST/NC/08/001.
[183] McDonald, *Florence Nightingale*, vol. 14, p. 183.
[184] LMA, Album containing letters relating to nurses from St John's House, H01/ST/NC/03/SU/A/35, letter from Florence Nightingale, 16 August 1855.
[185] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, F699/2/3/2, letter from Florence Nightingale to Lady Canning, 9 September 1855.
[186] BL, Papers of Charlotte, Lady Canning, F699/2/3/5, letter from Elizabeth Herbert to Lady Canning, 28 July 1855.

These examples show the clear intervention of class hierarchies in domestic and family matters. The need to support the family took these working women far from home, where family issues became the interest of the ladies, their social and professional superiors. But this was not simply a one-way, or top-down, mediation. Margaret Goodman, one of the Anglican sisters, wrote in her memoir that many of the nurses

> were widows, with large families, whom they found it a severe struggle to support by their labour in England. They were too well acquainted with disease not to understand the risk they ran from contagion; but they were under the impression that if their children were left orphans, the ladies of England would make them their charge.[187]

The appeals by some applicants for the lady organisers' assistance in finding work more broadly demonstrate that the organisers were already viewed, to some extent, as occupying civic philanthropic roles. Their ability to provide assistance in financial and social matters was to some extent assumed as part of the long tradition of ladies bountiful taking an interest in the domestic matters of the poor.[188] By the 1850s, the intervention of middle- and upper-class women in the lives of the poor to help assuage and discourage social evils was well established as an integral part of their class identity, and as an extension, albeit a problematic one, of their domesticity.[189] Philanthropic matters became of greater public interest during the 1850s, and received particular attention throughout the war. Calls for the support of soldiers' wives and children, for example, had seen the establishment of the Royal Patriotic Fund in October 1854, local branches of which were organised and run by middle- and upper-class philanthropists.

The lady organisers and Florence Nightingale neither acted, nor intended to act as philanthropists to the nurses. They did, however, stand as keystones in the social relationships

[187] M Goodman, *Experiences of an English Sister of Mercy* (London, 1862), p. 61.
[188] Elliott, *The Angel Out of the House*, pp. 23–24.
[189] Elliott, The *Angel Out of the House*, pp. 54–56.

within the nursing mission and domestic matters which, though formally unrecognised, constituted integral personal and collective concerns as a result of the all-female nature of this nursing venture. While women's work and middle- and upper-class philanthropy were problematic within gendered, public-private divisions of space and action, the matriarchal nature of the relationships between paid nurses and ladies over such personal matters as providing for one's children represented a domestication of military nursing.

Conclusion

From an early stage, military nursing in the Crimean War came to be perceived not only as women's work but as women's duty. This was partly due to Nightingale's example, but it was also due to the ways in which ideas of femininity and care more broadly contributed to hierarchies and expectations within mid-nineteenth-century society, and how these were drawn upon to present a solution to alleviate suffering within the military. The social and cultural interactions with war which are revealed in women's applications represent a historical moment of liminality and momentum. Women presented their desire to participate in military nursing in ways which emphasised gendered caregiving, but which also gave them an interest and distinctly configured role in the nation. In offering to disrupt their regular lives to tend the British soldiers, they positioned themselves and the men of the armed forces as part of the same "imagined community".[190] Although military nursing was ultimately interpreted differently by the lady organisers and by the interested applicants, their different constructions were rooted in the belief that women had a particular contribution to make to the campaign. Military nursing was an experiment, and its exact terms were, at least at first, indistinct. The nursing applications and other documents collated her personalise the venture, highlighting diverse perspectives on the work and its links to British society and identity, but they also show the transcendent nature

[190] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 6–7, 12, 36.

of some of those views and forcefully link Crimean War nursing to important contemporary struggles within the dominant class and gender ideologies.

The nursing venture was founded upon social relationships defined by class, which were ultimately replicated in the hospitals. Amid this process, however, nursing was brought into intersection with social concerns that were commonly assumed to underwrite those foundational relationships in similarly classed and gendered encounters in civilian contexts. These were conditions that organisers and applicants, ladies and nurses were acutely aware of, and which they used as public displays of identity and methods of social control on the one hand, but also as a means of personal fulfilment and redefinition and, for working-class women in particular, as resistance against poverty as part of an active working-class 'culture of survival' on the other.[191] The language of social power relationships that underwrote the nursing applications and which was drawn upon within them show women using accepted discourses to attempt to move beyond the boundaries of womanhood they experienced in their daily lives. The women who applied and nursed were located within complex and subjective networks of personal relationships, ambitions, financial pressures, and self-constructions. The contradictions inherent within the separate spheres discourse, functioning in conjunction with class hierarchies, the demands of labour, and racial prejudices, positioned military nursing on a knife-edge between "respectability" and drudgery. The image of the "Lady with the Lamp" would become far more firmly established in the popular imagination after the war, and the image of the "old" nurse would not be overhauled for many years. Although Nightingale was certainly an important icon of Christian femininity from the very beginning of the nursing venture, older stereotypes and stigmas continued to hold sway. For applicants and nurses—

[191] L. Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family: Britain 1850–1940* (London, 1995), p. 144.

middle- and working-class—and even the organisers, Crimean War nursing was both an opportunity and a risk.

Ultimately, military nursing had an appeal that extended far beyond the demographic that the lady organisers initially hoped to recruit, because the appeal of Crimean War nursing went far beyond the rigid classed and gendered ideologies shaping popular constructions of women, women's work, and respectable femininity. The organisation of military nursing was conducted with an acute awareness of the public nature of the endeavour and the difficulties incumbent upon a body of women establishing themselves in hospital spaces. It was also carried out amid the contradictions presented by the organisers' concerns to uphold traditional and familiar gendered labour relations, the demands of the work, and the very diverse interest that their appeals unintentionally attracted. Nursing soldiers in the Crimean War was an action which, much like the war zone itself, was characterised by liminality. The careful negotiation of classed and gendered hierarchies was all the more significant for the organisers, due to the proximity and scrutiny of an interested public. Their encounters with others' varied and, at times, conflicting conceptualisations of military nursing, labouring femininities, race, women's bodies, and women's responsibilities created tensions which reflect broader mid-century social and labour debates. Though subsumed under an idealised iconography, these social tensions shaped nursing just as much as the organisers themselves and created obstacles within military nursing throughout the war.

Nevertheless, for some, military nursing created long-lasting affiliations for caregiving and for the army. When Marianne Estcourt's brother once joked about nursing work with Jane Shaw Stewart, the Lady Superintendent of the Balaklava hospital, Stewart replied 'I'm not ashamed of my badge'.[192] She went on to study at several London and European hospitals, and

[192] GA, Marianne Estcourt, D1571/F558, 22 May 1855.

later worked as the superintendent of female nurses at the General Hospital in Netley.[193] Kate Anderson became Kate Hobson after her marriage, and both she and her husband continued to work with the army at home and abroad: Hobson was briefly the lady superintendent of the women's hospital at the Shorncliffe army camp, and she worked among soldiers' wives and the poor until her death in 1886.[194] Elizabeth Amy Edwards, the ex-lady's maid who became a nurse, wrote to Nightingale in May 1877. War had broken out between Russia and Turkey the month before and, though British neutrality had been proclaimed, she nevertheless volunteered to "step up" once again and serve as a military nurse to British soldiers, should the need arise.[195]

[193] S. Wildman, 'Stewart, Jane Catherine Shaw', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.013.107344.
[194] Hobson, *Catherine Leslie* Hobson, pp. 63–140.
[195] LMA, Letters to Florence Nightingale, H01/ST/NC/02/012, Letter to Florence Nightingale from Elizabeth Amy Green, 1 May 1877.

Chapter 4: Constructing the "Crimean Heroine": Women and the Legacy of the Crimean War

A CRIMEAN HEROINE.—On Sunday night there passed away one who in her time came through strange experiences—Mrs Bell Burbage, widow of the late John Burbage, Royal Artillery . . . During the Crimean War, Gunner Burbage was ordered out with his company to the front, and took part in many engagements . . . Mrs Burbage accompanied her husband to the front, and was with the besieging army for a long time, and she used to tell with great animation and pardonable pride of the different engagements to which she had been an eye-witness . . . Mrs Burbage was one of the very few women who were close to the front during that terrible time, and it was only her dauntless spirit that upheld her and enabled her to continue at her post in the midst of such trials and dangers.

The Fife Herald, 14 December 1887, p. 2

A CRIMEAN HEROINE. LORD WOLSELEY AND THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW. Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, has just done what the Patriotic Fund Commissioners, with their huge resources, have declined to do, namely, forwarded a grant of £4, from the Military Tournament Fund, to Mrs. Frances Lewis, a widow, who passed through the rigours and privations of the Crimean campaign . . . the widow, who is sixty-eight years of age, bears a character beyond reproach, and is in receipt of out-door relief, which she ekes out by a day or two spent at the wash-tub.

Daily Mail, 8 August 1899, p. 3

A CRIMEAN HEROINE. SNAPPING OF ANOTHER LINK WITH FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Probably the last of the devoted band of Crimean nurses organised by Florence Nightingale, the "Lady with the Lamp," has passed away at Warminster in the person of Miss Elizabeth Bidwell, aged 91. She volunteered for service in the prime of young womanhood, and for some time served under the famous Dr Meyer at Smyrna.

Birmingham Gazette, 4 August 1922, p. 1

From the end of Crimean War in 1856 into the early twentieth century, the memory of the conflict retained a prominent place in the public consciousness and in constructions of British national identity. In particular, as Crimean veterans aged and died, the end of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of what Lara Kriegel has termed the 'fin-de-siècle cult of the Crimean veteran'.[1] The men who survived the Crimean War, and to an extent other nineteenth-century conflicts, became 'the focus of patriotic celebration and philanthropic rescue' as attention was directed to the plight of the rank-and-file soldiers.[2] Many were living out their final days in poverty, often in the workhouse. However, the notices above appeared in papers spanning different geographical areas and demographics of readership, in addition to their chronological spread. They indicate that the Crimean heroine was another figure whose reach over the public imagination, while perhaps not as extensive as that of the veteran, nevertheless persisted with the passage of time. Previous chapters have demonstrated that social experiences

[1] L. Kriegel, 'Living Links to History, to, Victorian Veterans in the Twentieth-Century World', *Victorian Studies*, 58/2 (2016), p. 291.
[2] Kriegel, 'Living Links to History', p. 290. See also M. Brown and J. Begiato, 'Visualising the Aged Veteran in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Memory, Masculinity and the Nation', in M. Brown, A. M. Barry, and J. Begiato (eds), *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 2019), pp. 102–36.

of the conflict itself were heavily influenced by individuals' and communities' negotiation of classed and gendered expectations and gender relationships, across war zone spaces and within British society "at home". The promotion of the Crimean heroine in the press throughout the decades after the war demonstrates a continued struggle with questions of femininity and class in relation to this particular conflict. It also reflects a changing contemporary society and engaged significantly with popular memories of the war, in ways which ought to be recognised as part of its legacy.

Heroism was and continues to be created through recognition. Geoffrey Cubitt offers a useful definition:

> A hero is any man or woman whose existence, whether in his or her own lifetime or later, is endowed by others, not just with a higher degree of fame and honour, but with a special allocation of imputed meaning and symbolic significance – that not only raises them above others in public esteem but makes them the object of some kind of collective emotional investment.[3]

Studies consistently identify two significant lines of thought in nineteenth-century heroism. There was a conservative view, in which heroism was considered to be divinely bestowed and the hero was set apart from and above ordinary men (for most of those deemed heroes were men), through their historical significance as agents. There was also a more liberal view, which came to dominate in the late nineteenth century. According to this discourse, heroism was exemplary, achieved by the cultivation of certain "heroic" qualities like bravery, selflessness, and perseverance. Couched within a self-help ethos, the hero was rendered as an aspirational

[3] G. Cubitt, 'Introduction', in G. Cubitt and A. Warren, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives* (Manchester, 2000), p. 3.

figure and heroic literature as didactic, particularly to lower- and middle-class audiences.[4] John Price has attributed the rise and recognition of 'everyday heroism' to this latter discourse, defined as 'acts of life-risking bravery, undertaken by otherwise ordinary individuals, largely in the course of their daily lives and within quotidian surroundings'.[5] Price argues that everyday heroism and the elevation of ordinary individuals to the (albeit often temporary) status of "hero", was as significant an element within nineteenth-century popular culture and the construction of social identities at a local level, as the more conservative "great men" narratives were to the militaristic and political debates that often framed the negotiation of national and imperial identities.[6] Fundamentally, the construction of heroes relied on the shared value systems of the community from which the hero emerged, or that they were presented to. Therefore, the hero stemmed from, and had power over, group identity constructions and individuals' participation in them.[7]

However, these different types of heroism are notable for their limited inclusion of women. When women did appear, they did so as "heroines", implying their belonging to a gendered order of heroism separate to that of men. Most often, as Christine Hadamitzky identifies, heroines appeared in didactic literature for children, or, as Price highlights, were recognised when circumstances provoked action deemed anomalous for women. In such instances, their heroism was ultimately perceived or represented within the terms of the

[4] Cubitt, 'Introduction', pp. 9–10; J. Price, *Everyday Heroism: Victorian Constructions of the Heroic Civilian* (London, 2014), pp. 2–7; C. Hadamitzky, *Heroism in Victorian Periodicals, 1850–1900: Chambers's Journal – Leisure Hour – Fraser's Magazine*, Helden – Heroisierungen – Heroismen, vol. 15 (Baden-Baden, 2020), pp. 22–36.
[5] Price, *Everyday Heroism*, p. 2.
[6] Price, *Everyday Heroism*, pp. 4–13.
[7] Cubitt, 'Introduction', p. 3; Price, *Everyday Heroism*, p. 195; Hadamitzky, *Heroism in Victorian Periodicals*, pp. 42–44.

gendered, domestic role most commonly ascribed to women in contemporary society, or attributed to supposed feminine values.[8]

The gendered implications of military heroism in particular have been elucidated elsewhere. Graham Dawson has posited that male military heroism has historically been important in the representation and reproduction of a co-constitutive relationship between imagined constructs of masculinity and British national and imperial identities. And yet, soldiers' stories illuminate different ways of imagining these identities, since they and the terms which govern the transformation of the soldier into a hero are temporally and culturally specific. Heroic military masculinity is contingent upon the geopolitical and socio-cultural circumstances of conflict and "heroic" action, as well as their transmission to and reception among a wider audience.[9] The same can be said of women's heroism. As Mary Poovey has demonstrated, the public image of the heroine constructed around Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War consisted of two faces: that of the angelic ideal of middle-class womanhood, and that of a soldier or politician—determined and a keen administrator. These epitomised the patriotic narratives available at mid-century, rooted in a discourse of gender difference, but their convergence in the image of Florence Nightingale was emblematic of their inherent compatibility.[10] Moreover, the image of Nightingale as a military and national heroine disrupted other existing narratives of gendered heroism. As Stefanie Markovits noted, Florence Nightingale's 'promotion to heroine of the war occurred in part to compensate for a notable absence of male heroes', amidst the unpopularity of the war and the subsequent lack of faith in

[8] Price, *Everyday Heroism*, pp. 172, 175–94; Hadamitzky, *Heroism in Victorian Periodicals*, pp. 38–39.
[9] G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, 1994), pp. 1–2, 21–22, 81–83. See particularly chapter 4, 'The Imagining of a Hero: Sir Henry Havelock, the Indian Rebellion, and the News', and chapter 5, 'Commemorating the Exemplary Life: The Havelock Hagiography'.
[10] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp. 168–70,

traditionally aristocratic military leadership. Importantly, though, 'it also suggested a new range of possibility for female power'.[11]

The role of the press was crucial. In their personal experiences of the war, women certainly and actively negotiated ideas of British, civilian, and military femininity, but women who worked or travelled with the army also became the focus of debates about these same themes as they were constructed in the press for the reading public, both during and after the war. During the conflict, steam transportation and the establishment of a telegraph line improved the speed of communications between Britain and the war zone, while the rise of newspapers' "special correspondents" lent a new, authoritative press presence throughout the campaign.[12] These developments brought global news to domestic settings through national and regional papers across Britain. From graphic and devastating news and intelligence reports to lifestyle and history pieces on Turkey, the Crimea, and the army, the Crimean War captured British imaginations for the horrors of its progress and the exoticism of its arena. The regular appearance of letters to the editor sent by civilians in Britain and by soldiers in the Crimea, not only in *The Times* but also in many national, metropolitan, and provincial papers, provided a forum for expression and dialogue between otherwise far-removed British communities. These exchanges reveal the public's enthusiastic engagement with subjects including the provision of nurses for the army and the charitable support of soldiers' wives. It was also in the press that, in later decades, the Crimean heroine, like the Crimean veteran, was rendered recurrently visible—particularly in death, or in times of dire need.

[11] Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, p. 103.
[12] S. Markovits, 'Rushing into Print: "Participatory Journalism" during the Crimean War', *Victorian Studies*, 50/4 (2008), pp. 559–86; D. Murphy, 'William Howard Russell and the Development of War Journalism', in M. E. Ionescu (ed.), *War, Military and Media from Gutenberg to Today* (Bucharest, 2004), pp. 234–41; C. Waters, *Special Correspondents and the Newspaper Press in Victorian Print Culture, 1850–1886* (Cham, 2019), pp. 91–95; G. McLaughlin, *The War Correspondent* (2nd edn, London, 2016), pp. 93–94.

The rise of the Crimean heroine as most intrinsically linked with Nightingale's name and public image during the war laid down conditions for inclusion in this particular heroic fold which, as the notice of Elizabeth Bidwell's death indicates, persisted into the twentieth century. And yet it is amid shifting ideas of gendered heroism, and of heroism more broadly as a status attainable through the demonstration of particular values, that the label of "Crimean heroine" came to be applied to women like Bell Burbage and Frances Lewis, soldiers' wives who at first glance bear little resemblance to the title's progenitor. The changing representations of the Crimean heroine reveal that, in the British imagination, the Crimean War continued to function as a site for the negotiation of gendered boundaries and relationships, long after the events and spaces of the war receded from everyday discourse to the realms of popular memory, and even national mythology.

The extent of women's agency in the creation of these constructions varied greatly. Women could be subsumed within discussions of contemporary social issues or obscured amid generalised characterisations; but they could also be singled out, or consciously enter into dialogue with these debates in print of their own. While the newspaper and periodical press was a crucial medium through which Crimean War femininities and legacies were constructed for a popular audience, published accounts of the war often engaged heavily with this media. Their authors either drew upon the debates and themes which featured prominently in the newspapers and periodicals of the day, or else they and their works were discussed and reviewed within the pages of those same publications. The women who published their accounts in particular had to navigate the constraints of class and gender discourses in their expressions of identity.[13] They also had to confront broader and very public debates about the state of the British army and the management of the war, which shaped public opinion on all

[13] See S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London, 1991), pp. 5–6.

aspects of the Crimean campaign and impacted the narratives that would dominate in its popular legacy.

Traits such as bravery, courage, selflessness, and self-sacrifice emerge as tropes in the newspaper notices reproduced above and are familiar from previous chapters in the languages of military femininity, familial duty, and patriotic discourses of female caregiving. Ultimately, harking back to the conditions which shaped Nightingale's own transformation into a Crimean heroine, wider recognition of individual women in these terms consistently and explicitly located their "heroic" wartime participation in their rendering of a suitably feminine patriotic service: the care of male, fighting bodies. But, far from merely replicating the values of separate spheres ideology, the ways in which the Crimean heroine was recognised and reported demonstrate a broader engagement with fin-de-siècle social change and a new recognition of lower-class women and the values of military femininity. Through the press, women were incorporated into, and even looked to exploit, a legacy of female military patriotism that informed memories of the Crimean War, its female participants, and women's own narratives into the twentieth century.

Wartime Representations of Nurses

The representation of key groups of women involved in the war—nurses and soldiers' wives—reveal much about the values and the discourses of class, gender, labour, duty, and patriotism which first shaped the figure of the Crimean heroine during the conflict. Florence Nightingale in particular shot to fame as a heroine, much to her own distaste. The emergence of Florence Nightingale's heroic image in the press, and in British popular culture more widely, is a subject that has been widely written about, but it is pertinent to highlight key themes in order to understand the terms upon which the Crimean heroine first gained recognition. The emergence of Nightingale as the prototypical and, indeed, ultimate Crimean heroine during the war years,

and her sustained popularity as such over time, demonstrates elements of each of the two heroic discourses commonly identified in the nineteenth century, for her feminine heroic image had simultaneously conservative and popular potential.[14] By early February 1855, a little over three months after her departure from England, an account in *The Times* confirmed that:

> The popular instinct was not mistaken which when she set out from England on her mission of mercy, hailed her as a heroine . . . With the heart of a true woman, and the manners of a lady, accomplished and refined beyond most of her sex, she combines calmness of judgment and promptitude and decision of character.[15]

Clare Broome Saunders has stated that the dominance of the image of the "Lady with the Lamp", a title which stemmed from a phrase in the same *Times* report as the extract quoted above, was down to the efforts of the pro-establishment press which was keen to promote an 'iconocized version' of Nightingale, rather than emphasising her participation in the actual labour of nursing.[16] Certainly the fact of Nightingale undertaking this work was contentious at the time. In early 1855 the *London Evening Standard* printed several lengthy denouncements of Nightingale and other young ladies ministering to the sick themselves, as opposed to merely supervising trained hospital nurses. Criticising *The Times*'s support for Nightingale, the *Standard* was firmly of the opinion that 'a hospital of wounded and sick soldiers is no place for young women'.[17] Concerns about nurses' class status and expectations of appropriate

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[14] On Nightingale's contemporary fame and subsequent representations of her to the present day, see Whittaker and Olesen, 'The Faces of Florence Nightingale', pp. 19–35; A. L. Berridge, 'Off the Chart: The Crimean War in British Public Consciousness', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 20 (2015), DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.725; Wells and Bergin, 'British Icons and Catholic Perfidy', pp. 42–51; Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale*, pp. 523–46; Crawford et al., *Florence Nightingale at Home*, pp. 158–67, 229–33; R. Bates, 'Florence on Film', pp. 8–24.
[15] 'The Sick and Wounded Fund', *The Times*, 8 February 1855, p. 7.
[16] Broome Saunders, *Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Medievalism*, p. 61.
[17] 'The War', *London Evening Standard*, 16 January 1855, p. 2.

femininity meant that the suitability of sending nurses, and even of Nightingale herself, were debated in public and private. Nightingale's personal image as an upper-class woman stood in stark contrast to the negative reputation of hospital nurses, and became a tool wielded by supporters and critics alike.

The image of Nightingale as a heroine relied on certain key strands. The epithet "Lady with the Lamp" embodied Christian iconography and revered feminine values, which were intimately linked. As such, the religious differences within the nursing parties which caused internal tension throughout the war could be subsumed under Nightingale's Christian example for a British—particularly English—audience, though this was by no means a simple issue to reconcile. The *Illustrated London News* emphasised in October 1854 that the parties of nurses 'will not be "Sisters of Mercy" in the Roman Catholic—but in the British and Protestant sense'.[18] However, even as *The Times* proclaimed Nightingale a heroine in February 1855, one of the main debates circulating on the subject of military nursing centred around Florence Nightingale's religious convictions. The increasing proportion of Roman Catholic nuns in the nursing parties had caused an outcry, with suspicion directed towards the religious sympathies of the organisers.[19] A letter from Elizabeth Herbert, which tried to quell accusations that Nightingale's motive was to convert soldiers to the various denominations that she was supposed to support, was widely reproduced. It stated that Nightingale was Anglican, and "Low Church" at that.[20] The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine,* which had previously idolised

[18] Untitled, *Illustrated London News*, 21 October 1854, p. 387.
[19] On the issue of religion in the press and among the nursing parties, see Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale*, pp. 238–45; Helmstadter, *Beyond Nightingale*, pp. 86, 103–28.
[20] 'Miss Nightingale and the Hospitals at Scutari', *The Times*, 15 January 1855, p. 4. On Nightingale's complex and changing religious beliefs, see L. McDonald, *Florence Nightingale's Spiritual Journey: Biblical Annotations, Sermons and Journal Notes*. Collected Works of Florence Nightingale, vol. 2 (Waterloo, ON, 2001) and L. McDonald, *Florence Nightingale's Theology: Essays, Letters and Journal Notes*, Collected Works of Florence Nightingale, vol. 3 (Waterloo, ON, 2002).

Nightingale for its middle-class readers, dismissed accusations that Nightingale was a Puseyite as 'ridiculous', while *Punch* astutely turned these criticisms back upon the critics:[21]

> THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MISS NIGHTINGALE AND HER DETRACTORS.– With the latter, the practice is to make wounds—with the former, to heal them.[22]

Nightingale faithfully fulfilled the Christian duty of ministering to the sick, and that, it was deemed by her supporters, should be good enough. Christian duty provided a rhetoric through which supporters could not only reconcile Nightingale's personal attendance on the sick with her social position, but also celebrate it. As such, this rhetoric functioned as an important rebuttal against critics who were alarmed at the threat posed to the values of middle-class womanhood by hospital labour, and the potential of religious pluralism to undermine national support for military nursing.

In addition to nursing, Nightingale also became known for her role in the provision of material comforts for the sick and wounded. As such, her caregiving was also situated within a framework of middle-class feminine domestic management. Paul Crawford, Anna Greenwood, Richard Bates, and Jonathan Memel have pointed to the centrality of discourses of home in Nightingale's work and public image, for 'it was the ideal of home that helped to keep these seemingly contradictory ideas [of women and war] together'.[23] *The Times* in particular emphasised lines of connection between home and the hospitals in its accounts of the authorities' mismanagement. 'Home could bring comfort and restore a sense of compassion to the stranded and neglected soldier', but it could also provide 'an ethic of management, powerfully framed as a national effort'.[24] Nightingale's close cooperation with The Times Fund

[21] 'Miss Nightingale', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 3 (1854–55), pp. 281–82.
[22] 'The Difference Between Miss Nightingale and her Detractors', *Punch*, 28/708, 1855, p. 48.
[23] Crafword et al., *Florence Nightingale at Home*, p. 161.
[24] Crawford et al., *Florence Nightingale at Home*, p. 152.

to provide essential supplies and home comforts to the soldiers during the winter of 1854–55, and her subsequent role overseeing the distribution of vast donations from the public and the Queen, established her as a national symbol of home and of Englishness.[25]

It was ultimately through the ambivalence of Nightingale's public image—her appeal to popularly constructed class and gender roles, and her ability to compensate symbolically and practically for systemic failings—that she became known as the heroine of the war through the medium of the press, for a British audience at home.[26] Amid this popularisation of Nightingale as *the* Crimean heroine, the diversity of the rest of the nursing staff became indistinct as the nursing venture was invested with general but conditional heroic associations. While debates about military nursing continued throughout the war, they consistently focused on Nightingale as the nurses' leader, particularly emphasising her class status. An early criticism of Nightingale's and other ladies' 'admirable' but 'reckless' devotion to the sick and wounded appeared in *The Times*, written by "Common Sense", in November 1854.[27] In response, Revered C. P. Shepherd, master of St John's House, drew upon the values and practices most commonly associated with the middle and upper classes to defend the entire venture, emphasising these women's moral example, Christian motives, and philanthropic impulses.[28] This was a theme that continued throughout the war. When nursing did appear in the news, headlines generally reported on "Miss Nightingale", possibly coupled with some variation of "her devoted band". As a result, those individuals who made up subsequent parties and distinct workforces at other hospitals were included in a narrative of heroism by association but were consistently obscured as individuals. The exception was the paid nurses. On the occasions when these women were identified—collectively more often than individually, and often for

[25] Crawford et al., *Florence Nightingale at Home*, pp. 158, 164–65.
[26] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, pp. 166–72; Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, pp. 104–107.
[27] Common Sense, 'Nurses for the East', *The Times*, 13 November 1854, p. 10.
[28] C. P. Shepherd, 'Miss Nightingale and the Nurses', *The Times*, 15 November 1854, p. 8.

their misdemeanours—their difference from Nightingale and conformity to the negative connotations surrounding lower-class hospital nurses was emphasised. The *Illustrated London News* reported that several of Nightingale's first band of nurses had been sent home by January 1855, explaining that 'it cannot be expected that out of ninety nurses rapidly selected, all should be fit for the work'. The writer was swift to reassure the public that 'Miss Nightingale's judgement will enable her to select a strong band of really efficient nurses in a very short time', though we know she had little to do with the selection of nurses after leaving England.[29] In June, the *Observer* reported on immorality among the army and declared that 'it is but too true that the habit of drinking has spread among the hired nurses . . . These women, who might have shared the immortal honours of the sisterhood of nurses', newly endowed by Nightingale's example, 'have, in too many instances, sunk into intemperance'.[30]

Several women who published their accounts of the hospitals immediately upon their return to England did attempt to incorporate other military nurses into the public narrative more explicitly by exposing their labour. However, they often necessarily needed to draw upon Nightingale's established heroic fame, or upon the discourses underpinning that heroism, to do so. Martha Nicol's *Ismeer, or Smyrna and its British Hospitals in 1855* was published in 1856. In it, Nicol hardly mentioned Florence Nightingale, who had no authority over the civil hospital at Smyrna where Nicol was sent as a lady volunteer in March 1855. Instead, she praised the work of the other lady nurses. In order to present their work as appropriate and respectable, that praise relied upon the framework of domestic femininity that Nightingale, being of a similar class status, already monopolised in the British imagination. Implicitly echoing the concerns expressed about lady nurses earlier by the *Standard*, and refuting them by outlining the ladies' precise role, Nicol wrote that:

[29] 'The Hospitals at Scutari', *Illustrated London News*, 20 January 1855, p. 70.
[30] 'Miss Nightingale.—The Convalescent Soldiers and the Army Nurses', *The Observer*, 3 June 1855, p. 3.

> I believe we *were* of use. Not in the way many people had a vague idea of at first—i.e. that we were to be constantly going about with a pocket full of lint and plaister [*sic*], and a case of surgical instruments, perpetually dressing wounds (and I confess that I had a faint vision of this kind myself, before I went to Smyrna)—but in seeing the doctors' orders carried out with discretion, in the spirit as well as the letter—that nothing was done out of time, over-done, or neglected—in keeping systematic regularity—and, above all, in exercising a marvellous moral influence over the soldiers.[31]

Frances Taylor, another lady nurse, had arrived with Mary Stanley's second party of nurses in December 1854. In her two-volume book, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses*, published in 1856, she praised the work of the Irish Roman Catholic nuns at Koulali, where Taylor was predominantly employed. She had in fact converted to Catholicism while at the hospital in 1855. Extracts of her book were even read in parliament to counter anti-Catholic arguments for the repeal of the Maynooth Grant, providing, as Taylor did, abundant anecdotal evidence of the daily labour in the hospital and the essential good services rendered to the British army by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy.[32] It was, however, for its highly informative insight into daily experiences in the hospital more generally—like Nicol's book—and for Taylor's status, like Nightingale, as a lady and a 'kind-hearted Englishwoman', rather than for prompting any real reassessment of religious prejudices in constructs of Crimean heroism, that *Eastern Hospitals*

[31] Nicol, *Ismeer, or Smyrna*, p. 88. Original emphasis.
[32] 'Repeal of the Maynooth Grant Bill', *The Morning Advertiser*, 26 June 1854, p. 2. The Maynooth Bill was passed in 1845. It had been proposed by Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel to improve the relationship between Protestant England and Catholic Ireland. The Bill approved a considerable increase in the payment of an annual grant from the British government to a Catholic seminary in Maynooth. It caused significant political controversy and divisions within Peel's Tory party at the time. It continued to be opposed by anti-Catholic factions into the 1850s.

and English Nurses chiefly found praise.[33] Elizabeth Davis, also known as Betsi Cadwaladr, was the only lower-class nurse to publish an account of her experiences. Davis positioned herself as one of the few excellent nurses, working as a cook at the Balaklava hospital, and her character was emphasised by her extensive work and travel as a nurse, narrated across her two-volume autobiography. She upheld the division between managing ladies and working nurses, but, though Nightingale praised her work, Davis was very critical of Nightingale: she was, in fact, one of a group of disgruntled nurses who launched an unsuccessful libel suit against Nightingale in 1855.[34] Her narrative ultimately did little to discredit Nightingale at the time, although today Betsi Cadwaladr is lauded as a Welsh nursing icon in her own right.[35]

The individual who was most successful in gaining contemporary recognition in spite of Florence Nightingale's dominance was in fact Mary Seacole. Seacole enjoyed renown during the war, and also came to be lauded as a "Crimean heroine" after its conclusion, thanks in no small part to her self-bestowal of the title in her autobiography.[36] Amy Robinson has argued that in this text, Seacole satirically inverted and collapsed the distinctions between public and private, British and colonial subjectivities which would relegate her to a position of gendered and racial inferiority to the British audience she addressed. Consequently, she 'claim[ed] public image as identity, and claim[ed] that identity as authentic'.[37] Both her own narrative and the

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[33] 'Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses', *London Evening Standard,* 16 April 1856, p. 3 (re-print of a review in the *Literary Gazette*); see also 'Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses', *Saint James's Chronicle*, 15 April 1856, p. 1 (re-print of a review in the *United Service Gazette*).

[34] Helmstadter and Godden, *Nursing Before Nightingale*, p. 90.

[35] See M. L. Jones, 'From Bala to Balaclava: A History of Betsi Cadwaladr, Welsh Nurse in the Crimea, 1/2', *British Journal of Healthcare Assistants*, 10/4 (2016), pp. 184–87 and M. L. Jones, 'From Bala to Balaclava: Betsi Cadwaladr, Welsh Nurse in the Crimea, 2/2', *British Journal of Healthcare Assistants*, 10/5 (2016), pp. 252–55.

[36] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 71. See Paravisini-Gerbet, 'Mrs Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit', p. 73.

[37] Robinson, 'Authority and the Public Display of Identity', p. 554. See also Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning"', p. 101. On Seacole's use of comedy in her claims to be an example of Victorian womanhood and a Crimean heroine, see McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, pp. 33–36; Poon, 'Comic Acts of (Be)Longing', pp. 501–16.

way in which she was framed in the press tended to emphasise her work as a sutler, entrepreneur, or hotelier, to prevent overt comparisons with Nightingale's symbolic representation of white, Christian, English womanhood.[38] Indeed, Sarah Gunning has argued that the identity Seacole constructed in her narrative in fact acts as an appropriation and redemption of the role of the soldier's wife, caring for the men at the front.[39] However, the nature of that care nevertheless resembled that which underpinned Nightingale's own heroic image. When Seacole made arrangements to travel to the Crimea, she dedicated her resources to addressing two particular problems: 'a great portion of my limited capital was . . . invested in medicines which I had reason to believe would be useful; with the remainder I purchased those home comforts which I thought would be most difficult to obtain away from England'.[40] Caregiving, in terms of tending to soldiers' bodily ailments and providing material comforts, remained a key condition to the success of Seacole's persona as a self-proclaimed and widely acknowledged surrogate "mother", and to her broader recognition.[41] As one supporter outlined in *The Times* following Seacole's bankruptcy, her attention to these two particular issues was what rendered her contribution so valuable, so fundamentally good, and so patriotic:

> And for what does Mrs. Seacole deserve a subscription? For courage, devotion, goodness of heart, public services, great losses undeservedly incurred. I have seen her go down under fire with her little store of creature comforts for our wounded men . . . I saw her at the assaults on the Redan, at the Battle of the Tchernaya, at the fall of Sebastopol, laden, not with plunder, good old creature! But with wine, bandages, and

[38] Howell, 'Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity', p. 121.
[39] Gunning, 'Traveling with her Mother's Tastes', pp. 973–74.
[40] Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*, p. 75.
[41] Robinson, 'Authority and the Public Display of Identity', p. 546–47; Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning"', pp. 95–113.

food for the wounded or the prisoners.[42]

Seacole established her own difference from Nightingale—embracing her rejection from the hospital space Nightingale inhabited—and asserted her similarly valuable contribution in terms that did reflect women's roles with the army at the front more broadly. But Seacole's likeness to lower-class soldiers' wives was not perfect; in fact, her relationship to contemporary British class hierarchies demonstrates another aspect of what Jessica Howell has called Seacole's 'hybridity'—not only relating to the complexities of her racial identity, but the way she 'cannily borrows, subverts, and appropriates rhetorical elements' from contemporary discourses 'to suit her own goals'.[43] While Seacole could not embody the same middle-class domestic ideals as Nightingale, she nevertheless imitated and performed to the middle-class sympathies of her reading audience, for whom such caregiving had been specifically and forcefully articulated in relation to Nightingale during the war.[44] Her surrogate representation of British domesticity at the front included an imitation of the female heroism popularly understood to be enacted by Nightingale in the hospitals. This was all the more important an association to make, given that the popular representations of soldiers' wives at the time could in fact jeopardise Seacole's own claims to heroism.

Soldiers' Wives at War and at Home

Soldiers' wives were thrust into the spotlight of the popular press almost from the moment the first regiments set sail from England in February 1854, but there was little about them that was deemed heroic. The soldier's wife who accompanied the army already suffered from a poor reputation, which was generally not redeemed during the war. There was some recognition that

[42] W. H. R., 'The Seacole Fund', *The Times*, 11 April 1857, p. 8.
[43] Howell, 'Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity', p. 110.
[44] Fluhr, '"Their Calling Me 'Mother' Was Not, I Think, Altogether Unmeaning"', p. 103; Poon, 'Comic Acts of Belonging', p. 507.

many of the vices attributed to soldiers' wives were a result of military authority failings, rather than innate traits of the women, either individually or collectively as lower-class women. *Reynolds' Newspaper,* a radical working-men's paper, touted the oppressive nature of the military hierarchy when it printed a letter from a member of the camp at Varna under the heading, "Brutal Treatment of Soldiers' Wives". The writer blamed the soldiers' wives' condition squarely on the military authorities, stating that:

> Some one [*sic*] who has power, objects to the women. They get no quarters, and no measures are taken to enable them to keep up with the march of the light cavalry . . . The treatment these women are receiving is exactly the one most likely to convert the decent British females into camp-followers—those pests of our armies.[45]

Marianne Young, the wife of an army surgeon, also viewed the position of the soldier's wife as the result of military and social prejudices in her account of camp life, published in late 1854. 'I know nothing', Young stated, 'whether at home or abroad . . . That so loudly and so justly appeals to the sympathies of the men and women of England, as the condition of the soldier's wife'.[46] After witnessing the harsh conditions in which they lived and were treated in the military camps as the army moved through Bulgaria, Young was of the opinion that 'the English soldier's wife is one of those miserable mistakes in our social system, by which we are apt to make people bad, and then severely punish them for being so, by measures only calculated to make them worse'.[47] Funds were sent by some benevolent organisations to assist wives left stranded at military outposts en route to the Crimea, and to those left at Scutari to encourage their return to England.[48] Other proposals were put forth with a view to relieving

[45] 'Brutal Treatment of Soldiers' Wives', *Reynolds' Newspaper*, 9 July 1854, p. 7.
[46] M. Young, *Our Camp in Turkey, and the Way To It* (London, 1854), p. 59.
[47] Young, *Our Camp in Turkey*, p. 126.
[48] Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies*, pp. 152–54.

their suffering, such as training and employing them as nurses, but these schemes amounted to little. The supposed immoral character of soldiers' wives continued to blight these women throughout the war. In March 1855, the *Evening Mail* reported that twenty out of one-hundred-and-twenty soldiers' wives who had been left at Scutari hospital had been ordered home. 'Of those who remain', the correspondent declared, 'a portion only are willing to be in some degree useful, and do some kind of labour for the hospitals; the rest are simply mischievous and disorderly, and many of them drunken and profligate'.[49] Such damaging judgements on soldiers' wives' characters continued for many years after the Crimean War. In 1864 the Standing Orders for the Royal Regiment of Artillery for stated on the subject of marriage that 'it is impossible to point out in too strong terms the general inconveniences that arise, and the evil consequences entailed upon individuals in a regiment encumbered with women.[50]

This antipathy towards soldiers' wives provides an important point of contrast to the reputation attached to Crimean War soldiers' wives like Francis Lewis and Bell Burbage in later years. To understand the shift that would take place, however, it is important to also consider contemporary views of those soldiers' wives who were left behind in England, who became a major point of focus in the press during the early stages of the war. A letter to the editor appeared in *The Times* on 22 February, written by "A Naval Officer", which laid the plight faced by these women before the public:

> The pay of the soldier is wholly inadequate to maintain his wife, even without children, in his absence on foreign service, and no better proof could be given of deep and heart-felt interest in the welfare of our soldiers—of true sympathy with the one care that is weighing heavily on the hearts of many of them—than by an earnest effort

[49] 'The Sick and Wounded Fund', *The Evening Mail*, 19 March 1855, p. 6.
[50] *Standing Orders, Dress Regulations, and Trumpet and Bugle Sounds, for the Royal Regiment of Artillery* (London, 1864), p. 53.

> upon the part of the country to ameliorate the condition of their wives and families, who will be left, in general, in want and suffering.[51]

The Naval Officer made a connection—through patriotic language and the married soldier's domestic anxiety—between the work of the soldier, the suffering of his family, and the goodness of the public that could present a remedy. An accompanying article praised the 'good feeling of the writer [the Naval Officer]' for so 'manfully' championing the soldiers' domestic cause, making it clear that working to support soldiers' wives and families functioned as a commendable display of patriotic masculinity.[52] What is most striking, however, is the officer's final plea, that the editor ought to:

> *Let a well-devised scheme appear in your columns*, and the people of England will not be backward to prove that their hearts feel what their lips so unanimously proclaim—viz., a deep interest in the noble fellows who are going forth from among us to devote their best blood to the service of the country.[53]

The officer was confident that it was in the pages of *The Times* that the public he intended to address—the philanthropic, middle-class, reading public—would debate and resolve the problem of support for soldiers' wives. He was not mistaken on this account. In the letters to the editor, printed in the days and months that followed, soldiers' wives became the focus of an outpouring of public sympathy, and their cause was adopted as an outlet for the demonstration of middle-class patriotism.

It was widely accepted that it would be the duty of the public, rather than of the government or the military, to tackle the problem of destitution that arose when regiments left

[51] A Naval Officer, 'Soldiers' Wives', *The Times*, 22 February 1854, p. 12.
[52] 'London, Wednesday, February 22, 1854', *The Times*, 22 February 1854, p. 8.
[53] A Naval Officer, 'Soldiers' Wives', p. 12. Emphasis added.

women and children behind. Soldiers' wives, particularly those married off the strength, had long been thrust upon the Poor Law in their husbands' absence, although there was much confusion and inconsistency. The Poor Law Board and the War Office not only disputed who had responsibility for soldiers' wives' welfare, but when and how relief was to be provided.[54] The main debate in the press upon the outbreak of the Crimean War similarly focused on how soldiers' wives were to be helped, as attitudes towards philanthropy and towards soldiers' wives as lower-class women varied. A letter was published from "J.O." on 23 February in response to the Naval Officer's letter, proposing the establishment of a temporary school to relieve soldiers' wives of the 'burden' of their children, so that they might find employment.[55] In doing so, "J.O." clearly endorsed the self-help ethic that was widely held among philanthropists and exemplified in the Poor Laws: that philanthropy ought to promote moral and lifestyle reform among the lower-class recipients of aid, rather than encouraging dependence on financial relief. Another letter by "A Young Englishwoman" proclaimed that the problem of soldiers' wives 'not only claims the earnest attention of the men of England, but the most tender sympathy and consideration of her women also'.[56] She proposed the establishment of a committee of 'influential persons' to host a national bazaar in the summer, with the resulting funds to be distributed to soldiers' families by nearby ladies through channels of district visiting. In this way soldiers' families 'would all, or nearly all, be placed above want and the women of England would have performed their part in the world's great drama'.[57]

In the early days of the war, before Nightingale's rise to prominence, this reliance on established practices of women's philanthropy provided a crucial pathway for middle-class

[54] See Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 138–60.
[55] J.O., 'War', *The Times*, 23 February 1854, p. 9. A scheme of this nature, whereby children were boarded in private homes, was later established by Lord St Leonards. See Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 171.
[56] A Young Englishwoman, 'Soldiers' Wives', *The Times*, 23 February 1854, p. 9.
[57] A Young Englishwoman, 'Soldiers' Wives', p. 9.

women to engage with the war. Indeed, philanthropic efforts provided an important way for women to participate in the patriotic fervour throughout the conflict, as they sent textiles, supplies, homely comforts, and handmade items to the army and the hospitals. However, another contributor to *The Times*, T. M. MacKay, was critical of this kind of conspicuous display, preferring more immediate activity in response to soldiers' wives' poverty. 'Sentimental letters, and fancy fairs in May', he wrote, might be 'all good enough in season', but he strongly believed that 'there is not time to be lost in making provision for the wives and children of the gallant fellows who are now leaving home to fight their country's battles'.[58] He sent a cheque for £10 directly to *The Times.*

Different concerns were expressed by military officers. Their attitude towards soldiers' wives was intimately linked to regimental efficiency, but this produced conflicting views about wives' receipt of charity or other support. On 4 March, a notice appeared in *The Times* detailing the case of the wife of Private Hawkins, of the Scots Fusilier Guards. She had two young children and delivered a stillborn baby amid the stress caused by her husband's departure and her resulting destitution. With little aid to rely on, her address was printed with a plea for financial assistance to be sent to her.[59] Three days later, *The Times* printed the response of a trio of military officers, expressing their concern that the scale of the response to the appeal for Mrs Hawkins 'may lead to inconvenient results, by tempting other soldiers to act in contravention of those regulations it has been found necessary to enforce with regard to soldiers' marriages', that is to say, the limit placed upon the number of men who could marry in each regiment.[60] A retort from H. S. Powys, Major of the 60th Royal Rifles, condemned the

[58] T. M. MacKay, 'Soldiers' Wives and Children'. *The Times*, 2 March 1854, p. 9.
[59] H. W. Ranger, 'Soldiers' Wives, *The Times*, 4 March 1854, p. 9.
[60] P. Spencer Stanhope, A. Upton, and Rokeby, 'Soldiers' Wives', *The Times*, 7 March 1854, p. 10. P. Spencer Stanhope was Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Grenadier Guards. A. Upton was Colonel of the Coldstream Guards. Lord Rokeby was Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the Scots Fusilier Guards.

three officers for their discrimination, since they themselves had stated that the Brigade of Guards, to which they all belonged, exceeded as a 'general rule' the military regulation that only six per one-hundred men could marry; the Guards allowed up to ten percent of the strength to marry.[61]

While the form of public support was a subject of debate, it is clear is that soldiers' wives were deemed by the middle-class British public, even by some quarters of military command, to be deserving of aid by virtue of their husbands' service, which was taken as the epitome of patriotic action. This, and the scale of the public response to the problem, was an unprecedented development, as soldiers' wives had historically suffered neglect and marginalisation from both the military and the civil authorities, with little improvement to the 1850s.[62] These new sentiments swiftly produced results. Alongside an abundance of local schemes and subscriptions, the Central Association for the Aid of the Wives and Families, Widows, and Orphans of Soldiers Ordered on Active Service to the East was formed on 7 March 1854. It proved to be a popular cause: in its first six months, the Central Association raised over £80,000.[63] It operated throughout the war, providing allowances and provisions, though it fundamentally aimed to encourage wives into work. A similar outpouring of popular sympathy and calls to action were repeated once again in the autumn of 1854. As Britain's "noble soldiers" were struck down in increasing numbers during the battles in the Crimea, calls for philanthropic aid again assumed a tone of urgency, this time out of concern for the soldier's wife's new status as a widow. The aptly named Patriotic Fund was established in response,

[61] H. S. Powys, 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 17 March 1854, p. 9.
[62] See P. Huddie, 'Victims or Survivors: Army Wives in Ireland during the Crimean War, 1854–56', *Women's History Review*, 26/4 (2017), p. 544; Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 50–58, 68–75, 85–90.
[63] 'Excerpts from "The First Half-Yearly Report of the Central Association"', *United Service Gazette*, 7 October 1854, pp. 7–8', in L. MacKay (ed.), *Women, Families and the British Army 1700–1880: The Crimean War (1854–56)*, Women, Families and the British Army 1700–1880, vol. 5 (London, 2020), p. 137. £80,000 in 1854 equates to over £7 million in 2020 (relative purchasing power).

providing allowances for women married both on and off the strength, who could prove that their husbands had died as a result of their service in the Crimean War.[64] The rhetoric of soldiers' gallantry and women's suffering which fuelled these developments indicated public recognition of the patriotic service carried out by the rank-and-file soldiers, as the philanthropic care of their families was positioned as a civic repayment of the soldiers' sacrifice.[65] More fundamentally, while it rendered the soldier's wife as an object of sympathy, it also positioned her as a central figure in debates about the war, the military, society, and their interconnections. Civilians' philanthropic efforts were framed as an important and necessary patriotic work of their own, to compensate for the suffering and sacrifice of this historically maligned group of women. It was the relationship between soldiers' wives, the sacrifices made in war, and civic understandings of patriotic contribution that would later prove key to soldiers' wives' redemption as Crimean heroines.

Frances Duberly: A Failed Heroine

During the war years, however, the Crimean heroine was a figure constructed predominantly as a respectable caregiver in the pages of the press. She, particularly Florence Nightingale,

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[64] Huddie, 'Victims or Survivors', p. 548.

[65] Olive Anderson has argued that 'it was undoubtedly the Crimean War which began a dramatic change in attitude towards the army of British society in general, and of the religious public in particular . . . For the first time troops were hailed as 'the people's army', and idealized notions of what they were fighting for, together with unparalleled public identification with their hardships before Sebastopol, combined to give them an immense emotional appeal'. Michael Brown and Joanne Begiato, among others, have questioned the extent to which the Crimean War provoked a *new* recognition of and sympathy for rank-and-file service members, particularly with regard to veterans. Brown and Begiato point not only to the improved image of the army following the Crimean War, but to new technologies in visual media, New Imperialism, anxiety about the health of military men and modern war technology to explain the proliferation of images of both Georgian and Victorian veterans in the second half of the nineteenth century. See O. Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain', *The English Historical Review*, 86/338 (1971), pp. 46–72 and Brown, and Begiato, 'Visualising the Aged Veteran in Nineteenth-Century Britain', pp. 109–110. What is clear is that during the Crimean War and throughout its afterlife in the British imagination, ordinary soldiers and their struggles were the object of public attention, owing to recognition of the men's service as patriotic.

quickly came to represent an esteemed status and the embodiment of both patriotic and feminine values to which women could—and much of the positive press coverage of Nightingale implied that they *should*—aspire to emulate. Chapter 3 has already highlighted the veneration attached to Nightingale by nursing applicants, eager to follow her Christian and patriotic actions by volunteering or seeking employment as nurses themselves, but the Crimean heroine also featured in the consciousness of those in the war zone. Frances Duberly's letters offer a unique insight here. Kate McLoughlin has argued that 'accounts of war are always authored, in the sense that the gap between the experience and the representation of conflict can be narrowed but never completely eliminated'.[66] While this gap cannot be eliminated, it can, perhaps, be elucidated. In her letters, over the course of 1855, Duberly reflected on the compilation of her *Journal* in her correspondence with her sister and her brother-in-law. This correspondence reveals that Duberly was conscious of her public image and, across her personal networks and through her *Journal*, aspired to carve out a place as a Crimean heroine for herself. Fitting neither the trope of the ministering nurse, nor the hard-done-by soldier's wife, she attempted to present a publicly legitimate version of her military femininity by couching her writing within a language of patriotism and the context of war reporting to reflect, and appeal to, the popular mood. That patriotic display, however, was fragile and problematic in the face of portrayals of the angelic Nightingale and impoverished or maligned soldiers' wives which dominated the public consciousness.

Duberly intended to publish an account of her experiences from an early point in the campaign. On 28 August 1854, while the army was still encamped at Varna, she wrote to her sister 'if we don't go back this winter I shall send my journal to England for publication'.[67] Duberly had a keen interest in the coverage of the war. She actively contributed to British

[66] McLoughlin, *Authoring War,* p. 20.
[67] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 28 August 1854, fol. 34.

papers on the subject, even stipulating to her sister which papers to send her letters to, and which letters were to be kept strictly private.[68] Although her published letters appeared anonymously or under pseudonyms and are, therefore, difficult to identify, it is clear from her letters to her sister that she was particularly vocal on mismanagement and was critical of senior military officers—echoing the sentiments of the special correspondents. On 6 October 1854, she wrote to her sister 'Don't publish this letter for goodness sake – Cardigan read me my own letter . . . from the *Advertiser* yesterday!!! I thought I should have died of suppressed laughter'.[69] Her wish to remain anonymous in print reflects her awareness of the difficulties that publication and the subject of the war could present for a middle-class woman. It was perhaps for this reason, as well as the logistical difficulties of publishing at a distance from England, that Duberly turned to her brother-in-law, Francis Marx, for assistance. Many of Duberly's exchanges with her sister and with Marx himself included mention of "the book" throughout late 1855 and early 1856, prior to and immediately after its publication. Duberly's manuscript pages do not appear to have survived, and the extent to which Marx edited her writing is unknown. Some of Duberly's own comments, such as one to her sister that 'I am afraid it will want writing out a good deal or will make a very thin book', or to Marx that 'I leave the book in your hands' suggest his role was quite substantial.[70] When Duberly finally received a copy of the published book, however, she was satisfied with the end result, writing, if a little sardonically, that:

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[68] See for example BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 27 November 1854, fol. 74. Duberly requested that if Selina did publish the letter, she should send it to the *Daily News* or the *Herald*, and 'any other papers you please'.

[69] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 6 October 1854, fol. 50. Original emphasis. This was in reference to a letter dated 4 August 1854, 'from an officer of the Light Division in Turkey', which appeared in the *Morning Advertiser* on 28 August 1854 under the title 'Lord Cardigan in Turkey'. This letter is very similar to one which Duberly sent to Selina Marx on 1 August, criticising Cardigan's treatment of his men during their encampment at Jeni-Bazar.

[70] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 2 July 1855, fol. 1, and 28 September 1855, fol. 67, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx. See also Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War*, Kelly (ed.), pp. xxx–xxxii.

> I do not miss anything in the printed copy, except a word to two about poor Brother, and the alteration of a single word here & there – which I fancy has been changed . . . For my own opinion – of it – I think it's too scanty – with too many "I's" & Me's and hardly enough abuse of everybody.[71]

Duberly's letters best document her aspirations for her book and, at times, her frustration and disillusionment with the *Journal* and the writing of it. In doing so, they reveal the self-fashioned identity which she hoped to portray through the *Journal*, and her use of her writing as a medium through which to garner recognition among the army and the wider public.

Duberly did have financial motives for writing, for she worried about her husband's prospects. As Christine Kelly has stated, the pair were 'poor gentry', and Duberly's desire for an income beyond the means of Henry's army salary 'was a constant spur to [her] ambitions'.[72] When she had begun to look for a publisher in the summer of 1855, her only stipulation to her brother-in-law was to 'select the highest bid', though her financial motives soon gave way to more high-minded ambitions, as she insisted that the book be dedicated to the Queen.[73] By late August, she declared 'so long as I do not lose money by it, I am quite indifferent, as to how much, or how little I gain. I have applied for permission to dedicate it to the Queen'.[74]

The hopes Duberly had for the dedication provide perhaps the clearest example of her aspirations for recognition and esteem as a patriotic military heroine, for if a hero requires an audience, who could be a better advocate for Duberly's military femininity than Queen Victoria, the ultimate icon of nineteenth-century patriotic militarism and domestic symbolism? Duberly began to covet the Queen's favour as early as November 1854, when she sent a map

[71] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 8 March 1856, fol. 145. Original emphasis.
[72] Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War,* Kelly (ed.), pp. xvii–xviii.
[73] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 4 July 1855, fol. 3, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[74] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 21 August 1855, fol. 38, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.

that she had drawn indicating the position of the batteries and forces. Duberly wrote to her sister, 'I think it was not a bad hook to throw into the water – it may catch a little fish & if it doesn't there's no harm done'.[75] However, her hopes for royal endorsement were ultimately disappointed. According to a reply from Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, a public servant who had visited the Crimea in the autumn of 1854, 'so many applications of this kind are made to her [the Queen] that she is obliged to draw a line & not to accept a dedication "except under very particular circumstances." Her Majesty, however, will be most happy to accept a copy when the volume appears'.[76]

Duberly took the Queen's refusal to heart, ranting to her sister, 'I suppose if the Q[ueen] is too stingy to buy a copy she must have one bound in a lot of finery & given her'.[77] It appears to have been on Tremenheere's advice that she instead dedicated the book to the soldiers and sailors fighting in the war. Tremenheere advised that doing so 'w[oul]d give you an opportunity of saying something that w[oul]d stick in their hearts & be gratifying to think of during further trials'.[78] The final dedication read simply, 'To the Soldiers and Sailors of the Crimean Expedition this Journal is dedicated by an eye-witness of their chivalrous valour and their heroic fortitude, Frances Isabella Duberly'.[79] It foregrounded Duberly's authority as much as it acknowledged the heroism and patriotic actions of the men. It is possibly a heavily abridged version of a draft that Duberly had sent to Marx in the autumn of 1855:

> To those brave men whose deeds of heroism, endurance of hardship and magnificent courage have filled the heart of the whole world with wonder and admiration, the

[75] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 A, 20 November 1854, fol. 72.
[76] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 9 September 1855, fol. 70, letter from Hugh Seymour Tremenheere to Frances Duberly. See Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War*, Kelly (ed.), p. 325.
[77] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 1 October 1855, fol. 74, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[78] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 9 September 1855, fol. 70, letter from Hugh Seymour Tremenheere to Frances Duberly.
[79] Duberly, *Journal*, dedication page.

> soldiers and sailors of the English army. This little book is dedicated as a slight mark of gratitude for unfailing kindness, consideration & assistance shown at times when all needed help. By one (a woman?) whose greatest pride, consists in having been associated with them in the scenes glorious as well as mournful through which they have passed; & in which they have gathered for themselves the laurels of our imperishable fame.[80]

It seems clear from both versions of the dedication that Duberly adopted writing as a means of claiming a form of heroism for herself, framing her publication as a homage to the heroism demonstrated by serving men. It was not the first time Duberly had alluded to writing as cause for recognition. While she eagerly anticipated receiving a medal for her presence at the battlefields in 1855, she seems to have been only half joking when she wrote to her sister in October 1854, 'I write most regularly do I not? I think I deserve an extra medal as a correspondent – having proved myself such an exemplary creature in every way'.[81] After the publication of her book, she again expressed her wish for recognition from the Queen for her writing and patriotism: 'If it can amuse & alleviate pain – the book has fulfilled its mission. How I wish – how I do wish – the Queen would give me leave to wear a little bit of blue ribbon on my beautiful habit', blue being the colour of the Crimean medal's ribbon.[82]

Despite her disappointment on this front, Duberly was always conscious of her audience and of the wider market for accounts of the war. William Russell published his own book, *The War*, an edited collection of his despatches, and Duberly asked Marx in August 1855 'do not you think it advisable that mine should come out as soon as convenient – to succeed his – &

[80] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, before 19 October 1855, fol. 84, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[81] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 A, 13 October 1854, fol. 51.
[82] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 14 February 1856, fol. 136, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.

cut in before any body [*sic*] else[?]'[83]. A key obstacle to tackle was the disconnect between Duberly's social sphere and the tone of wider commentaries on the war, which had increasingly championed the cause of the rank-and-file soldier. Again, Duberly was aware of the social debates taking place from her extensive reading of English papers, acknowledging to Marx that *The Times* had 'certainly been the soldiers' friend'.[84] At the end of her *Journal*, *The Times* was even described as 'our best general, our most unflinching leader'.[85] Other elements of Duberly's *Journal* follow *The Times*' lead, appealing to the more democratic appreciation of the army which arose during the war. The criticism of the commanders' mismanagement which she vocalised in her letters, for example, was more implicit in her *Journal*, but nevertheless appears throughout its pages. Duberly often perceived courage and British (particularly English) military might in the fighting men, and placed it in opposition to this mishandling, such as in her verdict on Inkerman, that 'we fought as all known Englishmen will fight; and our loss was in proportion to the carelessness that permitted the attack, rather than to the magnificent courage that repelled it'.[86]

However, Duberly's narrative, like her letters, has an inescapably elitist focus that is at odds with the more inclusive tone of *The Times*' contemporary coverage, and which undermines attempts to read a successful, more inclusive agenda in the *Journal*.[87] The contrast between Duberly's frank and expressive letters, and the more crafted, overtly patriotic, and, most importantly, class-oriented language and anecdotes in her *Journal* have been commented

[83] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, undated letter (enclosure from fol. 24, 10 August 1855), fol. 30, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[84] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 28 September 1855, fol. 66, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[85] Duberly, *Journal*, p. 310.
[86] Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 129–30.
[87] Andrew Nys, for example, has argued that through her Journal, Duberly participated in the 'patriotic safeguarding of England'. However, he overstates the extent to which she championed the cause of the rank-and-file soldiery. A. Nys, 'The Patriot at Liberty: The Popular Reception of the Crimean War' (unpublished master's thesis, Ghent University, 2015), p. 70.

upon in previous chapters. They are especially significant when considered considering Duberly's creation of a public narrative. She told her sister that 'nothing I maintain is so difficult to write as a journal speaking of people you know'.[88] And yet, her *Journal* stands out for its lack of censorship, for unlike many personal narratives published by women in this period discussing middle- and upper-class networks of acquaintances, individual names were not omitted.

As a middle-class woman, Duberly would not mix with or narrate in detail the conditions of rank-and-file soldiers. Her *Journal* was, therefore, shaped by the social and cultural conditions of the war, as well as its production and consumption among Duberly's home society—her own reading audience. McLoughlin has identified a certain set of key credentials in literary accounts of warfare. The 'singularity' of the reporter and their subsequent 'noticeability', and the 'authoritativeness' and 'credibility' of their accounts do not guarantee the success of the narrative, or indeed the bestowal of a heroic status, but do facilitate a smoother transfer of knowledge about war to a wider public.[89] By naming outright the various commanders and officers who she encountered, Duberly established herself among the key military and "society" personages of the war zone, which was a crucial element in her claims to textual and experiential authority. In emphasising those relationships, she also declared her position within them as a well-placed commentator. Although she partook in the condemnation of the military commanders, Duberly nevertheless clung to a narrative of aristocratic heroism and gallantry, with which she also attempted to integrate by association in her *Journal* and her correspondence. In December 1854, she commented that her acquaintances back in England already held her in some esteem, writing to her sister 'only fancy how great a heroine coming out into this mess has made one!'[90] A year later, after Sebastopol had fallen and she faced

[88] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 B, 6 October 1855, fol. 77.
[89] McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, pp. 22–50.
[90] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 A, 2 December 1854, fol. 80.

uncertainty about the subsequent movements of the regiment, she again made reference to this status. Writing that the hardships of her campaigning experiences were outweighed by the freedom she had enjoyed, she told her sister dryly 'keep me tolerably warm, & give me food, and I don't merit any pity – besides the Heroineship goes for something!!'[91] Duberly's preoccupation with her own experiences and her entrenchment within the officer class meant that her *Journal* promoted a very particular, upper-class articulation of Englishness to which she, as a middle-class woman, aspired. Ultimately, it was necessary as part of Duberly's attempt to publicly preserve her own middle-class femininity and her authority as a witness to root her claims to a status as a Crimean heroine within this network.

However, Duberly's relationships with the actors who appeared in her *Journal* did pose real challenges which she tried to navigate while maintaining this status of esteemed commentator. She felt the presence of the military commanders who she so criticised as a hindrance to her writing. Although she circumvented this in the letters she published anonymously, she nevertheless expressed relief in September 1855 that 'Lord Raglan & all that set, being gone, I can express myself more freely, & say what I like – without fear of forging a thunder bolt for my own head'.[92] The more subtle criticisms which appeared in her *Journal* may reflect the intervention of her editor, but Duberly was nevertheless aware of her own voice. As she wrote the final chapter on the fall of Sebastopol during the following month, she took the advice of her sister to make her narrative 'more like my letters, & taking in two or three days at a time', and felt that it was 'incomparably better written' as a result.[93] While the very

[91] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 B, c.12 November 1855, fol. 103.
[92] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 B, 25 September 1855, fol. 65, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx. Lord Cardigan, commander of the Light Brigade, had left the Crimea in December 1854, citing ill health. Lord Raglan, the commander-in-chief, had died at the end of June 1855 and Sir George Brown, who had taken over the Light Brigade, had been invalided home. Lord Lucan, commander of the Cavalry Division, had been recalled to England in February 1855.
[93] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 B, 25 September 1855, fol. 65, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.

fact of her acting as a whistle-blower on the conduct of the war demonstrated her resistance to contemporary gender boundaries, she nevertheless provided commentary within a framework of narrative elements established in the press. Maureen Mulligan has stated that a salient reason for dishonesty in travel accounts—and, one can extrapolate, for omissions in public and ego-centric narratives more generally—is that 'there is the truth that must remain invisible for fear of shocking one's contemporaries'.[94] There were some elements of her experience that Duberly simply could not publish. The fact that the conditions of war were reported in such detail by newspaper correspondents and military men already made her presence contentious. However, Duberly could at least reiterate these aspects of the war, thus lending credibility to her account as she ventured to participate in the narrative. Her descriptions of Balaklava harbour—full of sickness, offal, human and animal bodies, and very real danger, as the men flaunted rules and smoked amid the powder barrels—were certainly appalling, and her presence among them perhaps equally so, but they were also common knowledge.[95] When she wrote to her sister in detail about a suicide that occurred in the tent next to her in the autumn of 1854, criticised Florence Nightingale, or disparaged Mrs Cresswell, a fellow officer's wife, she strayed into subject matter which was too socially taboo for a lady to impart, or encountered competing examples of femininity which could threaten her own self-constructed version of acceptable military femininity, should she publicly print such smears. Adopting a patriotic tone which chimed with the public's established perception of British military heroism while largely confining her narrative to the society of officers gave her a way to navigate these problems posed by military life, and her own status amid it as a middle-class woman.

And yet, throughout the compilation of the *Journal*, Duberly was conflicted about having her voice on display. Despite her bravado, she was not certain of achieving her heroic

[94] M. Mulligan, 'Women Travel Writers and the Question of Veracity', in C. B. Saunders (ed.), *Women, Travel Writing, and Truth* (New York, NY, 2014), p. 183.
[95] Duberly, *Journal*, pp. 144–45.

aspirations, or even of producing a book worthy of regard. When Duberly had first asked her brother-in-law to assess the potential value of her writing, she was self-deprecating. Deeming her pages to be 'awful bosh', she wrote 'you must not estimate its [the *Journal*'s] price – by its worth – but by its fashion – for rot sells better than the Proverbs of Solomon often enough'.[96] She wrote reflectively to her brother-in-law in October 1855 that:

> The book was written day by day – in suffering in weariness – in active rage, in high spirits, in low spirits – and its subject was a mere relating of facts. Chivalrous facts too – but then – one is always influenced by those amongst whom one lives. Each event I have heard discussed & prosed over, & torn to pieces, & induced to facts – and mutilated by the soldiers amongst whom I entirely live . . . So if my journal reads like my conversation you must consider all this & be merciful.[97]

While her confidence occasionally wavered, in the face of setbacks she was determined to forge ahead with the project. In August 1855, as she awaited a response from the Queen regarding the dedication, Duberly had received 'an almost insolent letter from Routledge', whom she had approached to publish the book.[98] Duberly declared in response to it that 'the sun has baked my skin to the consistency of that of a rhinosceros [*sic*], & I ain't much troubled by the pricking of little needles & pins'.[99] She affected disinterest as she instructed her sister 'do just as you please – I don't care a shot what becomes of it [the *Journal*]'.[100] However, her claims to ambivalence are belied by the continual references she made to the *Journal*'s impending

[96] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 A, 18 May 1855, fol. 166. Original emphasis.
[97] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47281 B, 29 October 1855, fols 94–95.
[98] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 17 August 1855, fol. 35 and undated letter (enclose from fol. 24, 10 August 1855), fol. 30. Routledge had in fact just published William Russell's book, and Duberly believed him to be the 'most liberal man' after publisher John Murray. Duberly's *Journal* was ultimately published by Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans.
[99] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 17 August 1855, fol. 35.
[100] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 17 August 1855, fol. 35.

publication. In October, she even began to investigate the interest in her book among the officers to arrange copies for them, but in November she again confessed to Selina 'you put me more in heart about the book – I was getting very nervous and very much ashamed of it'.[101]

As it turned out, Duberly's misgivings were warranted. When it was published in late 1855, her ambitions for recognition as a military heroine were sharply checked. She received a generally favourable response from friends and family. In a letter to Marx in February 1856, her husband wrote from Ismid that 'everybody here seems much pleased with it', while Duberly received letters from friends, reporting its enthusiastic reception in England.[102] The *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, the paper of Duberly's native county, was complimentary, deeming the *Journal* to have little value as an account of warfare, but to be a very good portrayal of life on campaign.[103] However, some of the reviews that appeared in other papers were deeply cutting. The *Examiner* reproduced extracts of the *Journal* to exaggerate the latent glibness that threatened in Duberly's attention to officer society and her awe at the sight of the battlefields. In doing so, the *Examiner* presented Duberly's presence and actions as fundamentally unfeeling and unfeminine. 'To permit the publication of this journal, though . . . it is not without some points of interest . . . surely was an error on the lady's part, or that of her friends', the review announced. 'It tempts the world to judge her by her diary'. The review went on to proclaim her literary persona as a 'comic Lady Sale', and directly addressed her heroic pretensions by pronouncing that 'the real hero of this Journal . . . Is Mrs Duberly's horse "Bob"'.[104] As McLoughlin has stated, 'when the object of scrutiny is armed conflict, [a]

[101] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 1 October 1855, fol. 74, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx and 28 November 1855, fol. 107.
[102] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 1 February 1856, fol. 133, letter from Henry Duberly to Francis Marx.
[103] 'Mrs Duberly's Journal', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 27 December 1855, p. 3.
[104] 'The Literary Examiner', *The Examiner*, 2500, 29 December 1855, p. 820. Lady Florentia Sale had written a diary while held prisoner during the First Anglo-Afghan War, extracts of which were sent to England. The diary was later published and critically acclaimed.

position of serene aloofness can come to connote negative qualities ranging from uncaringness to voyeurism'.[105] In the context of mid-nineteenth century expectations of gender roles, particularly of middle-class femininity as it related to Duberly, the *Examiner* and its intellectual audience, like the officers in the Crimea who witnessed her at the battlefields, could not reconcile Duberly's position as a middle-class woman with her representation of war, or with the mode of that representation—a published journal, founded upon her presence at the scene. A similar tone was taken up by *Punch* a few months later, as fictional extracts in which Duberly enjoyed 'gambling – singing – smoking till a late hour', and even 'joined the storming party' emphasised Duberly's masculinity and frivolity at the front.[106] The likeness implicit in these reviews between Duberly and the uncouth nature commonly attributed to lower-class soldiers' wives struck a chord. She wrote anxiously to her sister 'oh it is dreadful to be made out such a woman even in jest – for jest I conclude it is meant for. Do I give you the impression of such brutalized coarseness – ?'[107] Marx went so far as to write to *Punch* in Duberly's defence but, as Sarah Gunning has stated, her 'rebellion founder[ed] on the very conventions of womanhood she set[ ] out to defy'.[108]

Such criticisms of Duberly and her *Journal* were widely repeated. While one paper criticised the 'ungallant severity' of the *Examiner*'s mocking tone, in a dig that in all likelihood was aimed at Duberly, a review of Frances Taylor's *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses* in the *Standard* reversed that paper's earlier assessment of lady nurses.[109] The reviewer drew the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate spaces and forms of feminine action clearly, stating 'we have had accounts from the hospitals, and we have had an account—no very

[105] McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, p. 160.
[106] 'Diary of a Lady Fire-Eater', *Punch*, 30, 2 February 1856, p. 47.
[107] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, letter begun 19 February 1856, fol. 139, letter from Frances Duberly to Francis Marx.
[108] Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes', p. 977.
[109] 'The Realities of War – Pictures From The Camp', *The Inverness Courier*, 17 January 1856, p. 2.

agreeable or graceful one—of a lady's adventures and reflections at the seat of war'. Taylor's *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses* was, by contrast, deemed to be 'by one of the heroic band' of caregiving nurses, and utterly 'ladylike' in its representation of the good works carried out in the hospital, despite Taylor's Catholic leanings.[110] The *New Quarterly Review* lamented that Duberly's *Journal* had ever progressed beyond its manuscript state, as it was painful to see the name of an English lady 'appended to as unwomanly and ungentle a chronicle as it has ever been our misfortune to peruse'.[111] The *Literary Gazette* admitted that the *Journal* was informative, but 'we must confess to an opinion that ladies are out of place in such scenes, and much better employed at home'.[112]

The negative reception of Duberly's book, and her own doubts about it, stemmed from the fact that Duberly's position with the army was difficult to reconcile with constructs of appropriate middle-class femininity as it was expected and enacted in Britain, and became more problematic in light of the narrative of heroic wartime femininity that had come to prevail by the time of the *Journal*'s publication: that of Nightingale and her nurses, and even of Mary Seacole, which were fundamentally rooted in caregiving. Duberly was certainly conscious of the comparisons that could be drawn between her and the proclaimed heroic actions of Nightingale in particular. By October 1855, Duberly had declared some self-criticism in this regard, writing that 'I am conscious of having done so little good in any way out here – that it is a matter of far more shame than praise'.[113] In March 1856, when her book had been reviewed and she had been consoled over the negative reception by Marx and other friends, she acknowledged that Nightingale's staff deserved their praise, whereas 'I do not'. At the same

[110] 'Literature', *London Evening Standard*, 6 May 1856, p. 1.
[111] 'Journal kept During the Russian War', *The New Quarterly Review and Digest of Current Literature*, *British, American, French, and German*, 5/18, April 1856, p. 146.
[112] 'Journal Kept During the Russian War', *The Literary Gazette*, 2031, 22 December 1855, p. 807.
[113] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 13 October 1855, fol. 81.

time, she downplayed Nightingale's own legend in an effort to reduce the contrast that could be drawn with herself, proclaiming, perhaps empathetically, that 'Miss N has had her full meed of praise – The nurses, who had all the drudgery & hard work – & especially the Catholic Sisters of Mercy have not had anything approaching to their share'.[114]

The importance of the caregiving narrative—or rather, it's absence—in influencing the success of Duberly's ambitions for heroic recognition should not be underestimated. McLoughlin has noted that Mary Seacole drew a clear distinction in her narrative between observers and actors. She incorporated herself into the latter category through references to her own work caring and providing for the men, thus, as Gunning has stated, investing her account with patriotic motives.[115] The fact that Duberly did not participate in the same feminine forms of service to fighting men made her claims to heroism through her military femininity—which emphasised her freedom of action—and her narrative authority over the war problematic for the British reading public. By so publicly living and commentating beyond the social boundaries and physical spaces most commonly ascribed to middle-class women, Duberly lacked a connection to contemporary domestic or feminine symbolism—the dominant modes through which women were recognised as heroines in this period. To refer back to Cubitt's definition of heroism, Duberly was not a figure in whom the public could invest emotionally. Nevertheless, Duberly persisted in framing herself as a Crimean heroine in her second book, *Campaigning Experiences in Rajpootana and Central India*, in which she documented her travels to India during the rebellion of 1857. Recounting one dinner, Duberly wrote of the stir that her presence caused. She heard it asked across the room:

> "Which is Mrs. Duberly?" and as loudly replied to by, "There she is, sitting on the sofa, in pink," with the comment from a third of, "Oh! is that the Crimean

[114] BL, Duberly Letters, Add MS 47218 B, 28 March 1856, fol. 150.
[115] McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, p. 48; Gunning, 'Traveling with Her Mother's Tastes', p. 977.

heroine?"—while two young ladies shifted their chairs, in order to take an inventory of me at their leisure.[116]

For all her claims to exceptionalism, heroism, and authority, an announcement of Frances Duberly's death in 1902 merely stated that she 'achieved some measure of fame by a book recounting her personal experiences'.[117] The issue that blighted the publication of her book in 1855—that her travels with the army included no discernible, appropriately feminine service—remained problematic at the turn of the century. Other notices of her death bore such titles as 'A Much Travelled Lady's Death', and, most brutally in light of Duberly's careful, determined, and ambitious self-fashioning, 'A Dead Authoress'.[118] Her hopes for a reputation as a wartime heroine went largely unfulfilled.

Crimean Heroines Recognised

The values of the heroine which Duberly aspired to embody through her writing were in fact ultimately recognised in the work of many of the lower-class women who she consistently dismissed. As a more democratic appreciation of the army developed throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the Crimean War became more firmly established in the popular imagination as a conflict with emotional resonance across society. Women's participation in it underwent significant reassessment in light of the social change that took place throughout this period. Nursing became increasingly associated with respectability, women's citizenship, and patriotism, through the increasing participation of middle-class women, the professionalisation of nursing, and the organisation of official military nursing through Red Cross organisations—

[116] F. I. Duberly, *Campaigning Experiences of Rajpootana and Central India During the Suppression of the Mutiny, 1857–1858* (London, 1859), p. 25.
[117] 'London Day By Day', *Daily Telegraph*, 1 December 1902, p. 10.
[118] 'Much Travelled Lady's Death', *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, 1 December 1902, p. 3 and 'A Dead Authoress', *The Echo,* 25 November 1902, p. 4.

not only in Britain, but across Europe.[119] Soldiers' wives continued to feature in debates about both army and social reform. The Patriotic Fund continued to operate throughout the nineteenth century and the establishment of other organisations, such as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association in 1885, saw provision for soldiers' families—both on and off the strength—become a concern throughout wartime and peacetime.[120] The popular conception of the Crimean soldier's wife was impacted by such social changes, and by the ways in which the memory of the war itself was articulated in light of them.

There is evidence that the image of the soldier's wife underwent a degree of rehabilitation at a local level even immediately after the war. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 30 March 1856, and the subsequent declaration of peace, the return of the men encouraged outpourings of patriotic gratitude. In early August 1856, the story of Mrs Rogers, the wife of a private in the 4th Dragoon Guards, was printed in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* under the heading "A Crimean Heroine", after her tale had come to light at a regimental dinner.[121] She accompanied her husband through Turkey, Bulgaria, and the Crimea throughout 1854 and 1855. She lost her possessions during the storm of 14 November and encountered the famine and disease of the winter of 1854 at first hand. She also witnessed the battles of Balaklava and Inkerman, where she tended to the wounded and assisted in tasks such as cooking for the officers and men. Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Hodge, who had so derided the

[119] Hacker, 'Reformers, Nurses, and Ladies in Uniform', pp. 137–87.
[120] See Huddie, 'Victims or Survivors', p. 551.
[121] 'A Crimean Heroine', *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 2 August 1856, p. 6. The notices about "Crimean Heroines" discussed in this section are not exhaustive. Due to time and access constraints, they have been found using key search terms through the following online databases: The Times Digital Archive, The British Newspaper Archive, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer, Daily Mail Historical Archive, 1896–2004, British Library Newspapers, British Periodicals. Where possible, I have tried to trace the first instances of notices being printed—many notices were widely reprinted in local papers across the country. However, the search and text recognition functions across each of these databases has some margin of error. Some examples may have been missed in consequence or may have appeared earlier in papers not included in the above-mentioned repositories.

officers' wives, had praised Mrs Rogers highly in his diary for this caregiving. He promised that if Frances Duberly received a medal he would apply for one for Mrs Rogers, 'who deserves it ten times more than half the men who will get it'.[122] Mrs Rogers returned to England with the regiment in July 1856.

A few weeks later, in late August 1855, the *Carlow Sentinel*, printed a similar account, "A Crimean Heroine", about Mrs Kelly, a soldier's wife who resided in Tullow. The piece was direct in its intention to single Mrs Kelly out for praise, noting that 'with the exception of Miss Nightingale, none of the fair sex attracted attention, although there are a few who accompanied their husbands to the Crimea, who survived the struggle and partook of the hardships and privations that ensued'.[123] Mrs Kelly had been permitted to travel with her husband, a private in the 4th Regiment of Foot—the same regiment as Elizabeth Evans. She had also witnessed the series of battles in late 1854 and had nursed her husband until his death from cholera. Upon her return to Ireland, she received a small pension and her husband's medals from the Horse Guards authorities, who 'had become acquainted with her exemplary conduct—her patient endurance under privations, and her services to the sick and wounded'.[124] This notice was reproduced widely in numerous provincial Irish and English papers over the following weeks, as well as in a number of the popular London publications.

Such notices mark the beginning of a trend in which the qualities of the Crimean heroine were not only perceived through a middle-class appreciation of the caregiving provided by Florence Nightingale. Rather, the soldier's wife—who Nightingale had generally mistrusted and excluded from the performance of military nursing—was explicitly recognised as heroic for her informal services to the army and for her own conduct and endurance; a key value of

[122] Hodge, *Little Hodge,* p. 110. Mrs Rogers was included in a photograph taken by Roger Fenton—one of only a few to include women—with Edward Hodge and Captain Webb outside Webb's hut. See *Little Hodge*, p 107.
[123] 'A Crimean Heroine', *Carlow Sentinel*, 30 August 1856, p. 3.
[124] 'A Crimean Heroine', *Carlow Sentinel*, 30 August 1856, p. 3.

military femininity. This was a marked change from the narratives of soldiers' wives' immorality, the general inconvenience they caused for military efficiency, and their piteous state which, while resulting from military neglect, contributed to the former two problems. While this narrative was not overhauled, soldiers' wives' shared forbearance of hardship with the men and the informal services which they provided for the regiment were reworked into a narrative of heroism, which privileged the qualities of military femininity alongside women's feminine duty towards their husbands and towards the sick and wounded. The same ideological convergences that first constructed Florence Nightingale as a Crimean heroine were at work here. The loyalty perceived in these wives' actions in following their husbands and their caregiving roles denoted a feminisation and domestication of military life, encouraging civilian identification with the female military experience in terms of the dominant heroic narrative of Nightingale's work. At the same time, their more masculine traits of physical and psychological strength could be reconciled with the public knowledge of the condition of soldiers' wives and of government and military authority failings, which had produced many of the conditions in which such characteristics became essential for survival. They could also be taken as exemplary national attributes, rose-tinted through the lens of the recent victory against Russia.

As the century wore on, it was notably the lower-class background of many women—both nurses and soldiers' wives—that became a defining feature of their heroic status. As hospital nursing continued to undergo change throughout the nineteenth century, gaining more recognition as a respectable profession, and the soldier's wife acquired a much-improved reputation as a result of military reforms, the caregiving narrative increased in strength, but it assumed new boundaries beyond the middle and upper-class character of the individual that had underpinned Nightingale's own heroic image. The introduction of the Royal Red Cross provided a new and important link between military nursing and national identity which helped

to democratise female military heroism, in a similar manner to the social and cultural shifts reflected in the establishment of the Victoria Cross for soldiers in 1856.[125] Florence Nightingale was one of the first to receive the Royal Red Cross in 1883, but other Crimean War nurses were later decorated with the same honour as the iconography underpinning the image of the Crimean heroine broadened. This is particularly clear in the case of Ann Eyre Hely, who was awarded the Royal Red Cross in 1897. Hely was one of the paid nurses sent to the civil hospital at Smyrna in 1855; she later served at Renkioi. She was born the daughter of a Leicestershire publican and was the widow of a doctor when she was selected as a nurse, having good references from a local lady and a certificate from the local hospital.[126] Little is known about Hely's life after the war, though she reportedly nursed Florence Nightingale and was selected to nurse the Queen mother, who died before Hely's service could commence.[127] The Royal Red Cross was bestowed in her home town as, at 78 years of age, she was too frail to travel to London to receive it from the Queen:

> The Royal Red Cross Order was presented to Mrs. Hely by Lady Cave-Browne-Cave, at a meeting held in Ravenstone . . . Mrs. Hely is now an inmate of Ravenstone Hospital, which consists of thirty-six almshouses . . . In the year 1854 she left England with Dr. Holmes Coote and Mrs. Coote, to join Miss Florence Nightingale's staff of nurses in the Crimea . . . [The Rector remarked to the crowd that] Although the Crimean War was now a matter of history, and it did seem rather late in the day to reward anyone for any services performed during that time, they must, however, bear

[125] See L. Kriegel, 'The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross, 1856–2010', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 56/4 (2016), pp. 871–93.
[126] W. Freer, *Ann Ayre Hely, A Crimean War Nurse from Ravenstone, Leicestershire* (Ashby de la Zouch, 2016), pp. 1–2; TNA, Nurses' Testimonials, WO 25/264, Bundle H, fols 1582–87.
[127] 'Leicestershire Crimean Nurses, Invested with the Royal Red Cross', *Leicester Journal*, 17 December 1897, p. 8. See also 'Court Circular', *The Times*, 16 December 1897, p. 9.

> in mind that the Order was not established until 1883, and they found that one of the first recipients of the decoration was Miss Nightingale, Mrs. Hely's old friend . . . It was only natural that the time should come when Mrs. Hely herself should also receive the decoration, and there could be no more fitting time, he thought, than during the Diamond Jubilee year of the Queen's reign.[128]

This notice explicitly locates Hely within patriotic narratives that developed towards the end of the century, as an important relationship was perceived between the recognition of past services and contemporary articulations of national identity. Given the delay between the creation of the Royal Red Cross—even its bestowal upon Nightingale—and its conferral to Hely, the award was certainly overdue. But it was only with the social and professional changes that had taken place between 1854 and 1897 that Hely could have been recognised in this way. The fact that Hely was deemed no less deserving of the same award as Nightingale (it was not until World War I that a second order of "Associate" membership of the Royal Red Cross was introduced) and the significance attached to the co-incidence with the Jubilee demonstrates that Hely became part of a patriotic symbolism. Indeed, this Jubilee year saw Royal Red Cross awards presented to a range of Crimean nurses, including lady nurse Sarah Anne Terrot and Sisters Mary Stanislaus Jones, Anastasia Kelly, Mary Jane Frances de Chantal Huddon, Mary Helen Ellis, and Mary Aloysius Doyle, all of the Irish Catholic Sisters of Mercy.[129] Paid nurse Susan Cator would receive the same award the following year.[130] The Crimean War and

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[128] 'Leicestershire Crimean Nurses, Invested with the Royal Red Cross', *Leicester Journal*, 17 December 1897, p. 8.

[129] 'Royal Red Cross Decoration Bestowed on Edinburgh Lady', *The Scotsman*, 30 October 1897, p. 8; S. A. Terrot, *Nurse Sarah Anne: With Florence Nightingale at Scutari*, R. G. Richardson (ed.) (Chatham, 1977), pp. 8, 165–69; 'Notes', *The Tablet*, 10 July 1897, p. 54; Untitled notice, *Mid-Sussex Times*, 23 February 1897, p. 7. Sister Mary Helen Ellis died only a few months after receiving the award.

[130] 'Susan Cator', *The Queen*, 12 February 1898, p. 273.

nursing services performed throughout it had become an important aspect of the history and identity of the nation, and the perceived strength of each.

However, Hely's residence at an almshouse belies these associations with national strength and status. Although it was glossed over in a single sentence in the reports of her award, her reliance on charity nevertheless points to a narrative of decline implicit in stories of other Crimean heroines such as that of Francis Lewis who, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, relied upon outdoor relief supplemented by her work as a laundress. It in fact became common for women lauded as Crimean heroines to be living in reduced circumstances or in poverty. Particularly from the 1880s, as these women advanced in years, the heroism perceived in the actions of their youth provided a critical social commentary, as news articles contrasted their previous exemplary acts with the conditions in which many lived out their final years; a trend that continued at the beginning of the twentieth century. Emma Fagg, for example, was one of the nurses from St John's House who accompanied Florence Nightingale to Scutari in the first party of nurses in October 1854. On 7 December 1907, an article entitled "Heroine and the Workhouse" appeared in the *Echo*, in which Emma Fagg featured. Florence Nightingale had recently been granted the Order of Merit but, as the article proclaimed, 'the claims to honour of the rank and file of the devoted women who served with her, should not be forgotten'.[131] In the following weeks, Fagg's story was to receive more attention. On 7 January 1908, the *Daily Telegraph* printed a letter to the editor from H. C. Johnson, which read:

> There is one woman with a distinct claim upon the public for war services nobly rendered. I refer to Emma Fagg, a true heroine of the Crimea, a survivor (possibly the only one) of the little band of nurses which rendered such conspicuous service under Miss Florence Nightingale, sharing all that great lady's risks and labours and aiding

[131] LMA, Album containing letters relating to nurses from St John's House, H01/ST/NC/03/SU/A, fol. 53, (article clipping).

> her with such noble self-sacrifice; and devotion to duty that history may be searched in vain to find a parallel.[132]

The writer continued to say that Emma Fagg, now over 80 years of age, was residing in the Thanet Union workhouse. They did not appeal for funds, since local charity and Emma Fagg's own pension from Florence Nightingale herself were sufficient, though the writer welcomed contributions that would procure her some few extra luxuries. The intention of the letter had instead been to 'make known to the great British public . . . the existence of a humble Crimean heroine as well as many heroes, equally with their deserving recognition'.[133]

Soldiers' wives could experience very similar forms of local and popular promotion. In late 1907, Elizabeth Evans was dubbed a 'Crimean heroine' and 'daughter of the regiment' for her support of her husband:

> When the Crimea was reached Mrs. Evans refused to leave her husband's side. She marched by his side, carried his gun when he was tired, and stayed in the trenches with him, despite the terrible cold . . . Mrs. Evans was treated quite as one of the regular army . . . Many wounded men owe a debt of gratitude for the unceasing care with which Mrs. Evans nursed them.[134]

This image of Evans sharing in her husband's labour as a way to see to his comfort and her participation in the care of other soldiers as an informal nurse continued to echo the caregiving narrative constructed around Nightingale over fifty years before. Indeed, by the early twentieth century, there was some considerable conflation of the work of soldiers' wives and hospital

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[132] H. C. Johnson, 'To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 January 1908, pp. 9–10.
[133] Johnson, 'To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 January 1908, pp. 9–10.
[134] 'Crimean Heroine, The Only Woman Entitled to Wear the Balaclava Medal', *Northern Daily Mail*, 16 November 1907, p. 3.

nurses in the popular memory of the Crimean War. In an article in the *Sphere* published in 1908 entitled "Recognising the Work of Miss Florence Nightingale: Women Who Braved the Horrors of the Crimean Campaign", a photograph of Elizabeth Evans appeared alongside others of soldiers' wives Mrs Langley and Ellen Butler, and of Renkioi nurse Mrs Death.[135] Evans, Butler, and Langley wore their husbands' medals, while Death wore her "Civil Hospital" sash, part of the nurses' uniform. In the centre was an image of Florence Nightingale, 'as she looked fifty years ago' at the time of the Crimean War. Emma Fagg was included among these women in the accompanying text, which described them as 'Miss Nightingale's colleagues', despite the vast differences in each of these women's Crimean War experiences.[136]



The restlessness of Russia and the prominence of the woman question give unusual interest to Miss Florence Nightingale, who has recently been honoured by the King and is to be presented with the freedom of the City of London, for she reminds one of both interests. Born in 1829, Miss Nightingale began her famous work in hospitals in 1844, and she departed for the Crimea on October 21, 1854, with thirty-four nurses. When she came home a testimonial fund amounting to £50,000 was subscribed by the public in recognition of her services, and was at her special request devoted to the formation of an institution for the training of nurses. For many years she has lived in complete retirement at 10, South Street, Park Lane.

Miss Nightingale's colleagues are also being remembered, for the honour recently paid to the men who went through the Mutiny has drawn attention to the services of that little band of women who helped Miss Nightingale in the Crimea. Few of them now remain with us. One, Miss Emma Fagg, who is now nearly eighty-three, has been in the Thanet Union twenty-two years, and is quite happy in her surroundings. Nurse Langley of Bury St. Edmunds went out to the Crimea as wife of a sergeant in the 17th Lancers and nursed the Duke of Cambridge; Mrs. Evans, who lives at Watford, is now ninety years of age; Mrs. Death, who lives at Plaistow, is in poor circumstances; and so on the story might be told in many other cases.

Mrs. Death
Over eighty years of age

Mrs. Langley
Aged eighty

London Stereo Co.
Florence Nightingale
As she looked fifty years ago

Mrs. Ellen Butler
Over seventy-eight

Mrs. Evans
A soldier's wife

Figure 4: Extract from "Recognising the Work of Miss Florence Nightingale: Women Who Braved the Horrors of the Crimean Campaign", *The Sphere*, 29 February 1908, p. 180. Accessed via ProQuest: British Periodicals, 02/07/2021.

[135] Mrs Langley, or Nurse Langley as she was known during the Crimean War was at this time Mrs E. A. Ridges, having remarried. Her name is also sometimes reported as Mrs/Nurse Longley. Ellen Butler had been the wife of a soldier in the 95th Regiment. She reportedly kept a notebook recording her experiences of the war, but this has since been lost. See MacKay, *Women, Families and the British Army 1700–1880: The Crimean War (1854–56)*, vol. 5, pp. 341–44.

[136] 'Recognising the Work of Miss Florence Nightingale: Women Who Braved the Horrors of the Crimean Campaign', *The Sphere*, 29 February 1908, p. 180.

While their work was increasingly framed explicitly in terms of their nursing, these women were not only viewed as Florence Nightingale's helpers. They were also recognised in their own right. The soldier's wife Mrs Langley, it was reported, had received a medal from the Queen for her nursing services to the army.[137] Elizabeth Evans had already received public praise in the papers for her efforts with the 4th King's Own, and it was in this climate that she published her own account of military life in 1908, in which her participation and sense of belonging among the regiment appears as a natural extension of her duty to her husband, and forms a central focus throughout her narrative.[138] That sense of identity, however, was obscured by articles such as that in the *Sphere*. The promotion of women, particularly the transformation of the soldier's wife from camp follower to patriotic wife and nurse, demonstrates an important shift in popular understandings of the relationship between women and the Crimean War, amid changing conceptions of heroism more broadly. The spaces of women's war work and their own social standing, which had promoted such controversy throughout the war's duration, became far less important than the fact of women's performance of that work at all, as it was recognised as a legitimate feminine contribution to the war effort.

In addition to the expansion of the caregiving narrative and the recognition of lower-class women's labour as a patriotic service, there was another strand to this promotion of nurses and soldiers' wives as Crimean heroines. As H. C. Johnson stated in their initial letter about Emma Fagg, her service paralleled that of the veteran soldiers. Mary Frances Billington, a correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, began to research Emma Fagg's story after it had first come to light. In a letter written during this process, she stated 'from <u>our</u> point of view [at the *Daily Telegraph*] she is of interest as we are taking up the cause of the Crimean & [Indian] Mutiny Veterans in workhouses so strongly . . . There is a sense of national ingratitude & shame

[137] V. H. Bridges, 'To the Editor of "The Daily Telegraph"', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 January 1908, p. 6; Billington, 'Surviving Crimean Nurses', pp. 741–42.
[138] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', pp. 265–72.

as to letting those who once did a great service die as paupers'.[139] That service, Billington implied, extended to the work of women. Billington wrote more explicitly on this point for the *Quiver* when she wrote a piece about Emma Fagg, Mrs Langley, Elizabeth Evans, Mrs Death, and another soldier's wife, Mrs Chilton. As Billington stated, public attention had been roused

> To a sense of duty to all who had served it [the nation] in dark hours of need . . . Women who had faced hardships and privations to minister to them [soldiers, now veterans], when wounds or sickness had laid them low, were no less worthy to be remembered . . . it is a comparatively small matter for a nation like our own, with its vast wealth and resources, and above all, its reputation for humanitarian work, to ensure that the declining years of these heroines of the Crimea should be made as full of ease and comfort as possible.[140]

The adoption of the ageing Crimean veteran as a nostalgic symbol of Britain's past and the focus of sympathetic public attention was conspicuous at a national level in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with their continued participation in royal celebrations and ceremonies, such as for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. However, the charitable efforts of local associations and their continued operation throughout this same period also reflected the manifestation of patriotic sentiment as it was constructed at a local level.[141] As Geoffrey Cubitt has summarised:

> The celebration of heroes as influential historical individuals becomes increasingly

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[139] LMA, Album containing letters relating to nurses from St John's House, H01/ST/NC/03/SU/A, fol. 57, letter to an unknown recipient, from M. F. Billington, 9 January 1908. Original emphasis.
[140] Billington, 'Surviving Crimean Nurses', pp. 739, 744.
[141] Kriegel, 'Living Links to History', pp. 292–95. See also B. Beaven, 'The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier During the Boer War, 1899–1902: A Study of Local Patriotism', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37/2 (2009), pp. 217–19.

> closely connected with the maintenance of a sense of national community. People, in short, are encouraged to develop a sense of kinship or imaginative identification with the heroes of history and thus, potentially at least, to see the existences of the latter as bearers of ethical meanings relevant to their own lives.[142]

As a source of association for the display and expression of British identity, support of the Crimean War's nurses and soldiers' wives, as well as its veterans, became a worthy cause. By extension, that support provided a means for the expression of civilian participation in a patriotic heritage, by upholding the narrative of British past and present strength which the pauper status of these heroes and heroines threatened to collapse.[143] However, compared to the cause of impoverished Crimean veterans, which provoked considerable and sustained outcry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, little had been done over the preceding decades to directly address the circumstances of women. Although a select few excellent nurses received monetary bonuses from Nightingale upon the end of their service, there were no pensions for the military nurses generally. Soldiers' widows could claim pensions from the Patriotic Fund, but these remained meagre and conditional. Elizabeth Evans received a pension of 5s per week.[144] Francis Lewis, whose story was reproduced at the beginning of this chapter, was not in fact eligible for a Patriotic Fund pension when she was given money by the Military Tournament Fund in 1899. Although her husband had died in the Crimean War, she had since remarried twice, thus rendering her ineligible for further relief.[145] Soldiers' wives also received

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[142] Cubitt, 'Introduction', p. 18.
[143] See T. Harrison, *Remembrance Today: Poppies, Grief and Heroism* (London, 2012), p. 54. When pride and patriotism exist in popular memory or in society in relation to war, without the presence of grief, the result can be a promotion of 'idealized militarism'.
[144] 'Crimean Heroine, The Only Woman Entitled to Wear the Balaclava Medal', *Northern Daily Mail*, 16 November 1907, p. 3.
[145] Francis Lewis was known as Francis Driscoll during the Crimean War and appeared in other news articles with that name. 'The Crimean Heroine', *Daily Mail*, 26 August 1899, p. 3. See also MacKay, *Women, Families and the British Army 1700–1880: The Crimean War (1854–56)*, vol. 5, pp. 350–52.

limited assistance from the veterans' associations which emerged to help ex-soldiers. The Nottingham & Notts Crimean War and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association, for example, accepted a single female member, Anne Milne, the wife of a Sergeant-Major and later Hospital Sergeant of the 8th Hussars. When her husband was posted to Scutari, she began to work there, and she was documented as a nurse in the Association's records.[146] The Association provided for other soldiers' wives indirectly throughout its lifetime, through relief granted to their husbands, and for a handful of widows who left no other relations to arrange their funerals upon their deaths.[147] On the whole, however, women were not intended as the primary beneficiaries of the Association's efforts. Even as women like Emma Fagg and Elizabeth Evans received such emotive attention in the press, it was acknowledged that the band of Crimean heroines was diminishing fast. Many newspaper notices of other women's deaths in this period claimed that they had been "the last" of the Crimean War nurses or soldiers' wives, testifying to the relative invisibility of their work and their cause over time. It is not even certain, for instance, that Miss Elizabeth Bidwell introduced at the beginning of this chapter was one of Florence Nightingale's nurses, though the *Birmingham Gazette* stated that she was 'probably the last'. She was not included on the Register and does not appear among the collection of Nurses' Testimonials. The absence of significant earlier groundwork meant that the publicisation of the Crimean heroines—in the early twentieth century in particular—largely worked to promote individuals, rather than campaign for or introduce significant change to

[146] Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Archives (NA), Correspondence, Obituaries, and Reports of the Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association, M/1404, fol. 3 (1910 report); M/1417, fol. 31; Scrapbook compiled by G Fellows to 1920, with later additions, relating to the Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association, M/1418, fol. 486.

[147] The report of the Committee from March 1920 stated that the Association had 'defrayed the funeral expenses of 120 Veterans, and also of 3 widows who died leaving no relations. These 3 widows have been buried in the Veterans' ground'. NA, Correspondence of the Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association, M/1375, fol. 77.

their personal circumstances or those of women who had participated in other nineteenth-century conflicts.

It is, therefore, not surprising that, for all the good intentions of their champions, little ultimately changed in terms of these women's material circumstances, though their cause and their services were not forgotten during their lifetimes. Ann Eyre Hely died, still a resident of Ravenstone Hospital, in 1902.[148] Emma Fagg's name appeared again in the *Globe* in August 1912; she was still an inmate of Thanet Union Workhouse. A fund begun after her initial appearance in the papers had been exhausted but was to be started anew since she had been moved to the hospital ward.[149] She died only months later, in January 1913. Elizabeth Evans relied upon her small Patriotic Fund pension and her supplementary income as a laundress until she died in 1914.[150] She was, however, buried with military honours. The 4th King's Own sent a party of pallbearers, and her coffin was covered with the regimental pall.[151]

Conclusion

The relationship between Crimean War spaces and contemporary gender roles and expectations which have been explored throughout previous chapters had an enduring significance as women's role in the legacy of the war was negotiated throughout the subsequent decades. The emergence of the heroic representation of Florence Nightingale for a popular audience was, fundamentally, a navigation of the tensions inherent in the nursing venture as they reflected those in contemporary society. Critics sought to exploit issues of class, gender, and religion in connection with military nursing in their condemnations of a range of contentious subjects—

[148] 'A Colleague of Florence Nightingale', *Manchester Evening News*, 6 June 1902, p. 5.
[149] 'A Crimean Heroine: Story of a Helper of Miss Nightingale', *The Globe*, 6 August 1912, p. 6.
[150] 'A Crimean Heroine, Experiences of a Richmond Woman', *Liverpool Echo*, 2 February 1914, p. 6; TNA, *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*, RG14/3601.
[151] 'Crimean Heroine's Funeral', *The Times*, 5 February 1914, p. 11.

including feminine behaviour, government mismanagement of the war, and other political affairs. In response, supporters did the very same, to proclaim ever more vehemently Nightingale's role as a symbolic focal point for national unity and patriotic action. As such, Nightingale was the seminal figure around whom the press first constructed the parameters of the Crimean heroine as an appropriate, notably upper-class, feminine, patriotic figure, rooted within discourses of domestic management and caregiving, and framed as both religious and feminine duty. The varying degrees of success that other individuals met with when they tried to participate in that narrative reflects the extent to which Nightingale's image fundamentally appealed to popular discourses. As Mary Seacole used to her benefit, and Frances Duberly was to discover to her disappointment, the Crimean heroine could not exist outside of this relationship, so forceful was it during the war years.[152]

The construction of the Crimean heroine was a popular undertaking. While the image of Nightingale-as-heroine was and remained dominant, it was also ambiguous. Over time, that ambiguity provided space for the public to draw other female participants in the war into negotiations over questions of femininity, heroism, and social identity. The narrative of caregiving as a particularly laudable and feminine form of action remained central, but the Crimean War's temporal and cultural shift from current affairs or recent flashpoint to popular memory and national history meant that the memory war became a platform for the broader negotiation of women's patriotic service as part of the nation's heritage. By the end of the nineteenth century the Crimean heroine had been significantly reconstructed in terms of her class status. The changes taking place in the nursing profession, improvements in the condition and reputation of the soldier's wife, and the elevation of the Crimean veteran within the

[152] See Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 82. The Crimean heroine narrative functioned in similar ways to the celebration of the heroism of Sir Henry Havelock during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. According to Dawson, the narrative of heroism surrounding Havelock 'had no existence' beyond the 'conditions of cultural production and consumption' of that military heroism.

nation's patriotic symbolism all reflected the increasingly broad understanding of heroism which emerged in the late nineteenth century. By foregrounding lower-class women's labour, the popular narrative which circulated about these Crimean heroines emphasised their embodiment of feminine and heroic qualities. As such, these women came to represent both elements that Cubitt identifies as necessary for the recognition of heroes. They held 'symbolic significance' and functioned as figures for 'collective emotional investment' through their relationship to the war, to the established narrative of Nightingale's caregiving, and the place of both within British national heritage. The use of the women's poverty as a means of social criticism and national shame exposed their significant difference from the original Crimean heroine, but it also explicitly rendered a more socially diverse array of women as figures of civic pride, on far more equal terms with Nightingale.

However, this new visibility was not an entirely constructive development. The narrative of caregiving fundamentally appealed to broad understandings of appropriate spaces of women's action, to which gendered ideals continued to contribute, and it was only over time that lower-class women's service generally was accepted as an example of their patriotic contribution. As such, the caregiving narrative prompted little tangible redress to the social problems experienced and represented by these Crimean heroines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, while women's wartime service was recognised, the figure of the Crimean heroine provided only limited accommodation for women's—particularly soldiers' wives'— own attachment to military life identified in Part I. Praise for the Crimean heroines produced a climate where soldiers' wives could tell their own stories, but the military femininity of the army wife was diminished under the heroic qualities of the military nurse within this popular framing, which dominated as an explanation of the relationship between women and the war.

Conclusion

For Elizabeth Evans, the chance to narrate her account of the Crimean War in her old age offered an opportunity for reflection.

> When I take my mind back to those distant years of suffering by young women in the Army, I marvel at the changes which time has wrought. Sometimes I listen to the wails of the soldiers and their wives and sweethearts nowadays, and I smile almost pityingly, for, compared with the old order, they are ladies and gentlemen, and do not know what privation and iron discipline are.[1]

Her declarations of her own past suffering relative to army wives in 1908 serve as a reminder that, for all the points of pride and enjoyment that she found in her life with the army, she was ever marginalised by the military structure and her lower-class status; obstacles which were only overcome when time had wrought considerable change within the former, and revised social attitudes towards the latter. It was against such hierarchies, and always in relation to social constructions of gender roles and femininity, which Evans, Margaret Kerwin, Mary Seacole, the lower-class nurses, and the lower-class nursing applicants struggled to construct their own part in the war, and it was these struggles which prompted them to turn to other means to gain acceptance. The same was no less true of middle- and upper-class women. Although relatively privileged by their class status, gender continued to pose barriers that had to be navigated or subverted to access military space, authority, and acceptance. When James Estcourt travelled ahead of his wife and sister, Caroline and Marianne, upon receiving his appointment as Adjutant General in March 1854, he wrote in a letter that 'this sudden and

[1] Evans, 'A Soldier's Wife', p. 265.

unexpected change in the current of our life has upset some very pleasant schemes which were floating before our eyes. But at the same time, it opens a bright prospect of its own: and fills one with high hopes and expectations'.[2] These words could have been written by Frances Duberly, perhaps even by Ellen Palmer; the two certainly shared his sentiments about the excitement and opportunities that the war presented. Even lady nurses and middle-class nursing applicants looked forward, in some degree, to the departure that the military hospitals would provide from their lives in England, whether framed by personal or patriotic motives.

The military spaces of the Crimean War, including the war zone itself, were literal and metaphorical borderlands of British society. Women's experiences of the martial nature of the space had profound implications for their conceptions of femininity and for their sense of identity which transcended social divisions. According to their own accounts, women's part in the war consisted of their own feminine supportive capacity in both domestic and community matters, though class still mediated the nature of women's presence in labour and leisure terms. Women's accounts are clear that, while gender as a social construction was never far from their minds, military space and military communities were often experienced in terms of a removal from the constraints of civilian society and the relative rigidity of gender divisions it upheld. As such, all of the army women studied here experienced and recounted elements of enjoyment, adventure, and authority, and developed a profound sense of belonging which positioned them not as the helpmates of men or as advocates for peace, as "L." proposed they ought to be in their prize essay "Woman's Part in War", but as active members of the army community with distinct, if subjectively constructed, roles.

On the battlefield, renegotiations of femininity and identity could be taken further, as middle- and upper-class women also espoused their authority over that most martial of spaces

[2] GA, Copies by Caroline B. Estcourt of extracts from her husband's letters, D1571/F498, letter from James Bucknall Bucknall Estcourt to "Fanny", 17 March 1854.

in terms of their feminine domestic duties and in terms of their class status and cultural practices. However, such renegotiated femininity also met its strongest opposition here, as civilian leisure and military violence clashed conspicuously. Others' invocation of a far more stringent gender order to denounce women's presence relegated them to the ranks of the 'bizarre and fantastic, if not unfeminine and revolting'—the terms that "L." used to describe past forms of women's participation in war, which stood in such direct opposition to the ideal woman in the mid-nineteenth century.[3] If women's experiences of the war were intimately bound with their representations of those experiences, then the wider reception of their behaviours and accounts forms the third point in the trinity within which their authority in relation to the war was constructed and exercised—or checked.

Similar struggles over the nature of appropriate femininity and of women's participation in war took place in Britain throughout the organisation of the military nursing venture. The war was not only as a discrete event or space, but a national undertaking and an event of national crisis. As such, it can be seen as a stimulant to women's action and provides a lens on women's struggles over femininity, patriotism, and labour across society. War, in fact, was a prominent point of interest for British women, and the role of nurse held a broad appeal. Women's dialogues about military nursing exposed points of convergence and contention between personal and wider social concerns regarding class, labour, female bodies, family, and space. However, these were always framed by the innate femininity perceived in the work of caregiving. Amid intense public scrutiny, the need for that femininity to meet with popular approval dominated as a concern throughout the selection process in Britain and in the labour relations that manifested in the military hospitals.

These same debates shaped the place of women in the afterlife of the Crimean War for many decades. The dominance of Nightingale and of the caregiving narrative is testament to

[3] "L.", 'Woman's Part in War', p. 250.

the enduring influence of gendered discourse in nineteenth-century society, for it promoted and sustained a particularly gendered role for women in the Crimean War and its popular memory. As with femininity on the battlefield, the ways in which women's wartime actions were received provided the most stringent check on the scope that such borderlands as the Crimean War offered for significant or sustained transgression of normative social ideals and practices. The changing place of class within articulations of the Crimean heroine signify that reception was not static. Ultimately, however, women's roles could only be reconciled for wider public acceptance through a particularly gendered and civilian narrative of caregiving, particularly as the promotion of the Crimean heroine became a means through which Britain's contemporary status could be validated by connecting it to a glorified past. This is an issue that has particular resonance today. Written, as this thesis been, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Florence Nightingale's symbolism has continued to play an important role in the British response to the crisis, most notably with the swift construction of the NHS Nightingale Hospitals. However, the public continues to witness the non-translation of gratitude to the National Health Service's own "frontline heroes" into real increases in salaries.[4] These present-day heroes and the Crimean heroines have served as icons, examples, and emotive and patriotic symbols for a wider community to rally around and define themselves through—at personal, local, and national levels. However, the responsibilities of those communities to address real-world issues masked by the heroic façade remain problematic.

Women's part in the Crimean War did, therefore, incorporate ideas of the middle-class, Christian, domestic woman, since separate spheres ideology always contributed to popular ideals about femininity and spaces of women's action. Women who experienced or otherwise engaged with the Crimean War were necessarily drawn into dialogue with such ideas. Private

[4] M. Ford, 'Exclusive: Further delay confirmed to process for new nurse pay deal', *Nursing Times*, 18 June 2021, https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/workforce/exclusive-further-delay-confirmed-to-process-for-new-nurse-pay-deal-18-06-2021/, accessed 06/07/2021.

and domestic femininity was the standard to which these women were compared by others, and which they constructed themselves in reference, if not in conscious contradiction or even opposition to. However, women's roles were also shaped—often far more fundamentally at a personal level—by class and by space; by the operation of multiple gendered and classed discourses across the lines of social connection between Britain and military spaces; by the changing nature of these over time; and by women exercising agency in their experiences of the war zone, in their texts, and in their engagement with the war at home. Women constructed and fulfilled a rich variety of roles which were deeply personal, if not more broadly socially meaningful. Those roles, however, were always controversial amid ever-present debates about women, war, and the relationship between the two.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Transcripts of two Testimonials Forms often completed by nursing applicants.

a)

It is requested that this Form be filled up in order to prevent imposition

Notice.—As it is of the utmost importance, that Nurses sent out to the Hospitals in the East should be persons of experience and *unexceptionable character*, whoever signs this form is requested to do so from *personal* knowledge. Incorrect statements may lead to injurious consequences to the Sick, and loss to the person improperly recommended.

Name	Age	Where and how long employed as a Nurse	Character	How long personally known and where	State of Health*	Remarks
			Sober … Honest… Cleanly… Active… Intelligent… Good Tempered…			

Signature:

Address:

Signature:

Address:

*This as well as character to be certified by a Medical Practitioner.

b)

____ having referred to ____ as knowing her character and qualification is requested by ____ to whom the selection of Nurses for the Hospitals in the East has been entrusted, to fill up and return the accompanying form.

It is requested that this Form be filled up in order to prevent imposition

Notice.—As it is of the utmost importance, that Nurses sent out to the Hospitals in the East should be persons of experience and *unexceptionable character*, whoever signs this form is requested to do so from *personal* knowledge. Incorrect statements may lead to injurious consequences to the Sick, and loss to the person improperly recommended.

Name	Age	Employed			Character	How long personally known and where	Remarks
		Where	How	How long			
					Sober … Honest… Cleanly… Active… Intelligent… Good Tempered…		

Signature:

Address:

Signature:

Address:

N.B.– This Form being general, some of the above questions will of course be inapplicable to Ladies volunteering to serve as Nurses.

Appendix 2: Location data for nurses and applicants across historic counties

Historic County	Number of Nurses	Nurses (%)	Number of Applicants	Applicants (%)
England				
Bedfordshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Berkshire	0	0.00	6	1.17
Cambridgeshire	0	0.00	3	0.58
Cheshire	0	0.00	4	0.78
Cornwall	0	0.00	1	0.19
Cumberland	1	0.60	2	0.39
Derbyshire	1	0.60	1	0.19
Devon	9	5.36	13	2.53
Dorset	0	0.00	5	0.97
Durham	0	0.00	6	1.17
Essex	0	0.00	3	0.58
Gloucestershire	2	1.19	23	4.47
Hampshire	0	0.00	11	2.14
Hertfordshire	2	1.19	10	1.95
Kent	2	1.19	11	2.14
Lancashire	5	2.98	27	5.25
Leicestershire	1	0.60	4	0.78
Lincolnshire	2	1.19	3	0.58
Middlesex	92	54.76	199	38.73
Norfolk	0	0.00	2	0.39
Northampton	0	0.00	1	0.19
Northumberland	1	0.60	4	0.78
Nottinghamshire	4	2.38	5	0.97
Oxfordshire	5	2.98	9	1.75
Warwickshire	3	1.79	26	5.06
Shropshire	0	0.00	4	0.78
Somerset	0	0.00	13	2.53

Suffolk	0	0.00	4	0.78
Surrey	0	0.00	6	1.17
Sussex	3	1.79	9	1.75
Wiltshire	2	1.19	5	0.97
Worcestershire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Yorkshire	1	0.60	22	4.28
Wales				
Carmarthenshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Glamorganshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Monmouthshire	1	0.60	2	0.39
Pembrokeshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Scotland				
Aberdeenshire	1	0.60	2	0.39
Angus	1	0.60	2	0.39
Argyllshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Ayrshire	0	0.00	2	0.39
East Lothian	1	0.60	0	0.00
Fife	1	0.60	0	0.00
Inverness	1	0.60	1	0.19
Lanarkshire	0	0.00	5	0.97
Midlothian	13	7.74	9	1.75
Morayshire	0	0.00	2	0.39
Nairnshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
Roxburghshire	0	0.00	1	0.19
West Lothian	0	0.00	1	0.19
Ireland				
County Antrim	0	0.00	4	0.78
County Armagh	1	0.60	1	0.19
County Carlow	2	1.19	0	0.00
County Cork	7	4.17	3	0.58
County Down	0	0.00	1	0.19
County Kerry	0	0.00	1	0.19

County Kildare	0	0.00	3	0.58
County Limerick	0	0.00	2	0.39
County Tipperary	0	0.00	1	0.19
County Tyrone	0	0.00	1	0.19
Dublin	2	1.19	7	1.36
Londonderry	0	0.00	1	0.19
Waterford	0	0.00	1	0.19
Rest of World				
Bermuda	0	0.00	1	0.19
Brussels	1	0.60	1	0.19
Greece	1	0.60	0	0.00
Isle of Wight	0	0.00	2	0.39
Jersey	0	0.00	5	0.97
Neuilly-sur-Seine	0	0.00	1	0.19
New Orleans	0	0.00	1	0.19
Paris	0	0.00	1	0.19

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