Vertaling

Begin van een hoofdstuk voor een tekstboek voor eerstejaars studenten

One of the best-known women in world history is a nurse: Florence Nightingale (1820-1910). The uncontested heroine of Britain's national history, she is known throughout the world as the reputed 'Lady with the Lamp.' She is particularly known as the woman who, for the first time in history and practically on her own, made sure that the sick and wounded among common soldiers received decent care. Foot soldiers were rotting away and dying like flies in the military hospitals of the Crimean War (a war where France and Britain fought the Russians on Turkish territory between 1854 and 1856). Infectious diseases represented a much greater cause of death than actual battle wounds. With the help of a small brigade of nurses, Florence Nightingale managed to bring some relief to this living hell. She ensured the heavily soiled hospital was thoroughly cleaned, brought in clean sheets and fresh clothes, and personally surveyed the arrival and distribution of medical supplies and other stock. Her personal care for the soldiers and the letters she wrote to relatives in the case of a death immortalised her with the British people. She was no sweet lady, however. She was struggling against a rigid military administration and made use of well placed connections in the Ministry of War to achieve her ends. Deft at spin, she made sure the press reported favourably about her activities abroad during her stay in the Crimea. As a consequence, she was hailed as a national heroine upon her return from war.