

## A Crimean Nurse

In the year that saw the passing of the Emancipation Bill through the English Houses of Parliament there was living in the town of Paisley, Scotland, a man destined to be the father of a woman who was to live a life more adventurous and bitter than it is the lot of few living women to even imagine. That man was Mr. John McCowatt a very bitter Radical Reformer, or "Rusty Rad," as he, like most of his fellow enthusiasts were termed. He had four children, the eldest of whom was the late Nurse Ross. She was born in Paisley, on December 5, 1829 (which year is memorable as being that in which Western Australia was added to the British Dominions), and died in January of this year, at the age of 91 years. She received her early education in Paisley, and at the age of 21 married Sergeant Cadden, of the 27th Regiment of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. It was not long before Nurse Cadden heard Victoria's call to the unencumbered British women to go out as nurses to Crimea.

Though all other famous armies in time will be forgotten, that army of nurses will never be, either in England or in any other country. Their names are written in the annals of every civilised country where the suffering of the maimed and sick are in any way considered. That little band, with Florence Nightingale went not to fight, as did the soldier, Russians, but sickness and despair. Everybody honours the story of Nurse Nightingale and therefore it needs no repeating—but, what more beautiful is there than the story as told by one of her own band? Nurse Ross, or Cadden, as she was known then, was one of that brave, inspiring little band, and when her tongue was loosened what a myriad of tales she could tell with a clearness and veracity that few could equal.

At the termination of hostilities in '56 she went as nurse to the wives of the officers in Egypt. Meanwhile, in 1857, the Indian Mutiny had broken out and Sergeant Cadden, with his regiment, was ordered to India. Soon after leaving Capetown they were wrecked at

India, was ordered to India. Soon after leaving Capetown they were wrecked at Algoa Bay, but he was among the survivors, and in time reached India. Nurse Cadden did not stay long in Egypt but, as was the custom, followed her husband to India. She travelled a terribly rough journey by camel to Suez, where she took boat to India. She was at the siege of Lucknow, India (1856-57) and fortunately came out alive, when Campbell broke the siege.

Nurse Cadden found plenty of work among the besieged in that "hell-hole" as it was called by one of the rescued. The bravery with which the little garrison held out against the insurgents has few equals in the world's history. Terrible scenes were enacted around them—the walls crumbled before the onslaughts of the enemy—mine exploded beneath the feet of the little band, and Henry Laurence, their leader and brother of Governor Laurence, of the Punjab, was killed by a shell before Havelock relieved the fort. When the place was saved by General Colin Campbell, the besieged or those that could safely be moved, fled in bullock wagons to safety. Nurse Cadden nearly died of thirst. Every well had been poisoned by the notorious Nana Sahib. All along the way they saw thousands of babes crucified on swords and spears—often mutilated beyond recognition.

Many a time "Granny," as she is known to many, retold the story of the fellow countrywoman of hers, who, above the din of the firing after 87 days of siege, heard the welcome strains of the music which betokened rescue.

When the mutiny had been quelled and Sergeant Cadden's 29 years of service were over, he accepted the pension and came with his wife by the ship "Naval Brigade," about 50 years ago, to Western Australia. They took up their residence in the old Pensioners' Barracks (or Base Hospital as it is now known) where Mrs. Cadden continued her vocation as nurse, and won the lifelong praise and esteem of the late Dr. Hope. In the early days the sergeant, who, by the way, was a tall, well-built, handsome man, and Mrs. Cadden were welcome visitors at the homes of the best families in Western Australia, and during the first few years of her residence in Western Australia she was known as the "belle," and rightly so, if her beauty in those days can be judg-

if her beauty in those days can be judged by that which she possessed to her last days. For many years, too, she was a leading member of the Anglican Church. Mrs. Cadden unfortunately lost her husband through an accident to his knee. He died in the Perth Hospital and was buried in the East Perth Cemetery, in May, 1888. She married twice after his death, first Sergeant Quinn, an old friend of her first husband, and later a man named Ross. Her wonderful spirit and vitality, coupled with experience and love, kept her at the nursing profession till a years before her demise. So long has she been nursing that there are few persons in Fremantle who do not know her. Many of the oldest and best families claim her as a family nurse, and mourn her death almost as a relative, yet few people really believed she was till living.

The age to which she attained is by no means unusual in her family, as her mother lived till within one week of a century, while her grandmother exceeded the century. Her sister, now a resident in New Zealand, has also lived to a great age, being 84 last birthday. Mrs. Ross had two children, but both died young, one of them during the strife in India.

She was a much travelled woman, and knew more than most people of her age about America, South Africa, India, Australia, and the Continent, and at one time made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem at a time when that city was forbidden almost to Europeans. She was a fine linguist, and spoke Hindustani with a fluency remarkable.

She was buried in the Anglican portion of the Fremantle Cemetery, the Rev. F. T. Bowen officiating at the graveside. Her funeral would have been more largely attended had it not been for the railway strike, which prevented so many of her friends scattered over the country from attending.

And so passed one of the most remarkable spirits of either this or the last century, a Christian to the end.

An authority quite recently remarked that in a few years drunkenness and crime will be on the down grade: he claims that the new summer drink—"Gingerette"—will be the greatest power assisting the authorities.

power assisting the authorities. "Gingerette" is so economical that a large glass full costs less than one half-penny, and the taste is beyond comparison. It is to be remembered that "Gingerette" is a great stomachic tonic, and hence can be consumed in any quantity without any evil effects.