be held in every nursing library, and a copy must be among the possessions of any researcher or person interested in studying the history of nursing.

A. Carberry
London

**********

Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands
Falling Wall Press, Bristol, 1984
ISBN 0 905046 22 6 (cased)
ISBN 0 905046 23 4 (paperback) £3.95
Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee (eds)

In recent years a determined attempt has been made to place Mary Seacole in the canon of nursing history. A Jamaican businesswoman, healer and adventurer, she tried and failed to secure a place in Florence Nightingale's party of nurses travelling to the Crimea in 1854, but got there under her own steam - and won a reputation for both nursing and entrepreneurial talents. Now memorial services are held at her grave in Kensal Rise, articles occasionally appear in the nursing press, and a Mary Seacole Society has been formed, a revival of interest which is being stimulated further by this enterprising publication of her memoirs.

Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands, the first new edition of her story since its appearance in 1857, makes interesting and occasionally delightful reading. Born in 1805 in Kingston, the daughter of a free black woman and a Scottish solider, she grew up supplementing her knowledge of traditional Creole healing arts with scraps picked up from visiting army doctors, and built up local renown for her nursing and medical skills. These were put to good use in a cholera epidemic in her native island, on trips to the Central American republic of New Granada, now Panama, and eventually in the Crimea, where 'Mother Seacole' became a familiar figure nursing the sick, providing her own medicines, and tending the wounded after battle.

By her own lively and readable account, she was by no means singularly dedicated to nursing. Lacking the independent means to do the work she might otherwise have chosen, and possibly hindered by her colour, she in any case did not appear to relish the ascetism and vocationalism of the new Victorian nurse's life, and gained at least as much satisfaction from selling champagne and cold collations to the officers at Crimean cricket matches and horse races.

The memoirs were written partly to boost her ailing finances, for she returned from the Crimea a bankrupt, the goods and services she sold to soldiers from the 'British Hotel' near Balaklava no longer being needed. It is therefore difficult to assess the emphasis she places on her healing skills, for her descriptions of what she did are laced with much name-dropping and coy references to tributes from grateful and highly connected admirers. Certainly there is nothing in the text to support