

'All Touched my Hand': Queenly Sentiment and Royal Prerogative

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This article explores royal efforts to project a special relationship with the army during the Crimean War. It deals with royal attempts to cultivate its public image as well as public responses to the monarchy in the press and commercial prints. The Crimean War occurred during a formative period of, what John Plunkett terms, the monarchy's 'civic publicness'; in other words, the press-mediated display of public duty to assert a popular constitution.¹ Plunkett deals briefly with the Crimean War in *First Media Monarch* and his exploration of public responses to the monarchy is valuable in delving beyond the Queen's personal affection for her 'beloved army' during the war, which is well evidenced in her journal.² The Queen's journal shows that royal interest in the war was strong from its outset, but it was only during and after the winter troubles of 1854 that the monarchy raised its public profile. Alexander Kinglake attributed the administrative difficulties during the winter troubles to the 'monarchical surface of her [England's] polity'.³ At this time, the army was controlled by the Crown and Parliament, each levying influence through the commander-in-chief and the Secretary of State at War respectively.⁴ The commander-in-chief's office, based at Horse Guards, was responsible for appointments, reward, training, and discipline. During war, the office was supposed to defer to government but communication between both offices was often inadequate (Strachan, p. 55). Horse Guards viewed itself as solely accountable to the Crown and the war strengthened the Queen and Prince Albert's resolve to maintain this tradition. In 1855, the Queen wrote to Lord Raglan that

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¹ John Plunkett, *First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 14.

² Helen Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies: The Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London: Aurum Press, 2007).

³ Alexander Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*, 8 vols (London: Blackwood, 1863–87), 1 (1880), 15.

⁴ Kinglake, 1, 15–30; Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

control over the army was one of her 'dearest prerogatives'.⁵ The disruption and changes brought about by the war caused royal anxiety about the continuance of its army privileges and this concern drove the monarchy's desire to be seen with the soldier.

Many prints and drawings focused on the figure of Victoria and younger members of the royal family to accentuate the monarchy's caring and maternal presence. While Prince Albert's considerable efforts behind the scenes will be addressed, it is the Queen's figure that was the locus of public responses to the army and the role of the monarchy.⁶ Using the terms of Benedict Anderson's work on nationhood, Plunkett argues that 'the weight of reverent royal attention forcibly located Victoria at the heart of an imagined and imaginary community'.⁷ This article supports this statement, the war more often than not allowing a prominent and popular profiling of the monarchy as a sympathetic force for good, embodying national sensitivities. These responses provide a Victorian context for Anderson's notion of 'imagined community', creating a relationship between the Queen and a unified People based upon shared concern for the army.

In assessing visual representations of female care and in particular a media campaign to present Queen Victoria as 'in touch' with her subjects, this article builds upon previous issues of *19* by demonstrating that tactility and sentiment had an important role to play during the Crimean War.⁸

⁵ Queen Victoria, letter to Lord Raglan, 9 April 1855, Papers of FM Lord Fitzroy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan, Commander-in-Chief, Crimean War (1854–1856), London, National Army Museum (NAM), 1968-07-280.

⁶ Prince Albert's biographer credits him with a great deal of influence upon army administration. See Theodore Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort* (London: Smith, Elder, 1882), p. 31. Prince Albert wrote over fifty volumes of memoranda during the Crimean War. See Carolly Erickson, *Her Little Majesty: The Life of Queen Victoria* (London: Robson Books, 1997), p. 136.

⁷ Plunkett, p. 7. Anderson defines nationhood, or nation-ness, as an imagined communion of people, conveyed and reinforced through cultural artefacts. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, new edn (London: Verso, 2006), p. 6.

⁸ There is growing impetus to reorientate Victorian 'sentiment', or more controversially 'sentimentality', and tactility as meaningful vehicles of expression. Nicola Bown re-evaluates the superficial, kitsch associations of 'sentimentality' in Victorian art and literature, arguing that its immediacy 'invites us sympathetically to share the emotional world of those distant from us in time and circumstance'. See Nicola Bown, 'Introduction: Crying over Little Nell', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007), p. 4 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.16995/ntn.453>>. Similarly, Heather Tilley highlights a traditional 'hierarchy of senses', in which touch, taste, and smell are secondary to sight and sound. See Heather Tilley, 'Introduction: The Victorian Tactile Imagination', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014), p. 5 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.16995/ntn.723>>. Scholars promoting 'sense-based' analysis contest a Western discourse characterizing sentimentality and tactility as respectively irrational and base. See *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Cultural Reader*, ed. by David Howes (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 4–7.

Constance Classen writes that ‘the history of touch [...] is often an inferred history’, due to historical oversight of corporal practices and feeling.⁹ Yet, this article shows that touch was a celebrated means of expressing royal sympathy with suffering bodies. Royal ceremony explored here builds upon older, royal traditions of employing touch or touch once removed to signal healing, namely the ‘laying-on of hands’ to cure scrofula and the issuing of special, consecrated rings known as ‘cramp rings’, which were sent to those suffering from muscular pains and epilepsy.¹⁰ Heather Tilley highlights that touch was central to discourses on the relationship between the mind and body, and between ‘selves and others’ in the nineteenth century (p. 17). Particularly apt is her contention that regimes of touch embodied social attitudes: ‘Who touched whom, and how, counted in nineteenth-century society’ (p. 1). By looking at key moments during and following the war, beginning with the Queen’s leaked letter regarding the sick and wounded, it will be demonstrated how many responses were structured by the presentation of a feeling monarch cutting across political interests and class.

Royal interventions from the fireside

As initiatives to improve the care and conditions of soldiers serving in the Crimea gained momentum towards the close of 1854, there was a conscious attempt to position the suffering soldier as a principal subject of public interest. A major precipitator of these initiatives was *The Times*’s ‘Sick and Wounded Fund’ in October 1854, which encouraged the public to take an active stance and provide for the welfare of injured soldiers to compensate for government deficiencies. An emotive plea for £5,000 of comforts for wounded soldiers foregrounded the soldiers’ claims to the civilian reader, the latter characterized as sitting by the fireside and ‘indulging in all the sentiment of the affair’ but showing little action.¹¹ *The Times*’s leader sought to revise views of soldiers and sailors as ‘savage, murderous, ravaging and destroying creatures’ by emphasizing reciprocal pain and injury and finding a place for public influence in the work of hospitals (p. 6). Within a few weeks the Fund had reached the impressive figure of £11,957.¹² In an article reporting on the discernible benefits of the Sick and Wounded Fund, the correspondent wrote of the special claims of those ‘whose wounds and sufferings constitute them as chief actors in the bloody drama’ of war.¹³

⁹ Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), p. xii.

¹⁰ Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 3

¹¹ Leader, *The Times*, 12 October 1854, p. 6.

¹² ‘Soldiers’ Sick and Wounded Fund’, *The Times*, 9 November 1854, p. 6.

¹³ ‘The Sick and Wounded Fund’, *The Times*, 23 November 1854, p. 7.

This demonstrates the extent to which mid-Victorians realized the centrality of the body to war, what recent scholarship has characterized as ‘politics incarnate, politics written on and experienced through the thinking and feeling bodies of men and women’.¹⁴ Moreover, while the soldier’s weakened state may have exposed the realities of war to a distant, mid-Victorian public sitting by its fireside, it also served as a powerful trope for the positive and active intervention of civilians on matters beyond their direct control.

The Queen was alive to the dominance of the broken, suffering soldier in the press, whose condition was compromised by an ineffective administration as much as it was by the natural consequences of a ‘bloody drama’ with the foe. In order to distance itself from accusations levied against leading aristocratic figures of the war, such as Lord Raglan and the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for War, the monarchy recognized a need to harness a restorative, public profile. It therefore took a leading role in a growing media frenzy surrounding the army’s welfare. The Sick and Wounded Fund had coincided with the establishment of the Royal Patriotic Fund (RPF) for military orphans and widows on 13 October 1854, the timing arguably restricting the RPF’s momentum by diverting focus to the pressing wants of the soldier himself. Over the next few weeks, the Queen concentrated her personal efforts on convalescent soldiers abroad, staking a royal claim in the soldier’s welfare during the mounting political crisis, which reached an apogee in January 1855. The Queen’s authority and sympathy had to work as a distant force, as she was unable to assist the troops at the seat of war, a source of personal frustration. On 8 December 1854, the Queen wrote of her envy of Florence Nightingale and her good work among the ‘noble brave heroes’. The Queen had been reading copied extracts of Nightingale’s letters, which she found ‘most touching’.¹⁵ The role of the monarchy was put under pressure by Nightingale’s symbolic success as the government’s restorer, especially in view of the gendered appraisal of Nightingale’s work as a ‘ministering angel’ and her perceived authority in representing the Protestant faith. *The Times’s* correspondent marked the lively interest attending Nightingale and her mission as proof of ‘Protestant England’s’ high benevolence, capable of matching the reputation of Catholic Sisters of Mercy.¹⁶ The unprecedented mission of nurses to the seat of war on 23 November 1854 did not elicit universal encouragement but it was one which attracted much interest as an ‘experiment’ and

¹⁴ Kevin McSorley and Sarah Maltby, ‘War and the Body: Cultural and Military Practices’, *Journal of War and Cultural Studies*, 5 (2012), 3–6 (p. 3).

¹⁵ Queen Victoria’s Journals (QVJ), 8 December 1854, Windsor, Royal Archives (RA) VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1854. Also available online at <<http://www.queen Victoriasjournals.org/home.do>> [accessed 28 April 2015]. All archival material quoted with the permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

¹⁶ ‘The Sick and Wounded Fund’, *The Times*, 23 November 1854, p. 7.

was repeatedly reported as successful.¹⁷ Nightingale attracted powerful supporters, who were able to vouch for her effectiveness. Not least among her advocates was *The Times*, whose Sick and Wounded Fund had supported the nursing mission to Scutari and was therefore keen to report upon its success and immediate benefits.¹⁸ There was a danger that the Queen's status as figurehead and chief advocate of the army would be supplanted in soldiers' eyes by those attending to their immediate needs.

Royal anxiety about its wartime contribution is seen in efforts to distribute gifts to soldiers and to publicize their source. In December, the Queen arranged for books, newspapers, periodicals, air cushions, and woolen blankets to be sent out to Scutari Hospital.¹⁹ On 2 December 1854, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, Colonel Phipps, reported that he had written to the Chief of the Medical Department 'begging that the patients may know that these papers and books [...] come direct from Your Majesty; which [...] will more than double their value in the eyes of the wounded & sick'.²⁰ Over 224 pounds of Windsor soap was sent out and 144 bottles of aromatic vinegar.²¹ Similarly, at the end of the war, Colonel Phipps approved two libraries of books to be sent out to the Crimea, with the proviso that it was made clear that the books were a gift from the Queen and inscribed with her name.²² Although it is doubtful whether all of these supplies were fundamental to the care of the troops, knowledge of the Queen's own personal contribution demonstrated her generosity and the luxurious nature of the gifts conveyed to the soldier that he was deserving of the best of comforts.

Charles Phipps was a key courtier and advisor to the Queen and Prince Albert, coordinating numerous gifts and enquiries into the condition of troops over the course of the war. He had served in the Scots Fusilier Guards in peacetime, retiring as a colonel 'unattached' in 1851.²³ He was an important arbiter of royal interests, encouraging and complementing the Queen's interventions and the ideal of the monarchy's popular constitution. Phipps was a keen protector of royal prerogative in relation to army affairs. While he respected Nightingale's personal qualities, he

¹⁷ 'The Military Hospitals at Scutari', *The Times*, 8 December 1854, p. 8. This anonymous letter from a nurse reported, among other things, upon Nightingale's suitability for the role and the skill of most of her fellow nurses.

¹⁸ 'The Sick and Wounded Fund', *The Times*, 30 November 1854, p. 8.

¹⁹ Account statements, RA, PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/8/5011, 5016, 5017, 5111. The newspapers sent for December represented the most widely read for England, Scotland, and Ireland — *The Times*, *Dublin Evening Mail*, and *Edinburgh Scotsman*. Of the weeklies, *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*, followed by the *Observer*, *Spectator*, and *Examiner* were deemed the most popular.

²⁰ Phipps, letter to the Queen, 2 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/67.

²¹ Unknown, letter, 12 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/77.

²² Phipps, letter to the Queen, 23 December 1855, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/4/29.

²³ K. D. Reynolds, 'Phipps, Sir Charles Beaumont', in *ODNB* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22184>>.

was dubious of the nursing mission and the Sick and Wounded Fund as suitable remedies for supply failure:

There must be something judicially wrong in a service in which no order, arrangement, or comfort is attained except under the fortuitous instruction of a volunteer Lady — and when it is found best to procure what is wanted from ‘The Times’ correspondent, because the official dispensers of the supplies sent are found rather to be a hindrance than to give facility.²⁴

Phipps’s view of Nightingale as an honourable but unprofessional ‘volunteer Lady’ acts as an unflattering benchmark for the extent of deficiency, demonstrating his wariness of outside intervention. His letter goes on to outline a need for internal accountability. Two days later, the Queen lobbied Newcastle to address dire reports about the condition of the troops. The duke reported that the military authorities were in denial, but reassured the Queen that his commission into the state of the Medical Department was due to report its findings.²⁵ Despite Phipps’s personal views and Newcastle’s attempts to reform from within, favourable reports of Nightingale’s mission created a need to display outward royal duty and feeling as an antidote to personal suffering.

A striking example of royalist intervention followed the first distribution of royal gifts, demonstrating the dedication of the monarch from afar. The Queen wrote an anxious letter requesting information about the wounded from Scutari, expressing her concern for the men. The letter was leaked to the press, first appearing in the conservative daily, the *Morning Post*, on 4 January 1855. The ‘autograph letter’, as it was styled, repeatedly asserted the overriding right of the monarch to feel for the troops: ‘*no one* takes a warmer interest or feels *more* for their sufferings, or admires their courage or heroism *more* than their Queen.’²⁶ While there is no explicit frustration vented towards Nightingale’s unique position, the Queen’s recurrent declaration that the state of the wounded away from the battlefield interests ‘*me* more than anyone’ seems a pointed reminder of a superior claim. By printing the letter with its original emphasis in the first person, the *Morning Post* publicized the Queen’s passionate voice and heightened feeling. The paper’s description of the letter as an ‘autograph letter’ promotes it as a hallmark of the Queen’s personal sentiments and sympathy, that is to say, her strongly felt response to the plight of the army.

The letter was wrongly attributed as being addressed to Sidney Herbert in the newspaper. A copy of the original letter is available in the

²⁴ Phipps, letter to the Queen, 20 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/81.

²⁵ Duke of Newcastle, letter to the Queen, 22 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/B/13/219.

²⁶ ‘The War in the East’, *Morning Post*, 4 January 1855, p. 4, emphasis in original.

Royal Archives, revealing that it was sent to the Queen's governess, Miss Hildyard, who was asked to forward it on to Mrs Herbert. Crucially, the Queen added at the end of the original version: 'You can copy these words & beg Mrs Herbert to communicate them.'²⁷ The printed version condensed this request so the significance of 'you can copy these words' is lost. Although the appearance of the letter in the press may have startled the Queen — in her journal she notes her surprise — she sanctioned direct, written dissemination. The Herberts denied leaking the letter and so it is not clear who disclosed it. The *Morning Post* stated that it had received a copy of the royal letter from a Special Correspondent in the Crimea and indeed the letter had been circulated in hospitals by the time of its report. Reports from the front line justified royal faith in its power of sympathy for the Crimean sick and wounded. Relevant extracts were recorded by the Queen, which were retained as lasting testimonials of her impact. Mr Bracebridge, the husband of Nightingale's travelling companion, reported as follows:

The Queen's letter has been copied in large numbers, and has been stuck up in every ward [...]. It has been received with the greatest enthusiasm — many beg for a copy to keep as their greatest treasure — some say 'we will learn it by heart' some, 'how very feeling it is.'²⁸

Nurse Stanley noted the patriotic exclamation of one soldier: "I only wish I could go and fight for her again. We'd all fight whilst we've a drop of blood left — to think of her thinking of us."²⁹ She described patients reading the letter to those unable to read, the narrative thread for the Marchioness of Waterford's watercolour, *Reading the Queen's Letter*, which visualizes the letter's mystical aura for posterity. A lithograph version was purchased by the Queen, revealing her investment in the letter's cultural status (*Fig. 1*).

The scene, like the copied reports in the Royal Archives, acts as propaganda, presenting suffering that is responsive to the distant and imaginary figure of the Queen.³⁰ All the figures in the watercolour are subjugated and attentive to the focus of the picture, the illuminated letter, including the crouching figure of Nightingale straining to listen on the lower right. The painting very clearly presents the Queen as a source of light and hope,

²⁷ Queen Victoria, copy of letter to Miss Hildyard, 6 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/102.

²⁸ Mr Bracebridge, copied extract from letter, [n.d.], RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/80.

²⁹ Miss Stanley, copy of letter, 30 December 1854, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/90.

³⁰ Waterford's setting and focus of the bed-bound soldier bears a striking resemblance to the print after A. Laby, *The Wounded Soldier's Dream* (1855), which represents the royal family's distribution of a medal as the distant and dreamed of soldiers' homecoming. See Royal Collections Trust <<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection>> [accessed 29 April 2015].



Fig. 1: Vincent Brooks (after the Marchioness of Waterford), *Reading the Queen's Letter*, c. 1855, lithograph. Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2015.

casting Nightingale's figure on the periphery. There is a quasi-religious aspect to the scene, a patient reaching for the china cup held by Nightingale in a manner reminiscent of receiving communion, his hands also resembling prayer. The enlightened recipient of the Queen's message, cast in a warm glow and wearing a pure white tunic, bears a Christlike appearance. These accounts of the letter's impact all stem from official sources and reveal a remarkably consistent narrative of receptiveness, fervent patriotism, and faith. What is lacking are accounts from soldiers themselves to substantiate the letter's reception.

The extraordinary press responses to the letter generated favourable publicity for the monarchy as an institution. The *Morning Post* extolled the letter as the most gratifying document yet of the war, viewing it as a boost to the war effort and a turning point in constitutional politics.³¹ It praised Victoria for breaking down the barrier created by government relations, separating royal feeling from the populace: 'The present is the first instance of a direct communication having been opened between the individual who occupies the Throne and the nation at large — the first assurance of a community of feeling in the Sovereign and the People.'³² Similarly, the *Morning Chronicle*, of which Sidney Herbert had been a proprietor until 1854, dwelled on a constitutional shift in an opening editorial, viewing

³¹ 'The War in the East', *Morning Post*, 4 January 1855, p. 4.

³² 'The Queen's Autograph Letter', *Morning Post*, 5 January 1855, p. 4.

the letter as welcome evidence of the Queen's 'secret feelings'.³³ A community of feeling between a personal monarch and the 'People' emphasized both national unity and royal legitimacy. Yet, what was also at stake was the monarch's special relationship with the army, a relationship seen by some as a vestige of unconstitutional power due to the Crown's control over aspects of army administration. For example, Lord Grey was a vocal critic of Crown influence, which he viewed as a threat to civil liberty. He frequently called for the transfer of army control to a civilian board under the House of Commons, a proposal which was successfully rebuffed by Prince Albert.³⁴ Two different poems were printed under the title 'The Queen's Letter', one expressing the soldier's renewed fighting spirit while the other, kept for posterity in the Royal Collection, reasserts a special, royal-military relationship. Speaking from the Queen's perspective in first person throughout, the poem's final lines read: 'Tho' all England holds them dear, 'Tis their Queen who loves them best'.³⁵ All these responses to the letter position the Queen as the soldier's foremost well-wisher, but supported in this endeavour by a loyal and unified 'People'. Propaganda like this upheld royal prerogative, but also presented it as complementary to the British constitution.

There can be no doubt that the timing of the letter was significant, as Mrs Herbert explained to Miss Hildyard. She united the letter's candid expression with a particular audience:

Sidney says that the very fact of the letter being evidently to a Private and non-official will do such immense good. Especially in the Crimea where the 'Times' has been doing its best to make the poor fellows believe they are uncared for.³⁶

Indeed, the Queen's letter complemented the *Morning Post's* desire to counteract *The Times's* version of events. While recognizing misconduct during the war, the paper objected to *The Times's* tactic of selecting letters from soldiers expressing pessimistic views. The *Morning Post's* establishment response was equally as selective, however, favouring letters from content soldiers for its columns.³⁷ Interestingly, *The Times* reprinted the letter but did not pass comment on it, perhaps recognizing the tension between its own attack on aristocratic influence in the army and Crown prerogative. The Queen's letter refuted the perceived gap between privilege and the

³³ Leader, *Morning Chronicle*, 5 January 1855, p. 4.

³⁴ John Sweetman, *War and Administration* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1984), p. 84.

³⁵ 'The Queen's Letter', poem, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/101. Also appeared in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 20 January 1855.

³⁶ Mrs Herbert, letter to Miss Hildyard, January 1855, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/1/104.

³⁷ 'Facts from the Crimea', *Morning Post*, 6 January 1855, p. 2.

ordinary soldier, but not all critics were seduced by its power. *Reynolds's Newspaper*, a Chartist publication, had no patience for what it termed 'The Queen's Epistle'. Castigating the letter's enthusiasts, it stated: 'None but the veriest greenhorn can doubt that it was meant for publication, and few but thorough-paced simpletons will believe in its sincerity.'³⁸ On the same page as this indictment is a gloomy appraisal of the war's progress and the conflict's senior officers, including the Queen's cousin, the Duke of Cambridge. Cambridge had obtained a certificate of sick leave during the winter, along with a number of other high-profile officers and the paper seized the opportunity to brand him a shirker and call for his dismissal. The Queen had recognized privately that the duke's retreat would have 'the worst effect' and so royal intervention, in addition to asserting royal prerogative, could be seen to compensate for absent leadership (QVJ, 30 December 1854). The war damaged the reputation of leading military figures, such as Commander-in-Chief Lord Raglan. It also brought down Lord Aberdeen's coalition and with it a key mediator between Crown and government, the Duke of Newcastle. The Queen's journal for January reveals royal sympathy for the Duke of Newcastle's predicament, while the appointment of Lord Palmerston as Prime Minister was not at first favoured by the Queen due to historical differences.³⁹ The winter troubles called for remedial action and the leaked letter, whether intended for press publication or not, constituted a first attempt to exercise royal control and harness unity in a volatile climate. *Reynolds's Newspaper's* challenge that the Queen should convert her 'twaddle' into action was met with partial success. It will be shown how the popular image of a caring Queen was compromised by royal attempts to block army reform and preserve traditional class relations.

Facing her subjects: the politics of wounding

Over the course of 1855, the Queen performed public and private displays of maternal duty towards the wounded, no doubt encouraged by more favourable responses to the leaked letter and a particular admiration for open and gendered compassion. The *Morning Chronicle* had praised the Queen's feeling for the wounded in particular: 'There is fame for the dead. For the wounded there is Queenly and womanly sympathy.'⁴⁰ Even *Punch* proclaimed that the letter was 'all womanhood', with 'nought of the

³⁸ 'The Queen's Epistle — Hypocrisy and Humbug Exposed', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 7 January 1855, n.p.

³⁹ QVJ, 28 January 1855. For more on the chequered relationship with Palmerston, see David Urquhart, *The Queen and the Premier: A Statement of their Struggle and its Results* (London: Bryce, 1857).

⁴⁰ Leader, *Morning Chronicle*, 5 January 1855, p. 4.

ermine but its softness and purity'.⁴¹ *Punch* admired the Queen as a figure of stereotypical womanhood, emphasizing these qualities over her aristocratic status. The ermine is a symbol of nobility and purity, dating back to the Renaissance period, and its fur was commonly used for ceremonial dress. An ermine featured in a portrait of Elizabeth I, now held at Hatfield House, who also attracted mythical status for the 'Gloriana' devotion of her subjects, particularly following the Spanish Armada. In the absence of being able to lead troops out to battle, female monarchs used other powers at their disposal to cement ancient ties between royalty and the army.⁴² In Queen Victoria's case, this involved creating a sense of belonging, a family unit, of which she was the matriarchal head.

Responses to the leaked letter continued a trend established by *Punch*'s image of the Queen waving goodbye to the Guards as they filed past Buckingham Palace at the outbreak of war (*Fig. 2*). In this illustration,



Fig. 2: 'Throwing the Old Shoe, at the Parting of Her Majesty and her Guards', Punch, 11 March 1854, p. 98.

⁴¹ 'Royal Letters — Victoria', *Punch*, 20 January 1855, p. 21.

⁴² Rappaport, pp. 6–7. Rappaport refers to the 'mystical bond' between the army and its monarch and the Queen's own military ties.

ceremony is collapsed and the Queen is seen close-up on the balcony surrounded by her children, throwing an old shoe as a gesture of good luck to the departing Guards. This symbolic action of release is juxtaposed with a restraining arm around the youngest member of the royal family, Prince Leopold, who is perilously close to the edge of the balcony. The emphasis here is not on the Guards and their expression of loyalty to the monarch, but on an accessible, demonstrative Queen whose familial responsibilities coalesce with royal duty towards the army. The Queen's farewell to 'her Guards' is presented as a natural extension of motherly instinct, so that soldiering is recalibrated as a defence of the home and not the killing of others.⁴³ In adopting a close view of the family gathering, the illustrator avoids a grand view of 'home', Buckingham Palace. Victoria is the archetypal woman anxiously waiting at home, in accordance with the popular folk song of the period 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'.

As Anderson has observed, the family unit is associated with 'disinterested love and solidarity' and therefore representations of Victoria's domesticity during the Crimean War can be seen to perpetuate the monarchy's apolitical standing (Anderson, p. 144). *Punch's* image proved an influential template for royal 'womanly sympathy', which was utilized to great effect in the weeks and months following the leaked letter, at military hospitals in Portsmouth and Chatham and in the privileged space of Buckingham Palace. Gender was empowering and disempowering: on the one hand allowing demonstrative feeling prohibited in kingly martial representation, but, on the other hand, championing an exclusive narrative of female care.⁴⁴ The wounded soldier in this period is seen either with the Queen or Nightingale and not the numerous vicars, doctors, and surgeons also caring for their needs. Despite the close bonds between soldiers, womanly proximity could more easily be portrayed as an asset to the wounded soldier. A statuette of Florence Nightingale at the National Army Museum demonstrates the commonplace view of womanly sympathy, Nightingale supporting and guiding a wounded soldier (*Fig. 3*).⁴⁵

⁴³ Mary Favret elucidates on this recasting of war in Romantic texts. See Mary Favret, 'Coming Home: The Public Spaces of Romantic War', *Studies in Romanticism*, 33 (1994), 539–48 (p. 543).

⁴⁴ Matthew Lalumia has demonstrated a crucial revision of male care in favour of female care in Jerry Barrett's painting *The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale Receiving the Wounded at Scutari* (1857). In a preparatory painting, Barrett reveals male orderlies attending to a wounded soldier at Nightingale's feet, but in the final version, they are replaced with a female nurse offering a drink. See Matthew Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), pp. 88–91.

⁴⁵ The statuette has origins in a *Punch* illustration, 'Mr. Punch's Design for a Statue to Miss Nightingale', *Punch*, 30 August 1856, p. 81.



Fig. 3: Theodore Phyllers, Statuette of Florence Nightingale helping a wounded soldier, c. 1856, Parian ware. © National Army Museum, London.

This statuette, made from Parian ware, a cheaper alternative to bronze, was manufactured as an affordable piece of sculpture for the middle classes. The figures of the soldier and Nightingale incline towards one another, forming an arc around the central feature of the statuette, their

point of contact. Touch functions to accentuate pathos in the viewer, registering a moral need to face and reach out to suffering veterans. Pamela Gilbert has shown how, by the mid-nineteenth century, theorists drew upon touch as the foremost sense, while the hand in particular was seen as an important indicator of human intention and will.⁴⁶ Here, the emphasis is on Nightingale giving touch — Nightingale’s hands lightly cradle the arm and the fingers of the soldier. Nightingale does not clasp his hand, but tentatively receives it. No doubt this lightness of touch was in keeping with rules around etiquette for women of status, but it also establishes a subtle power relationship. Through touch, Nightingale’s soothing presence accentuates an image of dependency and need, an exchange that would be less acceptable with an intact male protagonist. The design of the statuette furthers a formula of the soldier’s forlornness and passiveness by averting his gaze downwards. The regimes of touch, of sensing and being sensed, are vital to this commercial piece, which registers tactile encounter over tactile exchange. These considerations are important for images of the Queen, who is frequently shown on the threshold of bodily contact with her soldiers.

Queen Victoria’s interactions with the wounded were documented by specially commissioned artists and photographers who had links to the illustrated press. The Queen extended her patronage to the artist-illustrators George Housman Thomas, John Gilbert, and John Tenniel. Thomas and Gilbert both contributed significantly to the *Illustrated London News* (*ILN*) and, although Tenniel was a chief cartoonist for *Punch* from 1851 onwards, he also worked for the *ILN*.⁴⁷ As Plunkett has shown, the *ILN* was particularly pro-monarchy and generally eschewed a political alignment in preference to portraying domestic harmony (pp. 99–100). In March 1855, the *ILN* printed evidence of the Queen’s interactions with wounded soldiers at Buckingham Palace in February 1855, heralding a trend for warming scenes of the Queen’s charitable and domestic figure, replete with younger members of the royal family (*Fig. 4*).

The Queen’s encounters at Buckingham Palace mark an unprecedented act of royal favour towards the Guardsmen, who were among the first to return to England either sick or with wounds sustained at Alma, Inkerman, and in the trenches (QVJ, 20 February 1855). The *ILN* scene appears to be the basis for a lost painting by John Gilbert, which caused a sensation at the Old Watercolour Society exhibition of 1856 and was

⁴⁶ Pamela Gilbert, ‘The Will to Touch: David Copperfield’s Hand’, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014), p. 4 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.16995/ntn.695>>.

⁴⁷ L. Perry Curtis jun., ‘Tenniel, Sir John (1820–1914)’, *ODNB* <<http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/36458>>; Delia Millar, *The Victorian Watercolours and Drawings in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen*, 2 vols (London: Wilson, 2001), II, 856.



Fig. 4: 'Her Majesty Inspecting the Wounded Guards in the Grand Hall of Buckingham Palace', *Illustrated London News*, 10 March 1855, p. 237.

reproduced in print form in 1903 by Vincent Brooks (Lalumia, pp. 77–78). This copy can be viewed at the National Army Museum and its choice of moment and perspective corresponds to the *ILN* print (Fig. 5).

John Ruskin considered the painting a success, the *Art Journal* admired the lack of 'sentimental heroism' and 'undue refinement', and the *Athenaeum* noted its power as a 'study of contrasts of well-dressed courtiers and bandaged veterans' (Lalumia, p. 80). The mixed reaction to the Queen's emotional outpouring via the leaked letter and the art critic's praise of Gilbert's painting for its lack of sentiment reveals a fine line for the public display of feeling, which could be read as affectation or refreshing sincerity.⁴⁸ Favourable responses to the Queen's leaked letter were in part excited by the idea that they were not intended for public consumption. Gilbert worked hard to create a sense of realism and understatement for his painting. Matthew Lalumia outlines the important alterations attending the transfer of the scene from print to watercolour: the increased weight given to the Guardsmen, who exceed the twenty-six actually present, the

⁴⁸ This instability is heightened by the altered meanings of the derivatives of 'sentimental' itself. For more on this, see Marie Banfield, 'From Sentiment to Sentimentality: A Nineteenth-Century Lexicographical Search', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.16995/ntn.459>>.



Fig. 5: Vincent Brookes (after John Gilbert), *Queen Inspecting the Guards at Buckingham Palace*, 1903, lithograph. © National Army Museum, London.

greater attention to their individual character, and the movement of the officers to the rear of the scene. In the royal party, Prince Albert is also moved behind the Queen, who is the only figure to stand alone without overlay and thus emerges as the main protagonist (Lalumia, p. 79). This accentuates the ‘study of contrasts’ identified by the *Athenaeum* between the radiant presence of the Sovereign and her children dressed in pure white and the ragged forms of the soldiers. Rather than simply being paraded in front of the monarch, Gilbert’s painting and the *ILN* print demonstrate interaction and homely belonging. The royal party’s attention is focused upon greeting the saluting Guardsman and Prince Alfred, gazing up at the Guardsman, responds with youthful interest. Many of the soldiers are seated, not standing to attention, and the casually discarded attire upon chairs in the foreground augments the scene’s domestic and informal qualities. Gilbert undoubtedly glorified the presence of the Queen for his painting to accentuate the meeting of bodies, whole and suffering, and spaces, the public sphere of war and the archetypal private sphere of royal domesticity. As Mary Favret has shown, the juxtaposition of the mangled body with the maternal body has a strong antecedent during the Napoleonic wars, when images of mothers and children absorbed and filtered the body of the private soldier to heal the pains of war (p. 545). Gilbert’s scene suspends the royal family as a stabilizing presence against vulnerable bodies. In doing so, Gilbert both collapses the distance between home and war and underscores it, by interpreting wounding through the comforting lens of domestic security.

During the war, physical proximity became increasingly important to the Queen's image as a way of communicating royal kinship; Victoria's public presence not one of aristocratic distance but personal intimacy. This featured in coverage of the distribution of Crimean Medals at Horse Guards Parade on 18 May 1855, a ceremony full of pomp and circumstance but projected as a close encounter. The Queen's journal devoted considerable coverage to the occasion, as one that brought together all ranks equally as heroes. Physical contact with officers and privates alike was an important and planned feature of the ceremony, to emphasize the accessibility of the Queen's person. The Queen recorded her satisfaction with this arrangement, revelling in an apparent transcendence of class boundaries: 'all touched my hand, the first time that a simple Private has touched the hand of his Sovereign, & that, — a Queen! I am proud of it, — proud of this tie which links the lowly brave to his Sovereign.' It was also rumoured that soldiers were reluctant to give their medal up for engraving, for fear they would not get the original, bearing the touch of the Queen, back (QVJ, 18 May 1855). The Crimean Medal was given to all soldiers who served in the war, but this ceremony targeted wounded and sick soldiers who had been sent home.

The Crimean Medal ceremony was an opportunity for unmediated public engagement with the wounded, with temporary stalls accommodating families and spectators, including members of the press. Journalists described the ceremony as unique and heartfelt, as well as its palpable effects on the senses. *The Times's* leader was marked by emotion, recording, somewhat inappropriately, the 'electric thrill' as the public witnessed the pallid forms and scarred features of the recipients, which told of their 'manly' endurance.⁴⁹ It wrote of a reciprocal affection:

Many of the poor fellows were almost overcome by their emotion and by the sweetness of her Majesty's condescension, and many a moistened eye on the royal dais bore witness to the intimate sympathy that exists between the Palace and the Camp. (p. 8)

It proclaimed the ceremony the first military spectacle of the age, unsurpassed in inspiring loyalty to the Queen and national gratitude towards the soldier and believed the occasion ushered in a new era in the history of the British soldier:

They who were fortunate enough to be present saw several hundred soldiers of all ranks and all arms of the service suffering from a community of sickness and wounds — all alike men and Englishmen, and receiving from the same Royal hand the same token of honour. (p. 8)

⁴⁹ Leader, *The Times*, 19 May 1855, p. 8.

The recurrence of the word ‘community’ is significant here, used previously by the *Morning Post* to describe a ‘community of feeling’ in response to the leaked letter. Royal advisors had sought to achieve a sense of belonging alongside the pomp of the day. Writing to the Queen, Phipps wrote of the dinner afterwards for NCOs and privates at the Queen’s Riding School:

The only thing in the day to be regretted was that a permanent record could not be kept of what may be called the ‘domestic’ scene, in the most glorious Military Pageant that England has seen: the scene in the Garden was an episode that should not be lost.⁵⁰

Phipps’s description of this ‘domestic’ scene demonstrates a vision of the rank and file ‘at home’ under the patronage and direction of the royal family and their officers.

Two different prints of the same moment during the ceremony are held at the National Army Museum: *Her Majesty Distributing the Crimean Medals* adopting a more intimate and focused view (*Fig. 6*), while *Distribution*



Fig. 6: Unknown engraver (after Robert Hind), *Her Majesty Distributing the Crimean Medals*, 1856, steel engraving. © National Army Museum, London.

⁵⁰ Phipps, letter to the Queen, 18 May 1855, RA, VIC/MAIN/F/2/70.



Fig. 7: Unknown artist, *Distribution of War Medals by the Queen*, 1855, coloured lithograph. © National Army Museum, London.

of War Medals by the Queen is more akin to a reportage-style giving a sense of scale and the numbers present (Fig. 7). Both prints feature the Queen's presentation of a medal to a disabled Colonel Thomas Troubridge of the 7th Fusiliers. The inspiration for this was likely a watercolour by Tenniel, commissioned by the Queen, entitled *Distribution of Crimean Medals at Horse Guards Parade* (Millar, II, 857–58). Another copy of Robert Hind's engraving exists in the Royal Collection, along with an almost identical depiction published by James Virtue and Co., attesting to the popularity of this particular interaction between monarch and soldier.⁵¹ Figures 6 and 7 capture the moment prior to touch, the Queen's hands reaching out to present the medal to a receptive Sir Thomas Troubridge, who was wheeled in a bath chair as a result of losing his left leg and right foot at Inkerman. That the prints depict the prospect of touch and not touch itself allows for a clear delineation, particularly in Fig. 6, of the Queen's slender hands, which are offered palms-down in the form of a 'laying-on' of hands or a blessing. As with the Nightingale statuette, the prints foreground the Queen's will to touch and her powers of healing, but avoids registering the answering action or grip of hand-on-hand contact.

⁵¹ See Royal Collections Trust <<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection>> [accessed 2 January 2015].

Troubridge was conferred the honour of aide-de-camp to the Queen during the ceremony, which both prints commemorate in their accompanying description, although representations of the man differ greatly. The differences in uniform and the inclusion of a moustache in *Fig. 6* suggest Troubridge's likeness was confused with one of the other officers present. Troubridge was one of three wounded officers to be wheeled in a bath chair and to receive the special concern of the Queen, although the only one to receive an honorific appointment.⁵² In her account of the ceremony, the Queen wrote the following:

Most moving was the sight of that gallant hero Sir T. Troubridge [...]. I told him, as he passed, that I should make him one of my A.D.C.'s, & his answer, with a bright & smiling countenance, was: 'I am amply repaid!' (QVJ, 18 May 1855)

It is probable that the Queen's prior knowledge of Troubridge's exploits made him the beneficiary of the honour. Prince Albert had visited Troubridge earlier in the year, at Admiralty House, Portsmouth, upon his return from the Crimea (QVJ, 19 March 1855). Troubridge had developed a reputation for his perseverance, when it was reported he had rested his maimed legs on a gun following his injury to prevent loss of blood, while continuing to command.⁵³ He therefore provided an example of an exemplary officer and leader, who put his men and the operation before his own desperate needs.

At a time when the army was gearing up for what it hoped would be the final bombardment of Sebastopol, the print coverage of the ceremony extended the notion of a 'community of sickness and wounds' to officers and not just privates, countervailing *The Times's* presentation of disproportionate suffering in the ranks. The Queen regularly encountered wounded officers at private receptions known as levees, but in raising the profile of the officer in publicly evocative terms, *Figures 6* and *7* supplied a counter-narrative to reports that a number of officers had abandoned the theatre of war on 'urgent private affairs' over the harsh winter months.⁵⁴ The prints unusually foreground Troubridge's disability, but the extent of his bodily loss is concealed by a luxurious blanket neatly tucked around the lower body, and his smiling countenance alleviates discomfort.⁵⁵ The effect is

⁵² 'Distribution of War Medals by the Queen at the Horse Guards', *The Times*, 19 May 1855, p. 11.

⁵³ 'The War in the East', *Morning Post*, 10 January 1855, pp. 5–6 (p. 6).

⁵⁴ QVJ, 17 April 1856. The concept gained such notoriety that the Queen attended a comedy entitled 'Urgent Private Affairs' at the Adelphi Theatre.

⁵⁵ The war produced few public images of injured officers. The exceptions to this rule avoid an aspect of vulnerability, the officers maintaining an active role. For example, Jerry Barrett inserts a pointing officer, seated on a stretcher, for his painting

demure, the bath chair and the blanket a sign of Troubridge's social status. There is a conscious effort to preserve Troubridge's gentlemanly appearance in spite of his injury. This mid-Victorian depiction of an officer's disability masks the true suffering of war in a similar fashion to depictions of disabled officers emerging from the Napoleonic wars.⁵⁶ These prints speak directly to disillusioned or fearful officers and their families facing service at the front, by balancing the dangers of battle with the prospect of royal recognition. Royal power to appoint is also on display. The prints evoke a neat hierarchy, the loyal private pulling along his wounded officer, who in turn interacts with the Queen against the backdrop of the British Flag and Royal Standard and powerful symbol of royal prerogative, the Horse Guards building.

The commander-in-chief's office at Horse Guards was particularly precious to the Crown. The Crown was keen to preserve the office as a locus for royal influence amidst structural changes taking place under Panmure in 1855. These changes included the consolidation of the Secretary of State for War's office and the disbanding of the Board of Ordnance, which had wide-ranging responsibilities for the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Sappers and Miners, and arms and fortifications (Sweetman, p. 59). The reorganization of the Ordnance prompted renewed attention on Horse Guards. On the day of the medal ceremony, Lord Grey called in Parliament for reorganization of Horse Guards, to eliminate its controversial access to the Queen (Sweetman, p. 94). Grey's calls were resisted and in 1856 the Crown consolidated its control over Horse Guards by appointing the Duke of Cambridge, the Queen's cousin, as commander-in-chief (Strachan, p. 62). The medal ceremony and royal commemoration of Troubridge ultimately sent a clear signal that merit was not lacking in the officer corps and matters of conduct and ability were a matter of royal discretion and not a cause for state interference or legislative change.

With the emphasis on a personal monarchy and the mingling of 'high' and 'low' during the ceremony, *Punch* found a humorous flaw to the rosy picture of an accessible Queen hosting a family reunion of afflicted officers and privates. In *Figures 6* and *7*, a brass railing is visible at the royal dais. Using satirical verse, *Punch* criticized the decision to rail the Queen

The Mission of Mercy (1857). A strikingly similar pose can be found in Captain Wilkinson's unpublished watercolour sketch, showing a gesturing Captain Agar on a stretcher during the first attack on the Redan on 18 June 1855. See NAM, 1972-07-06-23.

⁵⁶ See Philip Shaw, *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). Shaw offers analysis of Constantin Coene's painting of the imaginary visit of the Duke of Wellington to the Marquess of Anglesey, who lost his right leg at Waterloo. Anglesey's stump is clearly visible but the brightly illuminated bandages and the reverential aspect of onlookers precludes discomfort (pp. 179–80).

off from her soldiers, ridiculing the unknown mastermind ('Whose was this sorry job?') behind the ceremony:

Did the creature suppose
They would stamp on her toes,
Upon wooden legs hobbling especially those?

Did he fear they would press,
If permitted access,
To her person so close as to rumple her dress?⁵⁷

Punch directs no scorn towards the Queen herself, but rather ridicules the mastermind(s) or 'creature' behind the ceremony and the decision to include the obstacle. The platform would have served the practical purpose of providing extra height to a petite Queen and the railing no doubt gave physical support while she reached down to award the medals. However, for *Punch*, the railing is also a barrier, preventing the answering sensation that Steven Connor identifies as unique to touch.⁵⁸ Also, it is highly unlikely that the Queen would have attended this ceremony without adhering to the etiquette of wearing gloves, which thus guarded against skin-on-skin contact. *Punch's* satire is light-hearted, but the underlying message points to a tension between projected royal feeling and royal activity as carefully managed intervention. The wounded may have been given greater access to the Queen, but access is conditioned and social cohesion limited. As in accounts extolling the intimacy of the Queen at the medal ceremony, touch here becomes an important test of royal will to transgress class norms.

Elizabeth Longford argues in her biography of Victoria that the Queen relied on the aristocratic hierarchy in the army to 'preserve her own magical balance on the point of the military pyramid'.⁵⁹ For this reason, the monarchy was wary of undue parliamentary interference in army affairs and especially of politicians calling for change. The Queen objected to the Radical MP Austen Henry Layard becoming Undersecretary for War, following the government reshuffle in 1855 (QVJ, 5 February 1855). Critics of the purchase system, a system of entry to and promotion within the officer corps based upon financial payments, were prevented from gaining influence. The Queen's views on purchase were strong, influenced by her conservative military advisors, who argued that discipline would be compromised by the abolition of purchase. In a conversation with Lord Palmerston, she imparted the view that it would be an 'extraordinary mistake' to think 'improvement could be obtained by promoting men from the ranks, whom the men never respected in the same way as they did the

⁵⁷ 'A Brass Railing in Bad Taste', *Punch*, 26 May 1855, p. 210.

⁵⁸ Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), p. 263.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria* (London: Abacus, 2000), p. 267.

real born gentleman'.⁶⁰ Palmerston was sympathetic and, after a debate in Parliament, the purchase question was brought under royal/military control through a Royal Commission, resulting in the suspension of the purchase debate.⁶¹ The monarchy, by lobbying the Palmerston ministry, prevented fundamental army reform to protect its own prerogative and the traditional interests of the officer class. After the war, royal appearances became more assertive (*Fig. 8*).



Fig 8: 'Her Majesty in her New Military Costume, at the Camp, Aldershott', Illustrated London News, 16 August 1856, p. 167.

The Queen's appearances in military costume at the newly established army base at Aldershot, resplendent on horseback and sporting a

⁶⁰ QVJ, 30 June 1855. The Queen repeated this view in a journal entry on 29 July 1855.

⁶¹ Carl G. Slater, 'The Problem of Purchase Abolition in the British Army 1856–1862', *Military History Journal*, 4.6 (1979) <<http://samilitaryhistory.org/volo46cs.html>> [accessed 28 April 2015].

field marshal's feathers, and during the distribution of the first Victoria Crosses on 26 June 1857, were an outward statement of royal leadership. The scarlet riding habit she wore comprised a general's sash, a blue ribbon of the garter, and a general's plume of red and white feathers. The Queen's dresser noted drolly that, for once, her dress attracted universal admiration.⁶² However, this carefully constructed presence marked a shift in royal representation from womanly intimacy and sympathy to a more distant figurehead. The Queen chose the site of Hyde Park, so that she could attend on horseback and as a space at which large crowds could gather for the ceremony.⁶³ The military spectacle of the occasion was universally admired, the reviews and marches featuring different branches of the service and the uniforms of the royal entourage. The *Daily News* challenged the myth of the nation's anti-militarism on the basis of the thousands of people who had flocked for the event, while *The Times* proclaimed the event a 'new epoch in our military history', in a similar fashion to the Crimean Medal ceremony.⁶⁴ Yet the occasion did not produce the same admiration for the Queen's personal interactions, largely because many people, including journalists, could not witness proceedings. The Queen remained seated on her small mare for the occasion, her riding companions blocking her from being seen by a number of ticket holders in special galleries. For the *Daily News*, this was the one drawback, while an MP writing to *The Times* summed up his disappointment: 'It was *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet omitted.'⁶⁵ The disappointment of onlookers only illustrates the relative success of a wartime campaign to present a personal monarch, who was seen, heard, and touched.

In conclusion, royal influence during the Crimean War was heavily mediated by the press. Popular media projected the monarchy either as a revered sympathizer and the ultimate vessel of public sentiment in relation to the soldier, or, as an arbiter of superficial exaltation in the case of republican newspapers. While the Liberal press criticized aspects of royal ceremony, on the whole it remained supportive of the monarchy during the Crimean War, idealizing the Queen and her immediate family as a welcome locus of popular feeling when disillusionment with other sectors of the mid-Victorian establishment was strong. The Queen's domestic image provided a point of unity, an imaginary extended family, and a 'community of feeling'. However, representations of the Queen as an apolitical vessel

⁶² *My Mistress the Queen: The Letters of Frieda Arnold, Dresser to Queen Victoria 1854-9*, ed. by Benita Storey and Heinrich C. Weltzien (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), p. 19.

⁶³ Queen Victoria, letter to Lord Panmure, 12 June 1857, RA, VIC/MAIN/B/16/47.

⁶⁴ 'Distribution of the Victoria Cross', *Daily News*, 27 June 1857, p. 5; 'Distribution of the Victoria Cross for Valour', *The Times*, 27 June 1857, p. 5.

⁶⁵ 'Distribution of the Victoria Cross', *Daily News*, 27 June 1857, p. 5; 'Distribution of the Victoria Cross', letter to the editor, *The Times*, 29 June 1857, p. 12.

for this feeling were inherently misleading, masking both variance of public opinion and a concurrent struggle between Parliament and the Crown for influence over the army. The examples focused upon here demonstrate the importance attached to sentiment and intimacy between the monarch and the army at a time when royal prerogative was being challenged. The leaked letter was written for dissemination and provided patriotic balm to *The Times's* divisive attack over the winter of 1854, which many of its victims regarded as damaging to the war effort. Following demonstration of royal sympathy over subsequent months, the distribution of the Crimean Medals rebuffed *The Times's* tactics altogether in a ceremony which placed the Queen as central to the interests of wounded officers and privates. Representations of the ceremony expressed royal sympathy through the image of a touchable monarch, while subtly endorsing traditional army hierarchy between privates and officers, Horse Guards and the Crown. Ultimately, a restorative royal presence cemented existing army structures and its own interests.