

Dirge of the dead sisters essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Kipling wrote this poem when he went to South Africa as a journalist. For the first time doubt had entered his mind about military supremacy as he watched first hand the affects of war.

In the first stanza Kipling asks “ Who recalls the.... Faces of the Sisters with the dust upon their hair?” He asks this because the answer would most likely be very few people, when the true hero’s in the war were actually heroines such as the nurses that followed in the path that Florence Nightingale had set them.

Kipling continues by describing the gory corpses “ Blanket-hidden bodies, flagless, followed by the flies”, by flagless he means undefined, no longer soldiers fighting for their country, but corpses awaiting their burial. With this image in your mind already you receive an image of your mind of the awful sights that the nurses would have to endure every single day, even worse the “ stench and staleness” must be over powering.

When you imagine yourself there, with the sights and smells, you build up an affinity with those who actually lived the horror every day.

Truthfully if we put ourselves in those conditions, we would choose to leave straight away, and if we couldn’t our minds would deteriorate rather than face up to those conditions, so imagine a group of people, yet alone females, choosing to stay in that area of hell, and still keep a “ glory in their eyes”. No wonder Kipling deeply respected the valour shown by those mortal angels.

In the last stanza, Kipling yet again describes the conditions and what the Nurses “ endured unresting till they rested from their labours”. To end the

poem Kipling writes “ Little wasted bodies, so light to lower down!” This tells us of the main killer of the nurses was not the implements of war directly, but the infestation of disease that festoons around the hospital tents that the nurses spent all their time maintaining.

With that same comment, Kipling puts across the sense of needless waste, emphasised by the pathos of “ so light to lower down”.