

Professional Review.

"THE LIFE OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."*

One has no hesitation in predicting that one of the most popular books this season will be the "Life of Florence Nightingale" (written with the object of marking the jubilee of her departure for the Crimea), by Mrs. Sarah A. Tooley, for, although nearly half a century has passed since Miss Nightingale has taken an active part in public affairs, her name is still one to conjure with. The British public has never failed in its allegiance to the "Lady-in-Chief" who, the most picturesque, and, it may almost be added, the most capable personality in Europe at the time of the Crimean War, brought order out of confusion, and laid down principles of nursing which—though they may not appeal to the imagination of an emotional public in the same way as the figure of the "Lady with the Lamp"—are nevertheless the basis of her real greatness, the foundation on which the success of her work in the Crimea was based, and the secret of the fact that she belongs not alone to the country of her birth, but that, wherever modern nursing exists, there its exponents gladly acknowledge their debt to her who proclaimed unhesitatingly the general principles by which our calling must be regulated if it is to be efficient, and who asserted them with no uncertain voice.

As an example of this it may be noted that in 1863, when trained nursing could scarcely be said to exist, she claimed in her "Notes on Hospitals" (1) that the female head must be at once the Matron of the Hospital, "which means of the nursing in it, and superintendent of the nurses. It will not do for her to head the nurses or probationers in their 'home,' and to leave the heading of them in the hospital to a Matron or other superior. (2) That the Sisters must not be the heads of wards merely in order to use 'moral influence,' as the inexperienced sometimes fancy will be sufficient. If a lady has, in addition, the same knowledge and experience as an old-fashioned hospital head nurse, she is fit to be Sister or head nurse; if not, not." (3) In institutions where the nurses, whether male or female, are under the sole command of the male hospital authorities, "the arrangements as to hours, proprieties, and sanitary rules generally would strike anyone as all but crazy. Such are the rules which give nurses twenty-four hours 'on duty' in a ward, or which put them to sleep with the sick, of which the extreme case is where a female nurse is made to sleep in a man's ward."

Another proposition laid down by Miss Nightingale is: "Take it which way you will, the idea of the 'religious order' is always more or less to prepare the sick for death; of the secular, to restore them for life. And their nursing will be accordingly."

These truths will be good for all time.

With the history of Miss Nightingale's early years most English men and women are familiar.

Born at Florence, to which queen of cities she owes her name, her early years were passed in the beautiful Derbyshire dales, and at Embley Park, Hampshire. "In her Derbyshire home," the author relates, "she lived in touch with the life which at the same period was weaving its spell about Marian Evans when she visited her kinspeople and was destined to be im-

mortalised in *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*. Amongst her father's tenants Florence Nightingale knew farmers' wives who had a touch of Mrs. Poyser's caustic wit, and she was familiar with the 'yea' and 'nay' and other quaint forms of Derbyshire speech, such as Mr. Tulliver used when he talked to 'the little wench' in the house-place of the ill-fated Mill on the Floss. She met, too, many of 'the people called Methodists' who in her girlhood were establishing their preaching-places in the country around Lea Hurst, and she heard of the fame of the woman preacher, then exercising her marvellous gifts in the Derby district, who was to become immortal as Dinah Morris. In Florence Nightingale's early womanhood *Adam Bede* lived in his thatched cottage by Wirksworth Tape Mills, a few miles from Lea Hurst, and the Poyser's farm stood across the meadows."

Thus, once again, as so often happens, the child who later was to live in the glare of strenuous public life grew up in the midst of lovely surroundings. Is it fanciful to wonder if some of the calm which distinguished her in her Crimean days was absorbed by communion with the fair face of Nature in her early life? Could not many amongst us whose childhood has been passed in such surroundings tell, if they would, that often in the stress and storm of life in a great city the scenes of earlier days rise up unbidden in their minds, at once a solace and a strength? The hand which made this world so fair is the hand which rules it. If ever we get discouraged with things as they are, it is good to get away to the heart of Mother Nature and learn the lesson afresh at her feet. We shall bring back fresh strength for work if we commune with the everlasting hills.

In her early girlhood, Miss Nightingale showed that her bent was to take life seriously, and with characteristic thoroughness she set about preparing herself for her future work, acting up to the principle which she later enunciated:—"I would say to all young ladies who are called to any particular vocation, qualify yourself for it as a man does for his work. Don't think you can undertake it otherwise. Submit yourself to the rules of business as men do, by which alone you can make God's business succeed; for He has never said that He will give His success and His blessing to sketchy, unfinished work." On another occasion she wrote:—"Three-fourths of the whole mischief in women's lives arises from their excepting themselves from the rules of training considered needful for men." It was from Elizabeth Fry, who was a friend of Pastor Fliedner, that Florence Nightingale learnt of the work going on in the Deaconess Home at Kaiserswerth, and a few years later she enrolled herself as a nurse in that famous institution; meanwhile she studied the nursing systems in the London, Edinburgh, and Dublin hospitals, as well as in France, Germany, and Italy. "The comparison was not favourable to this country. The nursing in our hospitals was in the hands of the coarsest type of women, not only untrained, but callous in feeling and often grossly immoral."

At the Deaconess Hospital, Kaiserswerth, Miss Nightingale found her ideal system of nursing already an accomplished fact. The hospital was founded in 1836 by Frederica Fliedner, wife of the Pastor, though somehow Frederica (who died in 1843, six years before Miss Nightingale entered the hospital for training) seems to be overshadowed by the personality of the husband who outlived her, and she is not so much as mentioned in this connection in the book at present

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