

## A Great Heroine.

The story of the early years of Miss Nightingale is one which has been oftentimes told. All the world knows that she was born in the fair city of Florence, whose name she bears, that her happy youth, which was passed at Embley Park, in Hampshire, or Lea Hurst, in Derbyshire, was that of an ordinary English girl, though even in her early days her strong individuality asserted itself, and the stories told of her care for wounded animals, and her love of visiting the cottagers, gave an indication of the bent of her mind.

Amongst the many notable men and women of her time for whom Miss Nightingale had a sincere admiration were John Stuart Mill, Elizabeth Fry, and Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. The latter described her as "a young lady at home, chafing under the restrictions that crippled her active energy," and relates that walking on the lawn at Embley Park in front of the drawing-room she said, "Do you know what I always think when I look at that row of windows? I think how I should turn it into a hospital and just how I should place the beds." Throughout her life Miss Nightingale was an advocate of thoroughness, and her advice to girls who desire to qualify themselves is as necessary to-day as when it was written. She wrote:—

"I would say to all young ladies who are called to any particular vocation, qualify yourselves for it as a man does for his work. Don't think you can understand it otherwise. Submit yourselves 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 to sketchy and unfinished work," and again in the introduction to the life of Agnes Jones, she wrote:—

"Three-fourths of the whole mischief of women's lives arises from their excepting themselves from the rules of training considered necessary for men."

In accordance with her convictions, Miss Nightingale endeavoured to obtain practical experience in nursing, a difficult problem in the middle of the last century, both because of the inevitable opposition, and the fact that training in this country was practically non-existent, while the conditions under which experience was obtainable in the hospitals of that time were both hard and revolting. She, however, succeeded in studying nursing conditions in different parts of the United Kingdom.

Happily for Miss Nightingale, her attention was directed by Mrs. Fry to the value of the

training given in the institution at Kaiserswerth-on-the-Rhine, founded by Friederike Fliedner, wife of the pastor, who ably seconded her efforts, and there she spent some months, and afterwards studied the methods of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris. Later she took charge of the Home for Invalid Gentlewomen, then in Harley Street, W., and lately rebuilt on a larger scale in Lisson Grove.

It was while she was in charge of this Home that war was declared in the Crimea, and later, owing to the good offices of Sir William Russell, *Times* correspondent, the country became aware of the appalling and unnecessary suffering and terrible waste of life of the soldiers who had won our victories, who died with wounds so neglected

that they were breeding maggots, and of fever untended.

The inadequacy of our medical arrangements was the more emphasised, as the French and Russian sick and wounded were attended by Sisters of Charity, and it is noteworthy at the present time when the right of women to nurse men has been challenged, that in this extremity "Medicus," appealing in the *Times* for nurses, wrote: "Why are there no female nurses? Away with this nonsense [rules of service], there *must* be female nurses."

This was recognised by Mr. Sidney Herbert, the humane Secretary at War, and by Miss Nightingale, who had training, experience, and



An Early Portrait.

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