

the cultivation of any art or science; for although the cultivation of one's tastes and inclinations may be said to contribute to one's skill or the perfection of the thing itself, the mind requires culture previous to the particular exertion of the powers." There is also a good deal of wisdom in the following remarks from the *Spectator*: "The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies, that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture."

Moreover, granted or not granted, the chain of inference in this case is close and strong to a remarkable degree, particularly in view of those poignant revolutionary throes through which Christendom in general, and the Nursing Community in particular, have been (and still are) passing. But we are not concerned so much just now with the present and the future, as with the past; therefore we had better hasten on to consider and narrate somewhat briefly the simple story of the most womanly of woman's duties, as foreshadowed in the subject chosen for this Essay.

Well, we are free to confess that, somehow or other, this work has always had a peculiar fascination for us, and we cannot recall a time in our life when the "ministry of mercy" had no charms. And that many other women have been similarly situated, a review of the Nursing Horoscope of the present century places the inference beyond a doubt. Then, evidences are not wanting which point out the fact that during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, various ancient orders (Nursing and otherwise) were in vogue. Previous to the year 1840, however, there does not appear to have been any special effort made in this country or abroad, in the direction of systematic training and organisation of these isolated workers. This attempt was the outcome of the indefatigable labours of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, and proved to be the latest public effort of her life. This liberal-minded woman was born before the beginning of this century—in 1780—but the great work of her life, with which her name stands indelibly connected, was not begun until somewhat about 1813. And in matters of pure benevolence she had, perhaps, few compeers or equals in those remote stage-coach days; though she herself developed into what I should define *ideal womanhood*, and achieved a work during her lifetime that no less philanthropic-minded being could have done.

Incredible as it may seem, fifty years have

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passed by since she, realising the existing need for skilled Nurses, the chaotic condition of those workers, set about, with the restless energy of a true philanthropist, remedying this want. These "Nursing Sisters" were placed for some time in the largest Hospitals, and were under the supervision of Mrs. Fry's sister-in-law, Mrs. Samuel Gurney. Women of all denominations were encouraged to join the Institution, while their services were equally available in the palace and cottage. This little pioneer Institution is, we believe, still in vogue. May it flourish yet more and more.

"Mrs. Fry," says her biographer, "possessed the glove of velvet and the will of steel." Honest, upright, and conscientious in the highest degree, once convinced that she was on the right scent, she stood to her principles at all hazards. Certain it is that, respecting the simple story of her life, unless animated by somewhat of fellow feeling, it is difficult to understand her career, her sincere and spontaneous devotion to the claims of truth and the call of duty even now. Yes! her life stands too far apart, too highly lifted above our ordinary and multifarious pursuits, to be compared with anything less definite-aimed, less philanthropic-minded mortals may do. The impartial and faithful execution of the task assigned to her demanded a larger share of self-denial than ordinary mortals are capable of—called for great singleness of purpose, much sincerity of speech.

In the meantime, two other remarkable women were being born—Miss Harriet Martineau and Miss Florence Nightingale. The former was one of the most distinguished women the present century has produced, while unto the latter the future historian will allot a prominent place.

Of a retiring disposition, Miss Nightingale has never satisfied the curiosity of those who would wish to pry into her private history. Her friend, the late Miss Martineau, was a woman of clear intellect, and of the utmost determination in carrying out anything she had made up her mind to be right. *Apropos* the following touching little story is told: In those remote days, quiet and unimportant days as men vainly count them, days of mental evolution, preparation and development, as if in training for the work "I will tell thee of," there was found tending the sick bed of Miss Martineau—who had what she herself called "a beggarly nervous system," and before she attained her twentieth year had become quite deaf—the then amateur, but future pioneer Nurse, Miss Florence Nightingale. In gladsome

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