

a charming sprite, enjoying the lovely surroundings with her animal friends, listening to the sweet singing and calls of birds—always a music she loved.

And then the beautiful house of Elizabethan character, in which so much of her eager, unsatisfied youth was spent, came in view. On arrival we were most courteously made welcome by the present owner, Mr. J. J. Crosfield, who did us the honour himself, together with his head gardener, of showing us the lovely gardens and grounds. First we passed to the garden front of the house, where the window of the room on the second floor, usually occupied by Miss Nightingale was pointed out. How vividly a scrap of a letter, penned in the year 1851 by Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, flashed in mind. She wrote: "Walked with Florence in the delicious air . . . at Embley Park. As we walked on the lawn in front of the noble 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.'" Seventy-eight years ago! And not one of her eager disciples, standing on the same lawn and straining to come into touch with her mighty spirit was then of this world!

Then we were shown the lovely grounds and gardens on either side of the long walk which extends for a quarter of a mile from the house to the "Wishing Seat." We passed through wonders of sylvan beauty, first by the rose garden—still in flower—then the rock garden and further on the erica garden. Thickets of flowering shrubs, rhododendrons and azaleas, which we realised, made this demesne a gorgeous paradise in spring. Now in autumn the

foliage was beginning to glow, the translucent Japanese maple delicately crimson, in contrast yet in harmony with golden beeches and pungent emerald pines. Our attention was drawn to the fine tree under which Florence Nightingale taught holy truths to boys on Sundays, and to an old rhododendron of great size which might well have flowered in her far away youth.

Mr. Crosfield is evidently a great gardener and owns 600 different varieties of rhododendrons, amongst them many tiny and rare specimens from the Himalayas of which he is justly "precious."

Scraps of that vivacious letter written from Embley in the year 1839 by Florence Nightingale's sister to her cousin kept tinkling through one's brain.

"It is so beautiful in this world! so very beautiful," she wrote, "you really cannot fancy anything so near to approaching Eden or fairyland, or *il paradiso terrestre* . . . so very, very lovely . . . I never, though blest with many fair visions. . . conceived anything so exquisite as to-day lying among the flowers, such smells and such sounds

hovering round me! Flo reading and talking so that my immortal profited too . . . the garden is big, there are many clumps of rhododendrons and azaleas, and showers of rose-buds . . . I am writing perched in a chair on the grass, nightingales all round, blue sky above and such long shadows sleeping on the lawn. . . If you ask learned men they will tell you that June at Embley is a poetry ready made; and the first thing I shall do when I get to heaven . . . is to celebrate the pomp and beauties of the garden in this wicked world, than which I never wish for a better."

It would appear Embley is poetry ready made at any season of the year. Most nurses love flowers and beauty, and the half hour spent in "*il paradiso terrestre*" will never fade from the memory of those freely permitted to wander through it. We brought away sprigs of rosemary for remembrance, a little branch of the "Sunday School" tree, acorns and fir cones, and these trophies now repose in the "Nightingale box" into which relics of Miss Nightingale are being gathered together for the Nursing History Section of the British College of Nurses.

When we came again to the garden front of the house our very kind host asked "would we like to enter and visit Florence Nightingale's room?" "Would we?"

We entered the mansion by the garden entrance and through a small room to the Library, still panelled with the white fixture bookcases of the Nightingale occupation. It took but a glance to realize we were passing through a treasure house indeed. From the Library we came into a magnificent Hall, running the width of the house, where the antique

furniture and fittings were very fine. Jacobean chairs with rose puce velvet seats, a fine Refectory table, magnificent old masters on the walls and exquisite rugs, far too precious for shoes to step on. Leading from this beautiful Hall we passed into the "noble Drawing-room" which Florence Nightingale "longed to turn into a hospital ward." Here again a lover of the antique spied the handiwork of great craftsmen and fine artists.

The fine pillared Dining-room contained "Chippendale" of the highest quality, and chairs of splendid proportions with claw and ball feet found appropriate surroundings. Ah! me!—only minutes—where entrancing days could be passed!

Following our kind host, we were led up the panelled oak staircase, which gleamed like silver in contrast to glowing rose-coloured carpets, along a corridor, up a little stairway, and then we entered the bedroom used in days long passed by Florence Nightingale and from the windows gazed out over the sunlit park—a scene exquisitely English upon which her eyes must so often have rested.



EMBLEY PARK, GARDEN FRONT.

In the second row of windows, number three from the ground on the right, was Miss Nightingale's bedroom.

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