

"By 7 a.m. she was up and dressed, and had drunk the queerly tasting coffee brought to her room, and a few hours later she was actually helping Schwester Katerine to look after a crowd of excited children bathing in the Rhine. Many of the children, she was told, had been scrofulous; sun and air and water were the chief part of their cure."

As for propriety, Mrs. Nightingale herself could hardly have disapproved. The physical wants of the male patients were attended to by male nurses, the apothecary was a woman, and no male doctors were in residence. "Florence approved of this, not only because it did away with all vexatious suggestions of impropriety, but because she had noted that where doctors were living amongst their patients they were apt to assume autocratic control of soul and body in the name of medical science."

"Altogether that fortnight was one of the very happiest that Florence had ever had. She was allowed to share in everything. She thoroughly enjoyed the simple life, with no luxury at all except cleanliness (plain food was never a hardship but she could not bear bugs). She observed everything, not only the details of the management, but the general methods: the way in which the Pastor really, and not only nominally, delegated authority; the way in which religion was the mainspring of everything. And she was at peace; it was to her like Christian's sojourn in House Beautiful. When she said good-bye to the Fliedners and all the Sisters on August 13th and went to join the Bracebridges in Dusseldorf she felt as if nothing could ever vex her again. A few days later at Cologne Flo sat down to write a pamphlet about the Kaiserswerth Institution. "With what seemed to her extraordinary kindness, the Bracebridges let her sit over her writing and actually postponed their return to England till it was done. She resolved to make her pamphlet an appeal to the ladies of England. . . . The Roman Catholic Church must not be allowed to do all the work in the employment of women."

"How she hoped that English young ladies would flock to Kaiserswerth! How she hoped that she would soon be back there herself! But for the present she had to return to 'busy idleness.' On the afternoon of August 21st, with the little owl in her pocket, she arrived at Lea Hurst and surprised her dear people sitting in the drawing room, not thinking of her. Athena was soon thoroughly at home with the family. She at least entirely approved of the Young Lady's life."

So Florence returned to her ordinary home ways. "But although old troubles had melted away, other sorrows were constantly present with her. It was now more than a year since she had told Monckton Milnes she could not marry him, and she had not seen him since; but not a day went by without her thinking of him. Though the very thought of meeting him overcame her, she missed him all the time. It would not be so, she knew, if only she could get to the work she longed to do, and which she could not have done as his wife; but the dark, chilling fact seemed to be that no chance of leading what she thought of as the real life was going to arise—that she was doomed to go on as she was."

At the end of 1850 she wrote in her bedroom at Embley: "I have no desire now but to die. There is not a night that I do not lie down in my bed wishing that I may leave it no more. Unconsciousness is all that I desire. I remain in bed as long as I can, for what have I to wake for? I am perishing for want of food, and what prospect have I of better?"

Meeting Monckton Milnes unexpectedly she felt that "the very sight of him gave her strength," and later she wrote in her journal:—

Last night I saw him again for the second time for the last eighteen months. He would hardly speak. I was miserable . . . I wanted to find him longing to talk to me,

willing to give me another opportunity to keep open another decision; or perhaps I only wanted his sympathy without looking any further. He was not ready with it. He did not shew indifference but avoidance. No familiar friendship. No confidence such as I felt towards him."

Mrs. Nightingale could hardly believe that Florence wished to make nursing the business of her life. She "thought of nursing as a menial occupation attended by many disgusting disadvantages. But the aspect of the case that distressed her most of all was that Florence talked of leaving home. In Mrs. Nightingale's world young ladies did not leave home except to get married, or to pay visits or to travel with suitable friends. To leave home for such a purpose as Flo seemed to have in her mind would be unnatural; a thing that was not done and could hardly be conceived among ladies and gentlemen—it would therefore be a disgrace. It was difficult to believe that Flo really contemplated disgracing her family, but her words seemed to hint at it, and in the meantime it was clear that she was discontented at home."

Nevertheless, Florence passed another milestone. She had made up her mind that whatever her parents felt about it she must get some definite training. By the middle of July she was at Kaiserswerth, not now as a visitor but as an apprentice. Only her sense of her mother's and sister's disapproval spoilt her intense happiness in being really a part of the Kaiserswerth Institution. "The dear child must be mad," and when she put all her feelings of love and gratitude into a long letter of appeal they, sitting in their hotel at Karlsbad, were still more sure of it.

Her cousin, Hilary Bonham-Carter, in a letter to Mme. Mohl, summed up the situation with considerable acumen. "If Flo were to give up all, it would not make Parthe happy."

"I forgot one thing about Parthe. You know that she is an enjoying creature . . . and though her feeling is disappointed by the ideal in which Flo fixes her happiness, it may be reconciled—would be reconciled by success."

Miss Bonham-Carter proved a true prophet.

"Hilary stayed on at Embley (where she had been keeping house for 'Uncle Knight') when her aunt and cousins returned from abroad. The situation between them had become very acute. Florence was treated as one who had disgraced herself; her mother and sister would hardly speak to her. It was perhaps fortunate that she developed measles and had to be isolated, except from Hilary, who had had the disease."

Slowly, however, "European events were moving on to the conjunction which was to give Florence Nightingale her great opportunity"; meanwhile the opening to a new life appeared before her astonished eyes.

First a new Superintendent was required for the Home for Poor Gentlewomen, about to move to No. 1, Upper Harley Street; though Mrs. Douglas Galton (Marianne Nicholson), when consulted by the Ladies' Committee, "could not resist the temptation to drama, and was not sorry to interfere with Flo's absurd plans; she gave a piteous description of the anguish which would be suffered by Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale if their daughter deserted them." The ladies were shocked, and some of them said that they could go no further in the matter. It might all have ended there had not Florence found out about it and appealed to her father.

During the last eighteen months Mr. Nightingale had gradually been won over to Flo's plans. He did not agree with her, but "he liked people to have freedom to follow their ideas, and he began to see that Flo would not and could not stay quietly at home. The situation there was unbearable for a peace-loving man, and his sister, his brother-in-law Sam and others in whom he had confidence told him that he ought to end it by letting Florence go. He had made up his mind to do it, and to do it in the most

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