

She had become very French, but she was that international type of independent Englishwoman, who, whether she lives on the outskirts of any Empire or in a Cathedral Close, always remains adventurous and courageous in spirit, and yet simple and kindly at heart and in manner.

"Mary Clarke must have been a very intuitive woman to appreciate at once that there was something unusual in Florence Nightingale. For outwardly she was like thousands of other young Englishwomen of her class. . . . One rather suspects that Mary Clarke befriended the Nightingale family not because of Mrs. Nightingale or Parthe but because of Florence, whose great personality was already emerging from behind her conventional manners and ideas. . . ."

"Mrs. Nightingale, who always saw only the surface life of other human beings, thought that Florence had been cured of her silly notions. The girl seemed so much more normal and less intense. Mrs. Nightingale was proud of her daughter's social gifts, her obvious ability to be attractive in any drawing-room, her knowledge about so many subjects, her gift for languages, her increasing charm for men, and her lovely appearance."

The ten miserable years which followed before Florence Nightingale finally began her training as a nurse were irksome in the extreme. The pity of it! Probably the years of life from 20 to 30 are those in which some of woman's best work is done. "One cannot help looking at this decade she threw away and wasted with some of the bitter regret she must have felt herself."

It was in 1844 that Julia Ward Howe and her husband Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe went to Embley to stay with the Nightingales, and Florence having heard much of Dr. Howe as a philanthropist, said to him: "Dr. Howe, if I should determine to study nursing, and to devote my life to that profession, do you think it would be a dreadful thing?"

"By no means," replied Dr. Howe, "I think that it would be a very good thing."

"It was more than a year later, in December 1845, that she summoned up courage to discuss the matter with Mrs. Nightingale, frankly . . . one can only imagine Florence's despair when her mother scoffed at her idea. One has the feeling that this talk with her mother killed something in Florence. . . . Her mother's derisive attitude made the younger woman feel a curious shame; her spiritual modesty had been offended. She was always less gentle, less approachable afterwards." But "her self-control was magnificent in the crisis, and she resigned herself to her mother's wishes," but "despite her assumed cheerfulness, Florence's inarticulate bitterness, the repressed resentment towards her mother, were so intense that, psychologically, she never overcame this shock. Something very tragic had happened to her."

"Robbed and murdered," she wrote later in her *Suggestions for Thought*, "we read in the newspapers. The crime is horrible. . . . 'Robbed' of all their time, if robbing means taking away that which you do not wish to part with, slowly 'murdered' by their families."

Florence's situation at home was made worse by her parents' efforts to marry her off. . . . All of Florence Nightingale's biographers agree that she thought seriously of marriage, though none of them admits that she thought of it as an escape from home. The man whom she considered marrying was Richard Monckton Milnes. "It seems very doubtful that a woman as alive as Florence Nightingale would have resisted marriage if she had wanted to marry. . . . As it was, she gave Milnes, and her relationship to him, her best methodical and cool attention. She was almost statistical in her analysis of him. Eventually she decided against accepting Milnes and when she did so she gave up the idea of marrying anyone.

Her parents were profoundly disturbed at this decision, and so decided to send her abroad again with the Bracebridges, and fervently hoped a winter in Rome would make her more normal, but fate was playing a very unkind trick on her indeed, for in Rome Florence met three individuals who were to be of the utmost importance in her future career, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Herbert and, through them, Manning, then Archdeacon of Chichester. Later he was to exert a tremendous influence on her; and it was he who gave her the final spiritual impetus to leave home.

It was on July 31, 1848, that Florence Nightingale paid a visit of two weeks to the Institute of Deaconesses in Kaiserswerth where she found everything of the deepest interest.

Florence's hopelessness when she returned to England after her precious two weeks at Kaiserswerth can hardly be imagined, but as the months passed a definite change came over her. By the middle of 1851 she was ready for action. "I must *take* some things" she had decided by June 8th. No details are known of Florence's final struggle with her mother, but in July, 1851, she was allowed to go to Kaiserswerth as a student nurse. She had begun her career.

At heart, however, Mrs. Nightingale could not bring herself to forgive Florence for insisting on going to Kaiserswerth, and when they returned to England Florence was made to feel her mother's and her sister's displeasure very keenly. She was treated as one in disgrace for twelve months, and when they first settled down again at Embley they would hardly speak to her. But Florence was slowly hardening, and in 1853 her parents tacitly acknowledged their defeat, and in the end her father gave her £500 a year of her own. She was now financially as well as emotionally free of her family. Shortly afterwards she was appointed Superintendent of the Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness, located at No. 1, Harley Street, London, W.

The Czar Nicholas I declared war on Turkey in October 1853, and in January, 1854, Great Britain and France declared war on Russia. In September the Russians were defeated at the Battle of the Alma, and the Allies then pressed forward. The conditions of the British troops were appalling, and the motion in January, 1855, in the House of Commons by Mr. Roebuck, Radical member for Sheffield, drawing attention to these was followed by the resignation of Lord Aberdeen, the appointment of Lord Palmerston as Prime Minister and in his Reports to the *Times*, its Special Correspondent, William Howard Russell, wrote: "The commonest accessories of a hospital are wanting. There is not the least attention paid to decency or cleanliness, and for all I can observe the men die without the least effort to save them." How Sidney Herbert, at that time Secretary of War, wrote to Florence Nightingale asking her whether she would go out to Scutari with a group of nurses and her immediate response all the world knows. She brought order out of chaos in the vermin-infested and filthy hospital at Scutari, where 2,000 wounded men were housed and nursed in indescribable conditions.

In spite of obstruction, and detraction, the work of Florence Nightingale in the Crimea stands, for all time, a shining example of what can be accomplished by a woman of determination, organising ability, and genius. She returned to Lea Hurst on August 7th, 1856, but to the end of her long life (in 1910) she was immersed in work; for the Nightingale Training School for Nurses, for the British soldier, for the sanitation of the Army in India, for Poor Law Nursing Reform, for the recognition of the principle of the care of all wounded soldiers, and the neutrality of Red Cross hospitals.

It is rather tragic that the two last struggles upon which Florence Nightingale was engaged were destined to dis-

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