

brought to her something perhaps equally valuable and as inspiring—the friendship of Emily Davies, pioneer of women's education and the founder and first mistress of Girton. Emily, Elizabeth's senior by five years, was, during their life-long friendship, guide, counsellor, friend, and often critic too, to the younger woman. Here is a pretty picture of that friendship. The two sat, with Elizabeth's younger sister Millicent, brushing their hair by the bedroom fire one night. As they brushed, Emily said: "Women go nowhere unless they are as well educated as men. I shall open the Universities to them." "Yes," agreed the practical Elizabeth, "we need education, but we need an income too, and we can't earn without training and a profession. I shall start women in medicine. But what shall we do with Milly?" They agreed that Milly would get the parliamentary vote for women. Milly was then 14, but those young prophets of the fireside came surprisingly near the mark, and in no less honour to-day do we hold the name of Millicent Fawcett than that of her illustrious sister. Elizabeth has stated "that the stupidity of the teachers at the school where she was educated "made her shudder," but she owns that it brought to her and to others the inestimable blessing of a thirst for knowledge. She in her turn sought to develop this in her brothers and sisters, when she gathered them round her at certain hours to enlighten their minds on such subjects as "The Hungry Forties," or perhaps the Crimean War.

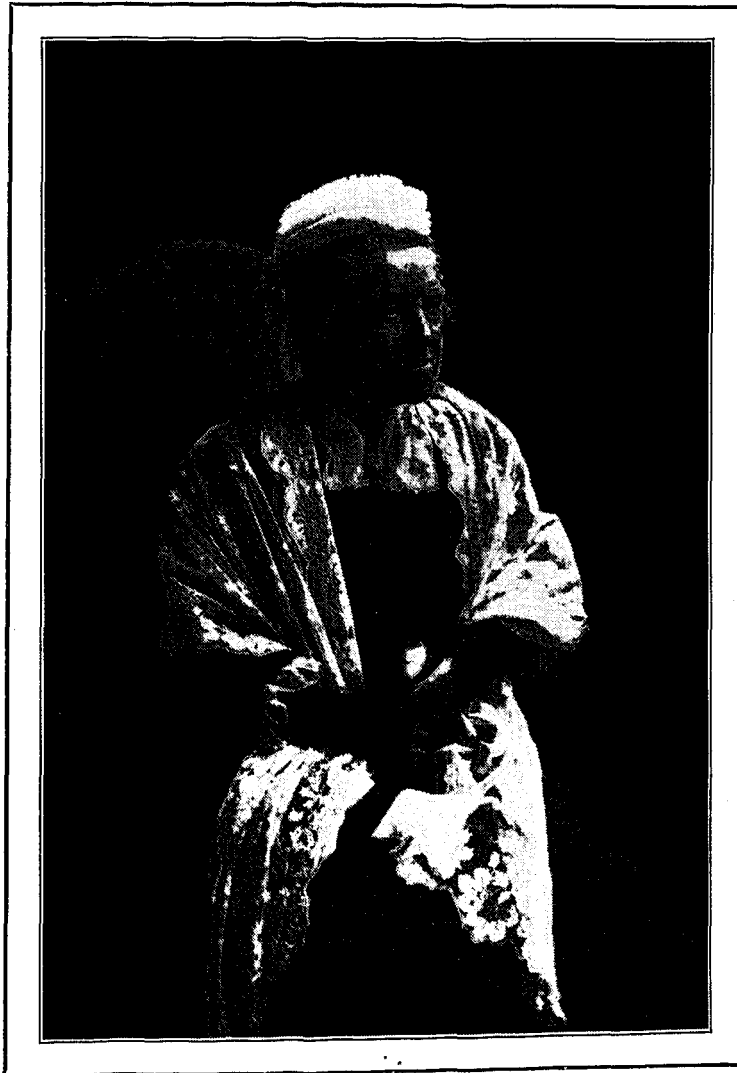
Another early friendship, which was to have its results, was that between Elizabeth and Dr. Blackwell, an English woman who had taken her medical degree in America. Elizabeth listened to three of Dr. Blackwell's lectures in the Portman Rooms, and there came to her the gleam that she was to follow through life and which was to enable her to attain at last to her great objective—the admission of women to the profession of medicine.

The personality of Elizabeth Garrett, as sketched for us at this time, is an attractive and vivid one, very completely it harmonises with the charming picture which forms the frontispiece of the volume. Here is a face good to look upon, with its fine wide brow, eyes set well apart and a mouth and chin that denote purpose and determination. Even the hand has something to tell you of her individuality;

if speaks of capacity, strength and character as it lies like a jewel, in the darkness of the picture, with its setting of soft lace. The unobtrusive gown, which belongs to no particular period of fashion, serves to bring the picture into line with our own or any age, so that it does not remind us in the least of some depressing, faded family album, as pictures of that period are apt to do. Rather we seem to recognise, in the woman it portrays, a fit dwelling place for a great spirit, a personality ahead of her age.

The book gives us an intimate picture of Elizabeth's preparatory struggles with her family in order to break down

barriers to her medical education—a sort of microcosmic struggle, this, as though to form and equip her for the macrocosmic one when she would storm the citadel of medicine and open its doors to women. There was, too, the position, adopted by her friends and advisers, to be faced, after she had won her father to her side, to remain her greatest supporter until the day of his death. An amusing remark, which nurses may relish, is one she made to a doctor who tried to dissuade her from her purpose and asked "Why not be a nurse?" "Because I prefer to earn a thousand rather than twenty pounds a year," came the reply. Elizabeth was ever practical in realising that she must conform to the requirements arising on the medium of currency in her time, little, she knew, can be gained without the help of that, especially when it comes to battering against the walls of prejudice and custom. In the Middlesex Hospital she was given the status of a nurse and worked in a surgical ward—this "to test her resolution"—and a testing indeed it was in those days



ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON, Aged 73.  
Photograph by Olive Edis, F.R.P.S. (Mrs. E. H. Galsworthy).

before the world had grasped the importance of Pasteur's discoveries and ere Lister had brought them into the sphere of surgical practice. Days they were when suppuration was *expected* after even a minor operation and "laudable pus," not asepsis, was the ideal in the mind of the surgeon—often there was worse and sometimes wards had to be closed because of the ravages of "Hospital Gangrene." But Lister came, hailed with contempt and ridicule, but later acclaimed as a saviour of mankind. After her term in the Middlesex was over, Elizabeth spent a somewhat unhappy period at the London, and then another at St. Andrews. Prior to this, the Society of Apothecaries had

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)