

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

SOME years ago, when the celebrated Florence Nightingale was a little girl living at her father's home, a large old Elizabethan house, with great woods about it, in Hampshire, England, there was one thing that struck everybody who knew her. It was that she seemed to be always thinking what she could do to please or aid anyone who needed either help or comfort. She was very fond, too, of animals, and she was so gentle in her way, that even the shyest of them would come quite close to her, and pick up whatever she flung down for them to eat.

Florence was fond of riding, and her father's old friend, the clergyman of the parish, often used to come and take her for a ride with him when he went to the farm cottages at a distance. As he had studied medicine when young, he was able to help those who were ill or had met with an accident. Little Florence took great delight in helping to nurse the sick; and whenever she went on these rides, she had fastened to her saddle a small basket filled with something nice which she had saved from her breakfast or dinner, or which had been provided by her mother.

One day as Florence and her old friend passed a field they found the shepherd tending his sheep without his dog. They noticed that he looked very sad so they asked him what was the matter.

"Oh," said Roger, "Cap v'll never be of any more use to me; I'll have to hang him, poor fellow, as soon as I go home to-night." "Hang him!" said Florence, "Oh, Roger, how wicked of you! What has dear old Cap done?" "He has done nothing," replied Roger, "but he will never be of any more use to me, and I cannot afford to keep him for nothing; one of the mischievous school boys threw a stone at him yesterday and broke one of his legs." And the old shepherd's eyes filled with tears, which he wiped away with his shirt sleeves, then he drove his spade deep into the ground to hide his feelings. "We will go and see poor Cap," said the vicar. "The leg may not be broken."

"Oh, if you could only cure him, how glad Roger would be!" replied Florence.

When they entered the cottage, the dog lay on the bare brick floor, his hair dishevelled and his eyes sparkling with anger at the intruders. But when he looked at Florence and heard her call him, "Poor Cap," he began to wag his short tail, and then crept from under the table and lay down at her feet. She took hold of one of his paws, patted his rough old head and talked to him, while her friend examined the injured leg. This caused the dog great pain but he knew it was meant kindly, and though moaning he licked the hands that were hurting him.

"It is only a bad bruise, no bones are broken. Rest is all Cap needs; he will soon be well again."