

SISTER DORA

DDOROTHY WYNDLOW PATTISON was born on January 15th, 1832. She was the youngest daughter, and the youngest child but one, of the Rev. Mark Pattison, who was for many years Rector of Hauxwell, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. She inherited from her father, who was of a Devonshire family, that finely proportioned and graceful figure which she always maintained; and from her mother, who was the daughter of a banker in Richmond, those lovely features which drew forth the admiration of everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Her father was a good and sincere man. He was thoroughly upright and strict.

Dora and her sister, like a thousand other country parsons' daughters, were of the utmost use in their father's Yorkshire parish. A French gentleman who had lived a while in England and in the country, said to me one day:

"Your young ladies astound me. They are **angels** of mercy. They wear no distinguishing habit; one does not see their wings, yet they fly everywhere, and everywhere bring grace and love and peace — in my country such a thing would be impossible."

These Pattison girls were for ever saving their **pocket** money to give it away, and they made it a rule to **mend** **and** remake their old frocks, so as not to have to buy

new ones out of their allowance for clothes, so as to have more to give. Even their dinners they would reserve for poor people, and content themselves with bread and cheese. "Giving to others instead of spending on themselves seems to have been the rule and delight of their lives."

A pretty story is told of Dorothy at this time. A schoolboy in the village, who was especially attached to her, fell ill of rheumatic fever. The boy's one longing was to see "Miss Dora" again, but she was abroad on the Continent. As he grew worse and worse, he constantly prayed that he might live long enough to see her. On the day on which she was expected, he sat up on his pillows intently listening, and at last, long before anyone else could hear a sound of wheels, he exclaimed: "There she is!" and sank back. She went to him at once, and nursed him till he died.

Her beauty was very great: large brilliant, brown eyes, full red lips, a firm chin and a finely cut profile; her hair dark, and slightly curling, waved all over her head; and the remarkable beauty and delicacy of her colouring and complexion, added to the liveliness of her expression, made her a fascinating creature to behold. Her father always called her "Little Sunshine."

But the most remarkable feature about her was to be found in her inner being. A will, which no earthly power could subdue, enabled her to accomplish an almost superhuman work; yet at times it was to her a faculty that brought her into difficulties. She was twenty-nine before she was able to find real scope for her energies, and then she took a bold step — answered an advertisement from a clergyman for a lady to **take** the village school. Her mother had died in **1861, and**

Sister Dora

she considered herself free from duties that bound her to her home. Her father did not relish the step she took, but acquiesced. She went to Woolston, and remained there three years, during which time she won the hearts, not of the children only, but of their parents as well. She had to live alone in a cottage, and do everything for her self; but the people never for a moment doubted she was a real lady, and always treated her with great respect.

Not thinking a little village school sufficient field for her energies, she resolved to join a nursing sisterhood at Redcar, in Yorkshire. The life was not quite suited to her strong will, but it did her good. She there learned how to make beds and to cook. At first she literally sat down and cried when the beds which she had just put in order were all pulled to pieces by some superior authority, who did not approve of the method in which they were made. But it was a useful lesson for her after life in a hospital. She was there till the early part of 1865, and then was sent to Walsall to help at a small cottage hospital, which had already been established for more than a year.

Walsall, though not in the "Black Country," is in a busy manufacturing district, chiefly of iron. At the time when Sister Dora went there it contained a population of 35,000 inhabitants. It is now connected with Birmingham by almost continuous houses and pits and furnaces.

As fresh coal and iron pits were being opened in the district around Walsall, accidents became more frequent, and it was found impracticable to send those injured to Birmingham, which was seven miles distant; Accordingly, in 1863, the Town Council invited the **Redcar** Society to start a hospital there. When the Sister **who**