

Lady With The Lamp

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Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), had introduced a new era in nursing. At the age of seventeen, she decided to devote herself to God's service as she believed that she heard voice of God calling her for a specific mission, but her family was not in favour of her decision. Later, she decided to serve humanity as a nurse, but nursing did not exist as a profession of high ethical and technical standard. Also there were social barriers which prevented women entering into nursing. But with high determination she got best possible training in the patient care at Kaiservorth in Germany.

During the Crimean War, Florence Nightingale heard the pathetic conditions of British soldiers at military hospitals at Scutary, France. Nightingale with few nurses set out for Crimea. As a young nurse, she faced many difficulties at Scutari, where among filth of the hospital, no cleanliness, no proper sanitation, less disciplined co-workers, the doctors opposition and objection at every turn, it was impossible to get the right food for the helpless patients. As an administrator she felt that nursing was to be her vocation and she became the in charge of

nurses. She subscribed and used money through 'The Time Fund' to provide everything from mattresses to bed-pans, some of these vitals were rejected by doctors to patients. Florence Nightingale was allowed to throw herself into the service of actual nursing.

Mother of whole British Army

Following the defeat of the British Army, the hospital became worse. When the maimed, dying, and limbless men began pouring into the quite, unprepared and inadequate hospital, it was then, as she knelt on the floors filthy with ordure and lice dressing men's wounds, when she stood by the screaming victims of amputation performed without anesthetic or proper implements, when she saw men unable to be cleaned or given fresh linen; covering their heads with their blankets that they might die unseen in their agony with wounds untended. The long suppressed and denied mother's love was so fully awakened by sympathy and compassion that she became from that moment 'the mother of the whole British Army'. Those helpless, maimed, sick and dying men saw her as a mother as their own. They utterly depended on her as their mother. They saw their mothers' love in her eyes. She loved

them, cherished them and they worshipped her... Many died in her arms while enjoying their own mothers' love and concern!. She was the mother of tens and thousands of soldiers of British Army.

Reformer

Florence Nightingale decided to fight for the negligence and her own emotion harden into an iron purpose. This terrible thing must never happen again, this preventable suffering through negligence and lack of humanness. The whole of medical side of army must be reformed. Never again men suffer like this. There must be hygienic hospitals and trained nurses. God was revealing His will to her at last. It was found that the drinking water had been filtered through a dead body of a long dead horse, which haunted her day and night. She wrote many times to War office and authorities but everything in vain. She had to battle continually with authorities. Her patience and tact were quite miraculous..

Florence Nightingale returned to England at the age of 36 with terrible experience she faced in Scutari. She demanded complete reform of Army Medical Administration as well as War Office. At that time like Scutari, the military hospitals in England were also in

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an almost equally shameful condition. Filth, lack of drainage, sanitation, hygiene and unnourishing food met her horrified gaze in all sides. Her notes for the Royal Commission on condition in Military Hospitals consisted of more than 800 pages containing all her knowledge, experience and practical proposals.

Her achievements & contribution

Florence Nightingale did more for the health of humanity in general than any other individual. She did not meddle with medicine. Her attention was only in drainage, hygiene, sanitation, fresh air and proper nursing care etc. These were her great contributions to the medical profession. In her time, it was a common experience for the people to enter hospitals either to die of disease with which they entered instead of being cured. But Nightingale proved that people were being admitted to the hospitals not to die but to heal. She was acknowledged to be the supreme authority on hospital matters. Administration and Organization were her genius. She was consulted on hospital buildings not only in England but all Crowned heads all over Europe who wished her to design their hospitals, and Viceroy's all visited Miss Nightingale for instruction and advice before they sailed to India. By 1860 Miss Nightingale established a training Nursing School at St. Thomas Hospital, London to train and educate nurses as

her wish.

Her most notable administrative reform was to remove nurses from supervision of the medical staff to that of Matron. Soon she started many reforms in work house nursing. Her nurses were not only established in most of the great hospitals in Britain, but were serving all over the

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world. She also had formed District Nursing Movements and Jubilee Institute for Nurses. She started educational facilities for British Army, also used statistics in medical science, invented "Polar area charts" to understand easily hospitals mortality data. She became a legend and an oracle. Kings, statesmen, and ministers deferred her and she was surrounded of young people, who had loved and revered her. Dr. Jowett of Balliol wrote about her, "This great lady worked in silence, there were many lives saved by her and her nurses...what a blessed life is and has been". In 1907, King conferred on her the "Order of Merit", the first Woman in England's history ever to receive it.

Her services for India
Florence Nightingale never

visited India, but through British Army Abroad, has brought her into touch with the army occupation in India. Through the Viceroy's report, Nightingale understood a perfect and practical picture of the whole of India in general and army hospitals conditions in particular. Irrigation and sanitation were her aims and practical achievements for India. According to John Strachey "of the sanitary improvements in India three-fourths are due to Miss Nightingale". With her request, Sir Arthur Cotton built damming of Colerain and Godavari rivers for irrigation which helped the irrigated districts from the famine of 1877. Four million people perished in South India, but none perished in the irrigated districts. Viceroy's like Lord de Grey, Lord Ripon and Lord Dufferin were her friends and gladly used all the knowledge and advice and carried out many of her plans for Indian Military Hospitals. Many of her nurses served the military hospitals in India and Miss Nightingale was able to improve sanitary conditions, and drainage of Indian cities. Her last battle was for Indian taxation to be used primarily for sanitary measures and she succeeded in this at the age of seventy-four.

The 'Lady with the Lamp'
Florence Nightingale won the romantic title 'The lady with the lamp'. She was the 'angel of mercy', and hope of dying. With full of love of God, she discovered God in

the face of those helpless and, sick and dying men. This may be the result of the Voice of God she heard at the age of seventeen, informing her that she had a mission. In the darkest nights, when the whole world was sleeping, she carried a lamp in her tiny hands, visited every dying person and consoled them. She was the mother for them. This title of motherhood has come not as an honorary gesture, but because of her mission and motherly activities among those isolated, the abandoned and the dying. She wanted to bring hope for them. Many have found meaning in their lives through her. She fed the hungry, clothed the cloth-less, bandaged their wounds, cared for the dying. For the

twisted, wounded and broken bodies, she gave strength, to the malnourished she added vigor and vitality. She sacrificed her romantic feelings for them. She worked almost twenty-two hours a day in silence. She was a great example of love of God in action; personification of compassion and caring. She was led by God to serve the suffering humanity. She was a great example of the way in which love of God was transformed into love of her patients and those abandoned by everybody. She revived hope in the hearts of the dying.

Her last days

In her old age she experienced what she had never known in any other period of

her life - peace and happiness. The tension-inner and outer were relaxed. She was content to love and be loved. She gave herself up to benevolence to friends, relatives and strangers. She lived for fifty-two years more, after she had been given up by the doctors. More than seventy years of selfless service, in 1910 Florence Nightingale departed to receive her great recognition from Almighty for her service on earth. She was 90 then.

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