

Pioneer of Nursing Profession

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FLORENCE Nightingale is universally regarded as the founder of trained Nursing profession for women. Her contribution for the development of military and civilian Nursing hospital care is unforgettable. Her work made her the heroine of her own time. She also contributed a lot for the welfare of the soldiers in peace and war, to military and civil hygiene, and to the condition of British District Nursing and the training of midwives. Florence has been entitled Lady with the Lamp. She is a light in the darkness. Her work and devotion enlightened the whole society.

Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820 in Florence, Italy. She belonged to a renowned British family. She was the second daughter of William Edward Nightingale and Frances (Fanny) Smith. She grew up in Derbyshire, Hampshire and London, where her family maintained comfortable homes. She was educated largely by her father, who taught her Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, History, Philosophy and Mathematics. Throughout her life, she read widely in many languages. Social life was generally unsatisfying for Miss Nightingale.

Mission of Life

On February 7, 1837 she believed that she heard the voice of God informing her that she had a mission, but it was not until nine years later that she realised what that mission was. Meanwhile, she strove to escape to a life of her own. Her proposal to study Nursing at a hospital was scotched. She was then persuaded to study parliamentary reports and in three years she was regarded by influential friends as an expert on Public Health and hospitals.

In 1846, a friend sent Miss Nightingale the Year Book of the

Institution of Protestant Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth, Germany, which trained country girls of good character to nurse the sick. Four years later she entered the institution and went through the full course of training as a nurse. In 1853, she was appointed superintendent of Institution for the care of sick gentlewomen, in London, the changes that she made and her administration were very successful. But she yearned for a wider field. By January 1914, she was referring to the Institution as "This Little Mobhill",

The Crimean War

The Crimean War broke out in March, 1854. Great Britain, France and Turkey declared war against Russia. Sisters of Charity were there nursing the soldiers of France and Sisters of Mercy were nursing those of Russia. "Why have we no Sisters of Charity" somebody asked in the London Times. The newspaper also published the miserable conditions of soldiers. At that time, it was unthinkable, immodest and revolutionary to have women Nurses with the British army. In spite of this, Florence along with 38 other nurses set out for Crimea. The condition of the hospitals in Crimea was terrible. There was nothing to nurse the patient, no vessels, no utensils, no soap or towel or hospital clothes. Soldiers used clothes soiled with blood for days together. Doctors were unwilling to allow patients to have female nurses.

On arrival, sisters brought pillows, slings, bandages, etc. Florence organized the hospital with her knowledge and skill in administration. She wrote letters to the soldiers' family members. Even during the night she used to visit every patient.

Peace was finally declared in February, 1856. Her health was impaired and she was advised rest

which she could not do because of her zeal for reform.

By May, 1855, nursing the sick had become her secondary interest and her prime concern now was the welfare of the British Army. She now transferred herself and some of her nurses to Crimea and on landing at Balaklava she was very ill with Crimean fever. Then her opponent, the Inspector-General of Hospitals, contended that she had authority only at Scutari and none in the Crimea. It was not till March 6, 1856, that her position as General Superintendent of the Female Nursing Establishment of the military hospitals of the army was confirmed in general order.

Shortly after the last patient left the Barrack Hospital, Miss Nightingale sailed for England where she had long been a national heroine. But she refused official transport for home and every kind of public reception. Miss Nightingale returned home, determined to destroy her popular image and to inaugurate official action to improve the health, living conditions and food of the British soldiers. In the second, she encountered difficulties as the important men regarded her scheme tolerantly but without enthusiasm. In October, 1856, however, she had a long interview with Queen Victoria, the prince consort, and Lord Pammure, Herbert's Successor. She later had a private interview with the Queen and Pammure promised a Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission on the health of the Army was appointed in May 1857. Miss Nightingale gave extensive evidence and compiled an immense confidential report, covering the whole field of army medical and hospital administration, which was later privately printed as her notes on matters affecting the health efficiency and

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Crisis Counselling

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7. *Resources:* If medical and financial issues are raised help the patient to mobilise their resources.

8. *Promises:* Do not make promises that you can not fulfil. Make only conditional promises when you are not sure, so they are prepared not to be surprised.

9. *Caring Family:* Do not neglect family members. Extend your care to them in their stress and loneliness. They can be more free to attend to the patient.

10. *Touch:* Touch has a great value in communicat-

ing while caring.

11. *Gratitude:* Accept graciously if expressed. Do not expect gratitude and don't be disappointed when it is not expressed.

12. *Termination:* It is important to terminate smoothly by announcing ahead of time. If the parting is going to be painful make the relationship meaningful by allowing them to express feelings.

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hospital administration of the British Army (1858). One consequence of the commission's activities was the foundation of the Army Medical School in 1857. The Indian Mutiny in the same year turned Miss Nightingale's interest to the health of the Army in India, and for that purpose another Royal Commission was appointed in 1859. This resulted in 1868 in the establishment of a sanitary department in the India Office with supreme authority in India.

Her Work

In 1860 she used the Nightingale Fund of \$ 45,000 subscribed by the public to commemorate her Crimean work, to establish at St. Thomas Hospital the Nightingale School for Nurses, the first of its kind in the world. Within a few years she was largely instrumental in inaugurating training for Midwives and she played part in the reform of workhouse. All these works were accomplished by a woman generally supposed to have died. From 1857 Nightingale had mainly lived in London. Her correspondence were enormous.

She was among the first to use coloured plates and graphs which helped in the interpretation of statistics to the public. She reformed the Army Medical Services. Sanitary conditions were improved by her and Army Hospitals were reconstructed with more facilities. She recommended recreational clubs for soldiers.

Government valued her recommendations regarding sanitary work and for the changes suggested

by her for the development of military and civil hospitals. Her dedicated work in the profession made revolution in the whole nursing system. She attracted the most intelligent and scrupulous women to join the profession. She made it a point that healthy Nursing was more important than sick Nursing. Florence had never been to India but she was an acknowledged master of most things in India.

Successive Viceroy's consulted her before assuming their offices.

In 1907, the King conferred on her the Order of Merit, the first woman ever to receive it. Florence died on August 13, 1910. The offer of a national funeral and burial in Westminster Abbey was by her wish declined. Her coffin was borne to the country Churchyard of East Wellow, Hampshire, by six Sergeants of the British Army.

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