

THE LIFE OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

By D. LAMMOND

Summary by a First Year Student, Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet

Florence Nightingale was born on 12th May 1820 in the Villa Colomba at Florence. Her father, William Edward Nightingale, gave her a liberal education. Even from her childhood she had the ambition to fit herself to be of some service to mankind. She records that on 7th February 1837 God called her to His service. She did some pioneer work for women's emancipation and freedom. She actually embarked upon her career only in 1850. In 1837 she went on a Continental tour with her parents. Two eventful and interesting years were passed in France, Italy and Switzerland. She returned to England in 1839. Mrs. Nightingale passionately desired that her daughter should marry and settle herself in married life. But Florence Nightingale showed not even the faintest inclination to marry. She found deeper satisfaction and experienced great pleasure in taking care of her family circle when any one fell ill. Later she decided that nursing should be her profession. Her parents tried their best to get rid of such a notion from her mind. In 1847 she went on a tour to Italy. She met several people who became associated with her work in later life. She returned in the beginning of 1848.

She went on a tour to Italy for the second time, with the Bracebridges. At the end of July 1850 she came to Kaiserwerth. Full of admiration for Kaiserwerth institution she wrote a pamphlet and published it under the title of 'The Institution of Kaiserwerth on the Rhine'. She returned to England in 1850. Going against her parents' unwillingness and disapproval, Florence Nightingale went to Kaiserwerth for training. On her return she insisted on going to Paris to study the work of the 'Sisters of Charity'. She started for Paris in 1853. She made arrangements to enter the Maison de la Providence under the care of the Sisters of Charity, but she was forced to abandon her plan by the opposition of her mother. On her return to England she became the Superintendent of 'The Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness'. She was serving without salary.

In 1854 the Crimean War broke out. Reports on the condition of the wounded and suffering soldiers awakened the public conscience. The Hon. Sidney Herbert, Secretary for War, wrote to Florence Nightingale asking her to offer her services. She personally met him and discussed the details of the scheme. On 19th October she received the official letter appointing her Superintendent of Nurses in the English hospitals in Turkey. She made all arrangements without delay and set out on 21st October 1854 with the Bracebridge family and a party of thirty-eight nurses. On 4th November the party disembarked at Scutari. Ten of the nurses were sent to the General Hospital and the rest took up their residence with Florence Nightingale in the Barracks Hospital.

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Florence Nightingale was more than a nurse. She proved herself capable and useful in many ways. She had to experience many difficulties, especially the lack of necessities and supplies for the hospitals. Sanitary arrangements were terrible and deficient. She was able to effect some improvement out of a fund which had been contributed by the public. She opened special diet kitchens under the control of a member of her party. Among the remarkable things that she used to do were her usual rounds. She could be observed alone walking with a little lamp from patient to patient when all the medical officers had retired. This habit earned for her the name 'Lady of the Lamp'. She captured the hearts of all the patients by her own self-sacrificing work.

For a time Florence Nightingale had been in the midst of certain perplexities. She was frequently accused of inducing the Catholic faith in her Protestant patients. Moreover, she had a rival, by name Mary Stanley, who took the leadership of the fresh batch of nurses despatched from England. But even in that adverse circumstance she found compensation in the love and admiration of the soldiers. In May 1858 Florence Nightingale went to visit the hospitals in the Crimea, accompanied by Bracebridge and by Soyer, a man who offered his services to the Government. She inspected the hospitals in Balaklava and suggested many improvements. It was a wonder that she who had escaped from all diseases, now fell a victim to Crimean fever. Her condition became very serious and the doctors could not hold out a confident hope of recovery. However, by skilful medical attention and careful nursing, above all by God's grace, she was saved. Then she returned to the Barracks Hospital. Once again it was overflowing with suffering soldiers, and Florence Nightingale was again overburdened with work. Throughout her lifetime she stood supremely efficient in her work.

The English nation, in appreciation of her work and as a token of its friendship and respect, started a fund called 'The Nightingale Hospital Fund'. People from all parts of England began to contribute but she herself closed the list when £44,000 had been raised. The nation showed its appreciation in other ways also. Songs proclaiming her merits were composed. Many shop windows were decorated with her portrait. Queen Victoria paid tribute to her work. The Queen sent a personal letter accompanied by a diamond brooch, with 'Crimea' and 'Blessed are the merciful' on one side, and on the other side an inscription that it was a present in memory of her services to the soldiers.

In March 1856 war was abandoned and peace was signed at Paris. Florence Nightingale went to the Crimea to complete the inspection of the hospitals. She started some welfare schemes for the benefit of soldiers, and the Government took the responsibility of the work. She found herself free. She set sail to England and reached home on 5th August. She had been so overburdened with work that for the rest of her life she was in a semi-invalid condition. But her illness did not prevent her from further work. Now she

entered upon a vigorous campaign to raise the general standard of nursing. In 1859 she published notes on nursing in which she put her views on the organization and administration of hospitals. She had hoped to start a separate training college for nurses with the Nightingale Fund. But her ill health prevented her from accomplishing such a large scheme of work. St. Thomas's Hospital was selected for the training of nurses. She drew up the regulations and the institution worked on her proposals. Similar institutions were established in many other parts of the country, some of them under the control of nurses recruited from the Nightingale School.

She focussed her attention on the condition of the British troops in India. In 1863 and 1873 she read two papers on Indian affairs to the Social Service Congress, and that was sufficient to create considerable interest in the public mind. Her constant efforts in that cause produced some amazing alterations in the condition of the Indian troops. She spent some part of her later life in literary work. While she was at work on her books she was deeply moved by the death of her father in 1874. The rest of life contained periods of depression and dejection. In later years religion figured more prominently in everything she did.

In 1887 she had started the experiment of District Nurses at Liverpool and it spread to several places with triumph and success. Later her scheme had been put on a firm and sound basis by the Royal gift. By this time the public claimed that the nursing profession should be safeguarded by a Register of Nurses. But Florence Nightingale was opposed to that view. Her idea was that technically qualified women might be found wholly unsuitable for the work. Later a section of the nurses applied for a Royal Charter. The Government considered the petition and the Charter was granted. In 1900 on her 80th birthday she received congratulations and honours from men of all ranks and position. In 1907 the international conference of Red Cross Societies paid homage to her merits. In the same year King Edward VII conferred the Order of Merit upon her. Throughout her life she had been indifferent to honours and worldly opinion. She died on 1st August 1910 at the age of ninety. People came from far and near to pay their last tribute to the saintly woman. She was buried in the quiet cemetery of East Wellow beside her mother and father.

A CASE OF STONE IN THE URETHRA

Case Study by Nurse B. BOWIE,

Student Nurse, J. J. Hospital, Bombay

(By permission of Mr. S. R. Moolgavkar, F.R.C.S.)

Nuribai Nasir, a Muhammadan woman 50 years of age, was admitted on 8-7-1940 for a swelling in the pelvic region of two years duration, and prolapse of the rectum for the last month. There was no history of difficult labours.

General Examination. The patient was in a run-down condition and ill-nourished. The skin was loose and wrinkled, the nails