

## **Florence Nightingale.**

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The story of Florence Nightingale, the impact of her personality upon the problems of nursing care in the England of her day, is an especially appropriate study in our own time today. In the midst of this terrible destructive war we are proud to know that the average length of time from the moment in which a soldier is wounded to the time he is given first aid is five minutes. The number of wounded saved from death is 97% of those wounded who are not killed by the first impact of their wound.

In the Crimean War of England, France and Turkey against Russia, old pensioners sent out to nurse the sick and wounded were not of the slightest use. The soldiers had to attend each other. No sufficient preparations had been made for the care of the wounded. There was not only lack of surgeons but there were no dressers, no trained nurses, not even linen to make bandages. No preparations were made for the commonest surgical operations. Men lay in barracks for weeks without receiving the services of a doctor. They were left to expire upon the field of battle. They died by the shiploads in being transferred on a four-day journey from the battlefield to the nearest barracks; and the barracks to which they were brought held five thousand wounded in a space planned for one thousand well men. The operating room was opposite the largest ward. Through the window came the shrieks of the unanesthetized sufferers and from out of the windows came flying amputated arms and legs which rotted where they lay, making an ever-increasing pile on the pavement, their stench scarcely greater than the stench of the barrack rooms themselves. The death rate of the unattended wounded on the field of battle was never computed. The death rate of the four days on shipboard from Balaklava, across the Black Sea to the straits of the Bosphorus where Scutari lay was 40% - four out of ten of those who had entered the transport from Balaklava near Sebastopol died on the way to the straits of the Bosphorus. Of those who reached the barracks of Scutari, 42% did not live to leave the hospital. Such was the care of England's wounded before Florence Nightingale.

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Compare this to our day: Now the wounded are speeded backward from the front even all the way to our homeland by air when necessary. Medical officers and corps men are dropped by parachute directly into the front lines at the fighting front when quick evacuation is not possible. Special nursing and medical care is efficiently given all along the lines from the front line evacuation depots to the homeland hospitals. This is a thing we take for granted. It is hard to believe that in times as recent as our Civil War (still remembered by living men) front line conveyances for the sick were either lacking entirely or were make-shift affairs in charge of men who were more often drunk than sober. And even the home hospitals were manned by attendants but little better morally than those near the front, - all wholly untrained as we know training today, most of them old, dirty, drunken, careless and profane.

Yet the nursing profession is a very old and very honorable profession. Twelve hundred years before Christ a well-developed, religious regimen was arranged by the Greeks for the sick, which included diet, rest in bed with good nursing care. Nursing as a profession continued under religious and semi-religious organizations and in large part is so guided today. Early Christianity, while its teachings led away from the Greek ideal of pride in the perfection of the body, still in its spirit brought charity and compassion into human relations. Probably the first nurse specifically mentioned as an individual in history is Saint Paul's "sister, Phoebe." In his letter to the Nazarenes, the Christians of Rome, in the first century A.D., he asked them to receive Phoebe "as becometh saints" because of her service in Cenchrea where "she had been a visiting nurse to many and to myself also." No one doubts that that battered old revolutionary, Saint Paul, had on many occasions a need for tender nursing care. The social status of women and the freedom granted them for self-directed work outside their own homes, had been the limiting factors determining the value of women to the community as a whole from century to century as the years have rolled on. Patterned rules of conduct within wealthy and complex religious orders first permitted women to work within the structure of these orders. There were planes of service, intellectual and menial; but in great

part there was little or no scientific training or application even of existing knowledge to the task of nursing. The monks and nuns owed their first allegiance to the rites of the church, not to their patient's needs. Nursing was a penance, not a profession. Yet, as special nursing religious orders grew, especially in times of war, the traditional strict discipline of nurses' training became crystalized through long association of nursing with authoritative regimens of medical, religious and military life.

With the advent of the Protestant Reformation and the expansion of wealth based on commerce and manufactures, the power of the feudal church declined. The care of the sick fell to tax-supported hospitals. The nurse became a paid servant of the city and the cheapest service the city fathers could find. Inmates of work-houses and penal institutions were sentenced to care for the sick poor. Without religious inspiration, without education, without scientific training, without wages or leisure - they were usually pitiable, despised creatures. In our own Bellevue Hospital, following the Civil War, much of the nursing was done by drunken prostitutes who, in the notorious five-point police courts of New York City, were given their option of going to prison or to hospital service. These women were often found drunk under the beds of their dead patients whose liquor they had stolen.

But little better than this is Dickens' Sarah Gamp, "She was a fat old woman, was this Mrs. Gamp, with a husky voice and a moist eye, which she had a remarkable power of turning up and only showing the white of it. Having very little neck, it cost her some trouble to look over herself, if one may say so, at those to whom she talked. She wore a very rusty black gown, rather the worse for snuff, and a shawl and bonnet to correspond. The face of Mrs. Gamp, the nose in particular, was somewhat red and swollen. It was difficult to enjoy her society without becoming conscious of a smell of spirits. Like most persons who have attained to great eminence in their profession, she took to hers very kindly; insomuch that, setting aside her natural predilections as a woman, she went to a lying-in or a laying-out with equal zest and

relish."

In Protestant England and outside of religious orders everywhere, this was the general level of nursing aid. There was little prospect of change. In Germany a desperately poor scholar, Theodore Fliedner, obtained a religious education through the greatest possible deprivation and hard menial work. At last, at the age of 22, he was ordained and took up his life work at Kaiserwerth on the Rhine in Germany. He had known poverty and want, had preached in the prisons and, through nursing, he had learned to use herbs and had gotten a simple knowledge of medicine. He knew the problems of the poor. Hardly had he begun his work when the velvet factory, upon which the town which he had chosen for his parish depended, shut down. Fliedner went out to neighboring Protestant countries to find help for his people. He tramped through Germany, visited Holland, finally visited England. In England he met Elizabeth Fry and, ~~inspired~~<sup>inspired</sup> with her work in prison reform at Newgate, he returned to Kaiserwerth and helped in the forming of the first German society for improving the conditions of prisoners. In his day, female prisoners in particular were dismissed from prisons with nothing open to them but evil. His first act on his own part was to build a small house on his own parish grounds for discharged female prisoners. At the start he had only two beds with a roof over head - two beds and a roof in his parish at Kaiserwerth and a dream castle in the clouds. He had only \$150.00 a year income from his parish with his wife, two young brothers and a sister to support. But out of this effort of Fliedner was revived the forgotten order of deaconesses and a planned training course with emphasis on nursing emerged. It was not long before the school attracted Protestant women of high type from all walks of life and soon there were established obligatory entrance certificates of good health, of good education and good character. After entrance, five years of graded, supervised training were required. There was an allowance of spending money. Recreation periods were part of the program. The principle of having a trained woman dean of the school with complete authority over the work of the pupils was established. These principles,

applied to a school for women, not restricted by religious vows or orders, were new in the world. To this school came Florence Nightingale, at first for a visit when 26 years of age and later at the age of 31 for a definite period of training. After entering the school Florence wrote in a letter to her mother, "The world here fills my life with interest. Until yesterday I never had time even to send my clothes to the wash. We have ten minutes for each of our meals of which we have four. We get up at five, breakfast at quarter before six. The patients dine at eleven, the sisters at twelve. We drink tea, that is, a drink made of ground rye, between two and three; and sup at seven. Several evenings in the week we collect in the great hall for a bible lesson. The man's wisdom and knowledge of human nature is wonderful. This is life. Now I know what it is to love life!"

Here Florence Nightingale crystalized her belief that nursing should be approached as a science and practiced as an art, with devotion and intelligence, not sentimentally as an outlet for emotions or penance for sin; and that, in an institution engaging nurses, a female superintendent should be solely responsible for their activities and discipline.

Among the many friends of the cultured Nightingale family was Henry Manning, a Protestant Englishman who had gone over to the Roman Catholic Faith. Having been to Kaiserwerth and having learned what was taught there, Florence Nightingale longed to study with the nursing Catholic sisters of the Maison de la Providence in Paris. Manning, who later became a cardinal, was able to get leave from a council of The Sisters of Charity for the English Protestant lady to study in their institution. They had two hundred orphans and a creche. They had a hospital for sick old women. There were two other hospitals ten minutes away. Florence Nightingale obtained permission to study Paris hospitals. She saw great surgeons at work, collected reports, made surveys and then at the age of 35 she entered the Maison de la Providence of the Soeurs de la Charite at No. 5 Rue Ordnot Saubourg St. Germain. During this period of

study, she was approached by the committees in charge of the "Harley Street Establishment for Gentlewomen During Illness" to become superintendent of their institution, an institution managed by a committee of ladies and one of gentlemen. They wanted her to give their institution new life. She accepted. Her own estimate of the organization she expressed as follows: "Harley Street is a sanitarium for sick governesses managed by a committee of fine ladies. Isaiah himself could not prophesy how they will be minded at eight o'clock this evening." She wrote, "I have been in service ten days and have had to furnish an entirely empty house in that time. We take in patients this Monday. My committee refused me to take in Catholic patients, whereupon I wished them Good Morning, unless I might take in Jews and their rabbis. So now it is settled and in print that we are to take in all denominations whatever and allow them to be visited by their priests and muftees providing I will receive the obnoxious animal at the door, make myself responsible that he does not speak to or look at anyone else and bring him downstairs again in a noose and out into the street. Amen. From philanthropy and all deceits, good Lord, deliver us."

She wrote to her father, "When I entered here I determined I would never intrigue among the committee. Now I perceive that I do all my business by intrigue. Last general committee I executed a series of resolutions on five subjects and presented them as coming from the medical men. All these five I proposed and carried in committee without telling that they came from me and not from the medical men; and then, and not until then, I showed them to the medical men without telling them that they were already passed in committee. Success is said to make an insurrection into a revolution. The medical men have had two meetings and approved them, all thought they were their own. No one suspected my intrigue, which would ruin me."

She was all sparkle and happiness. Here was the vision of the goal for which she had shaped her life: A nursing home to be modeled as she wished. It was run by committees of men and women whose agent she was, yet whose minds took direction from her. A year of happy management followed, of power combined with whimsical gentleness, fun and tenderness. For this life she had refused marriage. She had withstood the pressure of family and friends, withstood pressure from these sources so great we can hardly understand their weight today; not realizing that proud families of that day felt that to practice nursing was to join the dregs of womanhood. In that day too marriage would have meant complete subservience to a husband's will - no English husband could have been depended upon to remain enchanted to the extent of having his wife continue in a profession; and in England a man's wife was his chattel, his to command.

From her earliest youth, legends had grown up of the child Florence's attachment to animals, of her ministrations to sick dogs and ailing children, to the sick people in her father's estate and in her neighborhood of Barbysire. In her imagination, her dolls were always sick or injured, they were perpetually in splints. She and her sister, Parthenope, were trained at home by tutors directed by their wealthy, scholarly father. They spoke German, Italian, French fluently. They read Greek and Latin readily at sixteen. They studied Roman, German, Greek, Italian and Turkish history. Their father taught them mathematics, carried them into higher mathematics and nourished in Florence a love of statistical method which helped her in the arrangement and analysis of her experiences all of her life. Florence, graceful and brilliant, was attractive to everyone. Caroline Fox, in "Memories of Old Friends," records an encounter with Sir Henry de la Beche, the pioneer of the geological map of England: Warrenton Smythe and Sir Henry dined at Mr. Nightingale's and Florence sat between them. "She began by



drawing Sir Henry out on geology, enchanted him by the boldness and breadth of her views, which were not common then. She accidentally proceeded into regions of Latin and Greek and then our geologist had to get out of it. She was fresh from Egypt and began talking with W. Smythe about the instrip-tions where he thought he could do pretty well; but when she began quoting Lepsius which she had been studying in the original he was in the same case as Sir Henry. When the ladies left the room Sir Henry said to Smythe, 'A capital young lady that, if she hadn't floored me with her Latin and Greek.'

~~Florence, graceful and brilliant, was attractive to everyone.~~ It was the great German scientist, Baron von Bunsen, who, as a result of a conversation with her on the study of medicine and sanitary subjects, sent her the annual report of Fliedner's Institution for Deaconesses at Kaiserwerth with its hospital, school and penitentiary, <sup>which</sup> so satisfying to her inspiration that she wrote after visiting it, "The thoughts and feelings that I have now, I can remember since I was six years old. The first thought I can remember and the last with nursing work and in the absence of this education work, but more the education of the bad than of the young." All of the lines of her life drew to the one conclusion. Travelling in Rome at the age of 27 her mind was filled with plans for a Kaiserwerth at home. There in Rome she met Sidney Herbert and his young wife - a wealthy philanthropic pair, near neighbors at home in Barbysshire. Florence's conversation turned to her favorite field - the working people and their need of care in health and illness. "It is a coincidence, Miss Nightingale," said Sir Herbert, "that we should have followed unknowingly the same line of thought," for Sidney Herbert and his wife had spent that Summer devising plans for a convalescent home to be operated under their direction in England. Sidney Herbert's broad intel-

lect and progressive mind lifted him higher and higher into the realm of public service. He became a member of Sir Robert Peel's government, then Secretary to the Admiralty, then Secretary of War, and suddenly there burst upon England the Crimean War. The first news was of victory against the Russians and then the shocking news of England's neglect of her wounded. At once Sidney Herbert's thoughts turned to Florence Nightingale as the one woman in all England prepared to meet this challenge. He wrote to plead with her to accept the burden of the management of the nursing of England's uncared-for thousands of wounded, and she at the same moment wrote him to offer her services. Their letters crossed in the mail. Said he, "My question simply is, 'Would you listen to the request to go and superintend the whole thing?' You would, of course, have plenary authority over all of the nurses and I think I could secure you the fullest assistance and cooperation from the medical staff, and you would also have an unlimited power of drawing on the government for whatever you thought requisite for the success of your mission. If this succeeds, an enormous amount of good will be done now and to persons deserving everything at our hands, and a prejudice will have been broken through and a precedence established which will multiply the good to all times." Said she, "A small, private expedition of nurses has been organized for Scutari and I have been asked to command it. What does Mr. Herbert say to the scheme itself? Does he think it will be objected to by the authorities? Would he give us any advice or letters of recommendation? Are there any stores for the hospital he would advise us to take out? Would someone tell the authorities of me? this is not a lady but a real hospital nurse and she has had experience. My uncle went down this morning to ask my father's and my mother's consent." There resulted a woman in an office in the British Government,

assured of plenary authority. It was a milestone on the highway of advance into public life of women in England. The news flashed over England and the world. The London Examiner and the London Times told the nation that here was a woman who knew Latin and Greek, knew higher mathematics, was versed in art, science and literature, that she spoke French, German and Italian as fluently as English, that she had been over Europe, and gone up the Nile, that she was young - the same age as the English Queen Victoria - that she was graceful, feminine, rich, popular, obedient to her parents; she was tall, distinguished, her voice <sup>low</sup> sweet and ~~soft~~.

Florence Nightingale listened to none of it. She went busily about her work, calm and composed, earnestly endeavoring to select the proper women. Florence Nightingale wished to take only twenty - she agreed with Sidney Herbert on forty. The party left with thirty-eight. For these thirty-eight all London was scoured. Of all who came as volunteers, only one expressed a wish to go with any good motive. Money was the only inducement. The party which left England was composed of Roman Catholic Sisters, Anglican Sisters, nurses from St. John's and from various English hospitals. The Roman Catholic bishop released these sisters from his subjugation, He agreed on Florence Nightingale's entire leadership and signed a paper for it. His sisters had rules ordering them never to discuss religion except with Roman Catholic soldiers. Her influence on all was wonderful. The rough hospital nurses on the third day after breakfasting and dining with Florence Nightingale each day and receiving all her attentions, were quite humanized and civilized. Their very manners at table softened.

It is not possible for us to imagine the horror of the sight which greeted Florence Nightingale and her little band of nurses on their arrival at

Scutari. In the courtyard opposite the operating room an army mule-cart backed up to the rotting mess of arms and legs and began carrying them away. A wounded English officer, lying on a cot near the window looked up, "Moore," the officer said, "I believe that English nurse has come." In four months the death rate had fallen from 42% to scarcely more than 2%. Her letters give us glimpses of strong, swift action. "On Thursday last we had 1,756 wounded in this hospital among whom were 120 cholera patients, and 650 severely wounded in the other building called the "General Hospital" of which was also have charge, when the message came to prepare for 510 wounded who were arriving. We had half an hour's notice before they began landing the wounded. Between one and nine o'clock we had the mattresses stuffed, sewed up and layed down

only upon matting upon the floor, all the men washed and put to bed and all their wounds dressed. We are very lucky in our medical heads, two of them are brutes and four of them are angles. We have now four miles of beds and not 18 inches apart. All this fresh influx has been laid down in two corridors with a line of beds down each side, just room enough for one person to pass between. Yet in the midst of all this appalling horror there is good, and I can truly say like St. Peter, 'It is good for us to be here,' though I doubt whether if St. Peter had been here he would have said so." She adds, "The vermin might, if they had but unity of purpose, carry off the four miles of bed on their backs and march with them into the war office. There were no towels, no soap, meat boiled four hours, the helpless unfed, vermin, open sewers, no shirts, sheets made of canvas."

As the news reached England, English people were panic-stricken. The Times collected an immense fund to alleviate the suffering. Mr. McDonald, the

man in charge of the Times Fund, and Florence Nightingale clothed and fed uncounted numbers of the English soldiers whom the English Government was allowing to freeze and starve, for the British soldiers in their light summer uniforms fitted for a hot country were facing the rigors of a Russian winter; but with this fund every man of the regiment had a suit of flannels or other woollens, thus equipping the troops with the means of resisting mortal cold, but the frozen, starved men broke down in large numbers and were sent, ill with many diseases beside his wounds, across the four days of sea to the big hospital on the hill at Scutari, there to find its horrors and hardships.

With the coming of Florence Nightingale, many things changed. In a week a laundry was started, diet kitchens were established, access to soap and water was arranged. Fifty thousand shirts were issued from her store. She wrote Mr. Herbert, "I am a kind of a general dealer in sox, shirts, knives, forks, wooden spoons, tin baths, bebbage and sabbage and carrots, operating tables, towels and soap, small pillows. I will send you a picture of my caravansary into which beasts come in and out. The beasts were the vermin, the carevansary was Miss Nightingale's quarters.

She revised the method of feeding her sick stating, "The food should all be carved in the kitchens on hot plates and at meal times the orderlies should fetch it for the patients, carry it to the wards where an officer tells it off to every bed according to the bed ticket hung up at every bed." She planned for a house steward and a governor of the hospital and sketched a medical and purveying staff to be sent out from England. She set up a money-order department and four afternoons in a month received the money of any soldier who wished to send it home. About one thousand pounds a month was so taken and remitted to Mr. Smith, her uncle,

who distributed it in England. In six months 71,000 pounds, as she said, were "rescued" from the canteen and went back to families in England. She established classrooms and reading rooms. People back in England from the Queen down eagerly sent out books, games, music, maps, magic lanterns. Through all of this labor, Florence Nightingale found time to carry out individual nursing to such an extent that one of her doctors wrote, "I believe there never was a severe case of any kind that escaped her notice."

Eight months after Florence Nightingale's arrival at Scutari, in May of 1855, she decided to leave Scutari in order to visit the hospitals in the Crimea. Here she acquired Crimean Fever. She was extremely ill, "very near to death." On becoming convalescent, she refused to leave her work and return to England. Her recovery was gradual and her weakness great. The news of her illness and, in spite of it, her determination to remain in Scutari until the war was over, reached England and increased the enthusiasm of the people for her. She became a popular national heroine. It was decided to raise a fund for the establishment of some school for nurses under a council to be nominated by Miss Nightingale. The Nightingale Fund was established and with it she ultimately founded an institution for the training, sustenance and protection of nurses and hospital attendants. Her choice was St. Thomas Hospital. This hospital was large, rich and well-managed. The matron was a woman after Miss Nightingale's own heart, strong, devoted to her work, devoid of self-seeking, full of decision and administrative ability. This woman, Mrs. Wardrober, remained for 27 years superintendent of the Nightingale School. The hospital provided facilities for training and the Nightingale Fund paid the cost including the payment of the nurses themselves. This institution was destined to found the modern art and practice of nursing. Miss Nightingale stated the essential principles to be two:

Nurses should have their technical training in hospitals especially organized for the purpose and they should live in a home fit to form their moral life and discipline. When the probationers had finished their training, they were expected to enter into service as hospital nurses. It was not intended that they should enter upon private nursing. Florence Nightingale felt from the first that her training school should, in its turn, be the means of training elsewhere.

Miss Nightingale's illness in the Crimea had resulted in a weakness so great that she was constantly confined to her room, but in this room, Miss Nightingale's demand for detailed information about the school was almost insatiable. From year to year other hospitals were assisted from the Mother School with trained superintendents of staff and new centers were formed with the same objects as that of the Nurses Training School in St. Thomas Hospital. In this way, Miss Nightingale through the means of the fund of 44,000 pounds raised by the people of England in recognition of her services in the Crimean War, was instrumental in raising the calling of nurses to the position it now holds. In Germany, in France, in Austria and in other countries the training of nurses followed Miss Nightingale's lead. The seed which Florence Nightingale transplanted from Kaiserwerth grew up in other heads and with different developments into a proud profession.