




Florence Nightingale

“Lady with a lamp”





Florence Nightingale



- Florence Nightingale, the daughter of the wealthy landowner, William Nightingale of Embly Park, Hampshire, was born in Florence, Italy, on 12th May, 1820. Her father was a Unitarian and a Whig who was involved in the anti-slavery movement. As a child, Florence was very close to her father, who, without a son, treated her as his friend and companion. He took responsibility for her education and taught her Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, history, philosophy and mathematics.



PLATE II. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AND THE INJURED COLLIE DOG.
FROM AN ENGRAVING IN THE POSSESSION OF MISS WHITE, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, MONTREAL.

- At seventeen she felt herself to be called by God to some unnamed great cause. Florence's mother, Fanny Nightingale, also came from a staunch Unitarian family. Fanny was a domineering woman who was primarily concerned with finding her daughter a good husband. She was therefore upset by Florence's decision to reject Lord Houghton's offer of marriage. Florence refused to marry several suitors, and at the age of twenty-five told her parents she wanted to become a nurse. Her parents were totally opposed to the idea as nursing was associated with working class women.



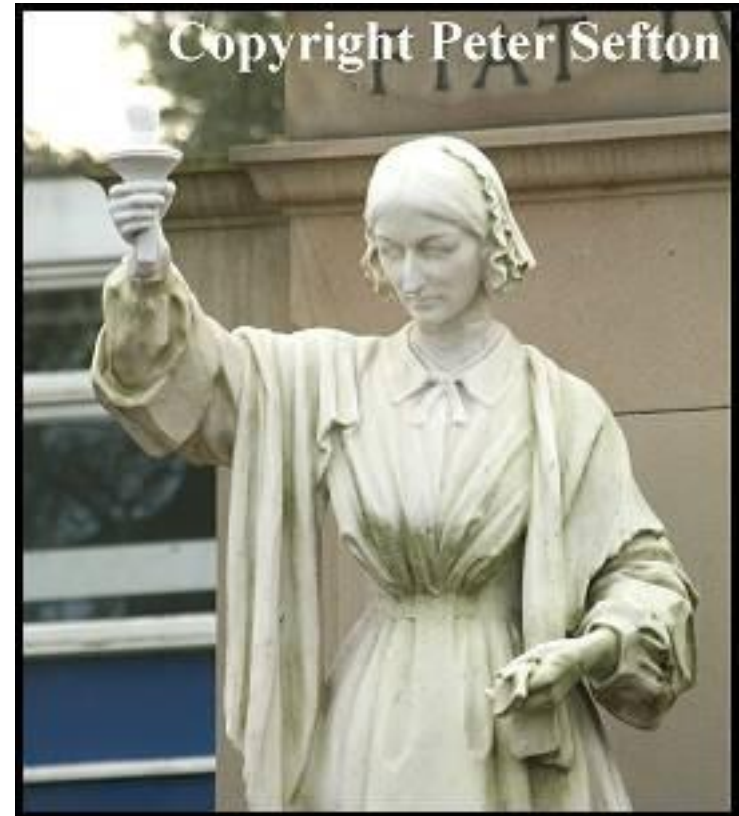
- Florence went to Kaiserwerth, Germany where she studied to become a nurse at the Institute of Protestant Deaconesses. Two years later she was appointed resident lady superintendent of a hospital for invalid women in Harley Street, London.
- In March, 1853, Russia invaded Turkey. Britain and France, concerned about the growing power of Russia, went to Turkey's aid. This conflict became known as the Crimean War. Soon after British soldiers arrived in Turkey, they began going down with cholera and malaria. Within a few weeks an estimated 8,000 men were suffering from these two diseases.





- Nightingale volunteered her services and was eventually given permission to take a group of thirty-eight nurses to Turkey.
- Military officers and doctors objected to Nightingale's views on reforming military hospitals. Nightingale received very little help from the military until she used her contacts at The Times to report details of the way that the British Army treated its wounded soldiers.
- In 1856 Florence Nightingale returned to England as a national heroine. She had been deeply shocked by the lack of hygiene and elementary care that the men received in the British Army. Nightingale therefore decided to begin a campaign to improve the quality of nursing in military hospitals. In October, 1856, she had a long interview with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and the following year gave evidence to the 1857 Sanitary Commission. This eventually resulted in the formation of the Army Medical College.

- To spread her opinions on reform, Nightingale published two books, Notes on Hospital (1859) and Notes on Nursing (1859). With the support of wealthy friends and John Delane at The Times, Nightingale was able to raise £59,000 to improve the quality of nursing. In 1860, she used this money to found the Nightingale School & Home for Nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital. She also became involved in the training of nurses for employment in the workhouses that had been established as a result of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act.





- In later life Florence Nightingale suffered from poor health and in 1895 went blind. Soon afterwards, the loss of other faculties meant she had to receive full-time nursing. Although a complete invalid she lived another fifteen years before her death in London on 13th August, 1910.

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