



From the Annals of the World History

Florence Nightingale

--- 12th May 1820 - 13th August 1910



The Lady with the Lamp

Considered to be the founder of modern nursing, British nurse, hospital reformer and public health innovator Florence Nightingale was born in Florence, Italy, and raised in the country side of Derbyshire, England. Believing she had a calling from God, she decided to dedicate her life to nursing. After travelling through Europe in 1849 to study hospital systems, she was trained at the Institute of Saint Vincent de Paul in Alexandria, Egypt, and the Institute for Protestant Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth, Germany. In 1853, she used her allowance to reorganize the **Institution for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen** in Harley Street, London, gaining valuable experience in hospital administration.

In 1853, Russia invaded Turkey and ignited Crimean War (1854 - 1856). Aware of Nightingale's success in Harley Street, Britain's Secretary of War, Sidney Herbert, asked her to undertake a nursing mission in the Crimea. She and 38 nurses went to Uskudar (now part of Istanbul), where they found 5000 British soldiers housed in filthy, dilapidated buildings that not only lacked medical equipment but even the barest living essentials. Under Nightingale's direction, the nurses cleaned and disinfected the vermin - filled barracks. Each night, by the light of the lantern she carried, **"The Lady with the Lamp"** ended her 20 - hour workday by personally inspecting every ward. Within months, casualties from infection dropped from 42 percent to 2.2 percent.



The Lady with the Lamp attending to the sick

After the war, Nightingale returned to England as a national heroine. In 1857, encouraged by Queen Victoria, Nightingale began the first scientific examination of the sanitary conditions and health of the peacetime army. Her books **'Notes on Matters Affecting the Health', 'Efficiency and Hospital Administration of the British Army'**, remain the standard work of its kind. She gradually widened the scope of her work to include civilian hospitals and public health.

In 1860, with money raised through donations, Nightingale founded the **Nightingale School of Nursing** at

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St. Thomas Hospital, the **first professional program in the world**. Prior to this time, nursing was considered a menial job undertaken by untrained personnel who were often of dubious character. By establishing strict standards, Nightingale raised nursing to the level of a medical profession. She outlined her methods in '**Notes on Nursing**' (1859), the first textbook for nurses.

Florence Nightingale had exhibited a gift for mathematics from an early age and excelled in the subject under the tutorship of her father. Later, Nightingale became a pioneer in the visual presentation of information and statistical graphics. In 1859 Nightingale was elected the first female member of the Royal Statistical Society and she later became an honorary member of the American Statistical Association.

In 1907, Nightingale became the first woman to receive the British order of Merit. After her death, the Crimean Monument was erected in her honour in Waterloo Place in London in 1915. The Nightingale Pledge taken by new nurses was named in her honour, and the **International Nurses Day** is celebrated around the world on her birthday.



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