Florence Nightingale,- "Lady With The Lamp" Honored In Baltimore

Centenary Of The Great English Nurse Of The Crimean War To Be Observed By Maryland Graduate Nurses With Massmeeting At Associate Congregational Church.

BY EMILY EMERSON LANTZ

In the Nurses' Home of Baltimore's great house of healing, the Johns Hopkins Hospital, there stands a small statue entitled, "The Lady With the Lamp." It represents the gentle English mother of scientific nursing, Florence Nightingale. She, who with a staff of 37 nurses, professional and volunteer, went out to the seat of the Crimean War and became there the pioneer of modern battle field nursing.

Ten thousand wounded, suffering soldiers were placed under Florence Nightingale's care and history records that late at night this devoted woman would make her solitary round of the wards, lamp in hand, stopping here and there to speak a kindly word to some helpless, heartsick man who blessed her as she passed and watched, with yearning eyes, her flickering light until she vanished from his view. The statuette at the Nurses' Home shows the nurse with shaded lamp intent upon her ministering errand.

Greek mythology has a poetic legend concerning Aesculapius, god of medicine. How his ministry to man caused Pluto to complain to Zeus that Hades was becoming depopulated because no man died while Aesculapius lived to heal him of disease. Zeus, therefore, killed Aesculapius with a lightning bolt, but placed him afterwards among the stars, since as a star of hope medical science shines upon the darkness of disease and pain.

So upon the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, which occurs May 15, 1920, the great work of scientific nursing inaugurated by her shines out as never before. Torch after torch has been lighted by hospitals and hospital nurses at her flickering hospital lamp. For many, many years her work has "carried on" and "The Lady With the Lamp" has become the patron saint, the inspiration, the example, the wise, beneficent guide to those following the tenderest of all woman's vocations, the mission of scientific nursing.

To Commemorate Anniversary.

On Wednesday night, May 12, of this week, members of the State Association of Graduate Nurses will commemorate the centenary of Florence Nightingale with a massmeeting to be held at 8 o'clock in the Associate Congregational Church, corner Preston street and Maryland avenue.

Members of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty that convenes in Baltimore this week will attend the meeting. Dr. William H. Welch will preside, and Dr. Howard A. Kelly will deliver an illustratde address. From 500 to 600 graduate nurses will assemble in the chapel and march in procession to the church singing Florence Nightingale's favorite hymn: "The Son of God goes forth to War." Two moving pictures will be shown, "An Equal Chance" and "Florence Nightingale," and "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America, the Beautiful" will be sung. An exhibition of Florence Nightingale relics will be on view, and graduate nurses of the Training School for Nurses of the Maryland University Hospital will wear the distinctive feature of the nursing garb of that school, the dainty white nurse's cap similar in design to that worn by Florence Nightingale herself.

Nurses from every part of the State of Maryland are expected to be present—health nurses, army nurses, nurses following many specific lines—with the officers of the Maryland State Association of Graduate Nurses, who are: President, Miss E. M. Lawler, of Johns Hopkins Hospital; vice-presidents, Miss Jane E. Nash, of the Church Home and Infirmary, and Miss Evans, of the Union Protestant Infirmary; secretary, Miss Sara F. Martin, and treasurer, Miss Bernice C. Connor.

Named After Her Birthplace.

The life story of Florence Nightingale is a very beautiful one. She was the younger daughter of William Edward Nightingale, of Embley Park, Hampshire, and Lea Hurst, Derbyshire, England, and was born in the city of Florence, Italy, May 15, 1820. The beautiful name of her birthplace was given her but most of her childhood was spent in Derbyshire, England, where, from infancy, her love of nature and animals was manifest. Even her games were characteristic since to nurse and bandage her dolls was her delight.

Her first living patient was the injured dog of a shepherd and from ministering to animals she passed on to ministry to her fellowmen. Wherever suffering or sorrow were found, there this young creature, whose mission was so apparent, was found also.

Society had few attractions for so earnest and consecrated a soul and while her social standing necessitated her being presented at court, history records that instead of attending debutante balls her first season in town was spent investigating hospitals, reformatories and charitable institutions. Later she made serious study of foreign hospitals, since England at that time was much behindhand in the matter of hospital nursing and sanitation, and in order to fit herself to improve nursing conditions in her native country, Miss Nightingale took a course in trained nursing at the Institute of Protestant Deaconesses at Kaisersworth, on the Rhine. Here she remained six months neglecting no detail that could make her proficient in her self-appointed task and from Kaisersworth she went to Paris, France, where she studied systems of hospital management and nursing under the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

On her return to England Miss Nightingale began at once the reorganization of the Governesses' Sanatorium in Harley street, now known as the Home for Gentlewomen During Temporary Illness, which was at that time in great needs of money and badly managed. Since Miss Nightingale spared neither her time nor strength, nor her fortune in its behalf, she quickly placed the sanatorium on a satisfactory basis.

Battle Hospital In Crimea.

England in 1854 was stirred to its foundation by tidings of the suffering of the wounded and sick in the Crimea. Conditions in the barracks hospital at Scutari were deplorable and there was utter lack of the commonest facilities for nursing. A royal commission of investigation was appointed and a patriotic fund opened to which call for money England generously responded. Sidney Herbert was then Secretary of War and letters between him and Miss Nightingale crossed one another—his asking her to go to Crimea and hers offering to undertake that service of mercy.

She set out from England October 24, 1854, with a staff of nurses and reached Scutaria November 4, in time to receive the wounded from Balaklava, that terrible engagement in which the "Charge of the Light Brigade" was made that cost the lives of most of that noble "six hundred." A day or two later the wounded from Inkerman were brought in and soon she had 10,000 men under her care and the responsibility of the general superintendence of all hospitals on the Bosporus. The woman at the head gave herself, body and soul, to the work. She would stand for 20 hours at a stretch to see the wounded accommodated and regularly attended surgical operations to encourage soldiers by her sympathy and heartening words. "Gradually," runs the official record, "the effects of the measures adopted were seen in a lowered death rate. In February 1, 1855, it was as high as 42 per cent.; before many months it had sunk to 2."

The brave nurse was herself stricken with fever, but refused to leave her post, and remained at Scutari until Turkey was evacuated by the British in July, 1856.

Slipped Quietly To England.

England yearned to honor the woman who had so valorously fought with disease and death for the lives of Briton's sons. The Government ordered a man of war to bring Miss Nightingale home. But "The Lady with the Lamp," who had listened undisturbed to the thunder of cannon, could not face the greetings of a grateful nation. She quietly took ship on a French vessel, crossed the Channel and had returned to her country home before news of her return had spread. With the £50,000 given her by the British people in recognition of her war service, Miss Nightingale founded the Nnightingale Home for Training Nurses at St. Thomas and King's College Hospitals.

Her health was permanently affected as a consequence of her war service, but this did not interfere with an after life of great usefulness. She concentrated her attention upon the subject of army sanitation reform and army hospitals and to the work of the Army Medical College at Chatham.

Published "Notes On Nursing."

In 1858 Florence Nightingale published her "Nnotes on Nursing; What It Is and What It Is Not," a book that proved an immense stimulus to the vocation of nursing in England and a copy of which is in the Peabody Institute, Baltimore, published, in 1880, by D. Appleton & Co.

With the help of the County Council Technical Instruction Committee, Miss Nightingale organized, in 1892, a health crusade in Buckinghamshire. Instructors were sent among cottages to give practical information upon such matters as cleanliness, drainage, ventilation, etc. Miss Nnightingale is understood to have drawn up a confidential report for the British Government on the working of the Army Medical Corps in the Crimea and to have been officially consulted during the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War, while the Order of Merit was bestowed upon her in 1907 by King Edward VII as a mark of the appreciation of her country. She died in London on August 13, 1910, at the advanced age of 90 years.

Woman Of Advanced Thought.

One of the most remarkable things about this very unusual woman is the completeness with which her original and progressive mind grasped and introduced health and nursing methods that are the accepted standards of today. Her "Notes On Nursing," a small volume clearly and forcibly written, is as instructive now as 62 years ago, when it was penned. She modestly says of them:

"They are meant simply to give hints for thought to women who have personal charge of the health of others. Every woman, or at least almost every woman in England, at one time or another in her life has charge of the personal health of somebody, whether child or invalid—in other words, every woman is a nurse. Every day sanitary knowledge or the knowledge of nursing, or, in other words, of how to put the constitution in such a state as that it will have no disease, or that it can recover from disease, takes a higher place. It is recognized as the knowledge which every one ought to have. If, then, every woman must, at some time or other of her life, become a nurse, that is, have charge of somebody's health, how immense and how valuable would be the produce of her united experience if every woman would think how to nurse. I do not pretend to teach her how: I ask her to teach herself, and for this purpose I venture to give her some hints."

Miss Nightingale believed that all disease, at some period or other of its course, is more or less a recuperative process, not necessarily accompanied with suffering; an effort of nature to remedy a process of poisoning or of decay which has taken place weeks.

months, sometimes years beforehand, unnoticed.

She says: "In watching diseases, the thing which strikes the experienced observer most forcibly is this, that the symptoms or the suffering generally considered to be inevitable and incident to the disease are very often not symptoms of the disease at all, but of something quite different—of the want of fresh air or of light or of warmth or of quiet, or of cleanliness or of want of punctuality and care in the administration of diet of each or of all of these, and this quite as much in private as in hospital nursing.

"The recuperative process which nature has instituted and which we call disease has been hindered by some want of knowledge or attention in one or all of these things, and pain and suffering or interruption of the whole process sets in."

"If a patient," she says, "is cold, feverish, faint; if sick after taking food, or if he has bedsores, it is generally the fault not of the disease, but of the nursing." "Nursing," she continues, "ought to signify the proper use of fresh air, light, warmth, cleanliness, quiet and the proper selection and administration of diet—all at the least expense of vital power to the patient."

She is no believer in the time honored theory that good nursing is instinctive, for she writes:

"It has been said and written scores of times that every woman makes a good nurse. I believe, on the contrary, that the very elements of nursing are all but unknown. By this I do not mean that the nurse is always to blame. Bad sanitation, bad architecture and bad administrative arrangements often make it impossible to nurse. But the art of nursing ought to include such arrangements as alone make what I understand by nursing possible.

"The art of nursing as now prastised seems to be expressly constituted to unmake what Got designed disease to be—namely, a recuperative process. When nursing conditions are perfect we will then know what symptoms and suffering are inseparable from the disease and what the result of the lack of nursing.

"Deep-rooted and universal is the conviction that to give medicine is something, or rather everything, to give air, warmth, cleanliness, etc., is to do nothing.

"The same laws of health or of nursing, for they are in reality the same, obtain among the well as among the sick, the breaking of them produces onyl a less violent consequence among the former than among the latter—this sometimes—not always."

"Oh mothers of familes," Miss Nightingale cries, "do you know that one in every seven infants in this civilized land of England, perishes before it is one year old? That in London, two in every five die before they are five years? and that in the other great cities of England nearly one out of two?" She quotes some analytical chemsit, who says: "The life period of tender babies is the most delicate test of sanitary conditions and Macauley, who says that it is extraordinary that 'whereas, the laws of the motions of the heavenly bodies, so far removed as they are from us, are perfectly understood, the laws of the human mind which are under our observation all day and every day, are no better understood than they were 2,000 years ago.'"

Miss Nightingale says that while every schoolgirl was taught what she calls the "coxcombries" of education—that is elements of astronomy—"neither mothers of families, nor school mistresses of any class nor nurses of children nor nurses of hospitals are taught anything about those laws God has assigned to the relations of our bodies with the world in which he has put them."

One rule laid down by this great nurse is:

The first and last canon of nursing, the first essential to the patient without which "all the rest you can do for him is as nothing is to keep the air he breathes as pure as the external air without chilling him." She warns against having the air which is supposed to ventilate a sick room, coming from any foul source such as an unaired corridor, from a hall full of the fumes of gas, or cooking, or mustiness; from an underground kitchen, sing, washhouse or open sewer since, ventilated from such sources, the sickroom is poisoned rather than aired. Ventilation should always come from without, but not from a closed court where, if the wind does not blow, the air becomes as stagnant as from a hall or corridor.

Keep Sick From Chill.

This wise woman gives work of warning concerning the importance of never permitting a patient to become chilled, and tells the nurse to exercise almost momently care in this particular, saying that "while purity of air is essential, a temperature must be secured which shall not chill the patient. She regards an air test as important in a ward or sickroom as a thermometer. "In certain diseases," she says, "much less heat is produced than in health and there is constant tendency to decline and extinction of vital powers by the call made upon them to sustain the heat of the body.

"Cases like this," she says, "should be watched with greatest care from hour to hour—I had almost said from minute to minute."

As she thus wisely explains the difference between cold and ventilation Miss Nightingale points out other equally important rules of nursing that every woman would do well to thoughtfully read and prayerfully strive to remember because she says:

"On woman we must depend, first and last, for personal and household hygiene —for preserving the race from degenerating in as far as these things are concerned."