

Florence Nightingale's name has illuminated thousands of pages in hundreds of well written volumes; has been penned into countless numbers of newspaper and magazine columns and the stories of this heroic nurse have told of dauntless courage and heroism. In the past few decades many fine nurses have served in all parts of the world in time of peace and time of war. Their exploits have gone unheralded. In fact Lindsay and district has had a vast number of trained nurses whose exploits have gone unnoticed. It was ever thus in any avenue of life.

It is only a comparatively few years ago that this particular ex-nurse was called on to answer the call of duty, much as soldiers of the past had to do.

For instance there was the freezingly cold winter day when winds were howling and the snow was blocking unpaved and unploughed roads, snow up to the haunches of the best teams of horses, when

this particular "Florence Nightingale" was summoned by the Doctor in a town some twenty-two miles away to pack her belongings, take the night train out of Lindsay and get off at a then lonely flag station---a desperately ill farmer needed immediate care.

The engine wheezed to a groaning stop and the iron wheels were heard crunching the snowy rails. Our nurse disembarked and as the train drew out of sight she realized that there was no light in the little flag station and what was worse, no person in sight. No one was there to meet her.

Disturbed and a bit timid the young girl started down the road where some two miles away a light glimmered in a farm house window. Her luggage was too heavy to carry. Trudging along in deep snow on a narrow road which was barely visible even in the moonlight, swinging her arms to keep warm, it appeared like an hour before a horse and cutter stopped at her beckoning.

"Can you tell me" she asked the coon-coated driver" if there is a sick man hereabouts?" The answer was in the negative but the driver of the cutter gladly gave her a ride to the house in the snowy wilderness from which emitted a light.

A knock at the door was answered by a thin, tired looking woman who nodded that there was a sick man in the house, her husband. The woman said that a nurse was expected but

she was to arrive with the Doctor. That was why the young nurse was left on the station platform and that was why she learned that a light had been placed in the window to guide the Doctor.

The house was small, very much barren and devoid of extra furnishings and not the cleanest home by any means. A sick man was found lying on a bed and he was fully clothed. He had been the unfortunate victim of a stroke and was quite helpless. First the bed had to be arranged and the sick man undressed.

This was not an easy task as the victim was a heavily set man and helpless. The good woman of the house was willing to help and after a time which seemed hours to the young nurse, the patient was

made as comfortable as possible and the brave young nurse proceeded to use all her technical knowledge and skill to keep the man alive until the arrival of the Doctor. This was not until late the following day. He had been delayed by drifted roads and bitter cold winds.

“Two neighbours arrived late in the night, having heard of the farmer’s sickness. I sent them on to the nearest vilage to a drug store and told them what to get. I have to have good soap and not the cake of lye soap in the house; I had to have medicine and I needed bandages and other types of medicine to take care of a man with a stroke”.

Continuing the Nurse added: “It was hours before they came back, all they had was

a couple of bottles of whiskey and they were very drunk-but no medicines. I was fagged out and told the two neighbours to sit and watch the man while I went upstairs for a nap. I could not get to sleep. It was an old bed, with a straw tick mattress and it was not the cleanest bed in the world--at least not what I was used to".

"After awhile I tip-toed down stairs to see how my patient was getting along. Was I surprised and mad at what I saw! These two men had the sick man propped up in bed in a sitting position and they were pouring whiskey down his throat. They meant well, but it was a terrible thing to do. I got the man back to bed again and told the two inebriated men to get out".

That was a long night for the Lindsay nurse. The Doctor arrived in due course and took over.

"Some of these 'old time' Doctors were wonderful men" said the nurse. "They were called on perform many an operation in farm homes, using the kitchen table as a bed, working sometimes by the light of a weak coal oil lamp and sometimes used candles

for extra lighting. All they needed was plenty of hot water, lots of clean bandages, good eyes, a pair of sharp scissors, a scalpel and needles. These family doctors were skillful, they were blunt and demanding, but they were also kind and considerate.

"I have always respected and honoured the Family Doctor and they were truly the life blood of the community" added our Miss Florence Nightingale. No doubt many a former nurse has a story to tell equally as fascinating. Orchids to the Nursing Profession.