

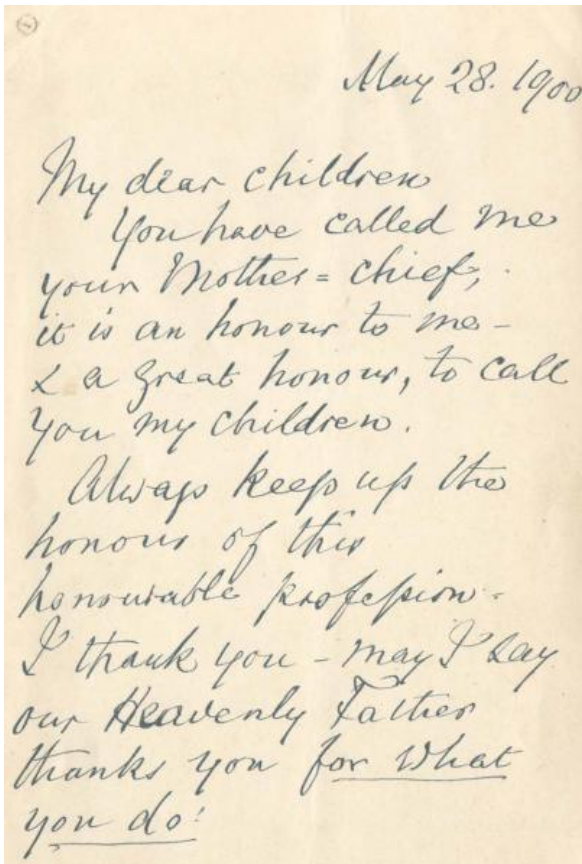
# Letter to Nursing Students: 28 May 1900

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Between 1872 and 1900 Miss Nightingale used, when she was able, to send an annual letter or address to the probationer-nurses of the Nightingale School at St. Thomas' Hospital, "and the nurses who have been trained there." These addresses were usually read aloud by Sir Harry Verney, the chairman of the Nightingale Fund, in the presence of the probationers and nurses, and a printed copy or a lithographed facsimile of the manuscript was given to each of the nurses present, "for private use only." A few also were written for the Nightingale Nurses serving in Edinburgh.

Nightingale, F. (1914). Preface. In R. Nash (Ed.), *FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE TO HER NURSES*. MacMillan and Co. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49732/49732-h/49732-h.htm>

*We believe this letter is a facsimile and not an original.*



May 28. 1900

My dear children  
You have called me  
your Mother-Chief;  
it is an honour to me -  
& a great honour, to call  
you my children.

Always keep up the  
honour of this  
honourable profession -  
I thank you - may I say  
our Heavenly Father  
thanks you for what  
you do!

May 28, 1900

My dear children,  
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Always keep up the  
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thanks you for what  
you do!

"Lift high the royal banner  
"It shall not suffer loss..."

“Lift high the royal banner,  
“It shall not suffer loss.”  
The royal banner of  
Nursing. It should gain  
through every one of you.  
It has gained through  
you immensely.  
The old Romans were  
in some respects I think  
superior to us. But they  
had no idea of being  
good to the sick and  
weak. That

It came in with  
Christianity. Christ  
was the author of our  
profession. We honour  
Christ when we are  
good Nurses. We  
dishonour Him when  
we are bad or careless  
Nurses. We dishonour  
Him when we do not  
do our best to relieve  
suffering - even in the  
meanest creature.  
Kindness to sick man,

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Kindness to sick man,

woman & child came  
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rivers to starve or  
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The Nation did not try

Woman & child came  
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banks of the great  
rivers to starve or  
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Lepers were kept apart.  
The nation did not try  
to avert or to cure  
leprosy. There have  
been lepers in England.  
Now it is a thing almost  
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There have been great,  
I may say, discoveries  
in Nursing:  
A very remarkable Doctor,  
a great friend of mine,  
now dead, introduced  
new ideas about  
Consumption, which  
might <sup>then</sup> be called the  
curse of England.  
His own wife was  
what is called "Consumptive"  
i.e. she had tubercular  
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He said to her: "Now  
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He said to her: "Now  
you have to chose: either

"you must spend the  
"next 6 months in your  
"room or you must garden  
"everyday." [They had a  
wretched little garden at  
the end of a street.]  
"You must dig -get  
"your feet wet ever day."

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wretched little garden at  
the end of a street]  
"you must dig - get  
"your feet wet every day".  
She chose the latter -  
became the hardiest of  
women & lived to be old.  
The change in the  
treatment of Pneumonia  
- disease of the lungs -  
is complete. I myself

saw a Doctor take up a  
child-sufferer, which  
seemed as if it could  
hardly breathe - carry it  
to the window, open the  
window at the top, &  
hold it up there. The  
nurse positively yelled  
with horror. He only  
said: "When my Patient  
"can breathe but little  
"air, I like that little  
"good." The child  
recovered & lived to  
old age.

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Nursing is become a  
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Nursing no longer an  
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But, oh, if home Nursing  
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of London, the biggest in

Nursing is become a profession. Trained Nursing no longer an object but a fact. But, oh, if home Nursing could become an every day fact here in this big city of London, the biggest in the world, in an island the smallest inhabited island in the world. But here in London in feeding - a most important branch of it - if you ask a mother who has perhaps brought you a sick

child to "look at": "What have you given it to eat?" she answers triumphantly, "O, it has the same as we have" (!). Yes, often including the gin. And a city where milk, & good milk, is now easier to get than in the country. For all farmers send their milk to London or the great cities. A sick child has been sent to Hospital (and recovered). You ask what it had: "O, they gave it 'nothing - nothing' -"

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3  
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It is true they gave it nothing but milk. Milk is 'nothing'. Milk the most nourishing of all things. Sick men

It is true they gave it  
nothing but milk -  
Milk is 'nothing'. Milk  
the most nourishing of  
all things. Sick men  
have recovered & lived  
upon milk.

My soul doth magnify  
the Lord: & my Spirit  
hath rejoiced in God  
my Saviour."  
The 19<sup>th</sup> Century (there was  
a tradition) was to be the  
Century of Woman. How  
true that legendary

prophecy has been!  
Woman was the <sup>home</sup> drudge.  
Now she is the teacher.  
Let her not forfeit it  
by being the arrogant -  
the "Equal with Men."  
She does not forfeit it  
by being the help "meet."

Now, will you let me  
try to thank you,  
tho' words cannot  
express my thankfulness,  
for all your kind thoughts,  
for your beautiful Books

have recovered & lived  
upon milk.

"My soul doth magnify  
the Lord & my Spirit  
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the "Equal with Men."

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by being the help "meet."

Now, will you let me

try to thank you,

tho' words cannot

express my thankfulness,

for all your kind thoughts,

for your beautiful Books

& basket of flowers

& kind wishes, all.

God bless you all

and me your Mother-Chief,

as you are good enough  
to call me,

My dear children  
Florence Nightingale

To  
All our Nurses

Additional Resources:

- [St. Thomas Hospital: Nightingale Training School](#)
- [Nightingale Home and Training Schools for Nurses](#)
- [Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Koulali General Hospital Crimea 1856 images](#)