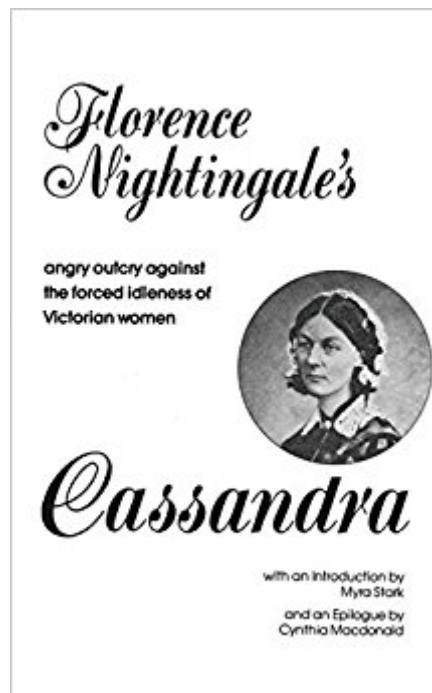




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# Cassandra: Florence Nightingale's Angry Outcry Against The Forced Idleness Of Victorian Women



## Synopsis

The world knows Florence Nightingale as "the lady with the lamp"; the revered founder of nursing as a respectable profession for women. But few people are aware that Nightingale's career began only after years of struggle to free herself from her suffocating Victorian family. In this surprisingly passionate feminist essay (a "brilliant polemic," states Martha Vicinus), Nightingale denounces the lives of idleness she and other women of her class were forced to lead.

## Book Information

Paperback: 64 pages

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## Customer Reviews

"Over the years Cassandra has maintained its position as a focal feminist text, an important documentary link between women's earlier struggles for personal, legal, and political liberties, and the full-blown fight for emancipation that emerged in the first decade of the 20th century." — The Guardian

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) earned the nickname "The Lady With the Lamp" for her tireless nursing of British soldiers during the Crimean War. Nightingale was born to wealthy English parents and proved to be a quick-witted and independent child. She eventually became interested in nursing and, despite opposition from her parents, trained as a nurse and began work in a London clinic. When the Crimean War broke out in 1854, she led a group of three dozen nurses to Constantinople to serve in British military hospitals there. She cajoled army officials to change the terrible conditions in the hospitals, thus earning the gratitude of soldiers and a measure of public fame. When the war

ended in 1856 she returned to London and continued her reform campaign there. Nightingale's outspoken *Notes on Matters Affecting the Health, Efficiency and Hospital Administration of the British Army* and *Notes on Hospitals* helped create changes in hygiene and overall treatment of patients. She also founded the groundbreaking Nightingale Training School for nurses, and in later years published dozens of books and pamphlets on public health. Nightingale was awarded the Royal Red Cross by Queen Victoria in 1883, and in 1907 became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit.

Florence expresses her exasperation with Victorian rules and regulations in a way that reaches right up to the 21st century.

If you are interested in Victorian gender roles especially, but also nursing history or the Crimean War, Nightingale's *Cassandra* is a nice text to own. Be aware that it is not a fancy publication, but it is worth the price. It's a slim stapled paperback volume at 64 pages: pp. 1-23 is an interesting intro by Myra Stark, p. 24 is a short chronology of Nightingale's life, pp. 25-55 is the actual essay, and pp. 56-8 is a poem Epilogue by Cynthia Macdonald. *Cassandra* is an interesting primary source that gets inside the head of an amazing and overlooked woman. Most people have heard of her as the nurse from a war, but not as many know how outspoken, intelligent, and independent she was. It also gets inside the heads of Victorian women who thought like Nightingale on Victorian gender roles. She is very quotable; I just turned to a random page and came across, "Marriage is the only chance (and it is but a chance) offered to women for escape from this death; and how eagerly and ignorantly it is embraced!" (38). (Not terribly important, but I purchased this text used and my copy is a bright orange-red rather than blue. I wasn't sure what it was when I opened the package!)

Book was great quality, wasn't my favorite read but was definitely a New Woman text!.

Terrific little book.

Informative.

This writing is excellent and a highly recommended one for new nurses or any nurse who has not read Nightingale's writings. Came in excellent condition and soon after it was ordered.

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