

NURSING PROGRESS IN BELGIUM.

EXAMINATIONS FOR HOSPITAL AND VISITING NURSES IN BELGIUM.

(By CECILE MECHÉLYNCK, *Directrice Générale de l'Association des Infirmières de Belgique*. Translated by the LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES.)

All those interested in the question of nursing in Belgium hailed with acclamation the Royal Decree of September 3rd, 1921, which regulates the training of hospital and visiting nurses. Two state nursing examinations had been in force for some time but were not satisfactory, and in many of the better schools they were not taken.

The first of these examinations, for which a certificate was awarded, required merely theoretical knowledge, and the second, for which a diploma was given, was held after two years' practical work. As, however, nurses were permitted to practise after the first examination confusion resulted, the public being unable to differentiate between the two grades of nurses.

The Royal Decree regulates the course of study required for both hospital and visiting nurses as follows:—

No pupil is accepted for examination unless she has, as resident nurse in a nurses' training school, followed the theoretical instruction and demonstrations to be given, with the exception of classes in domestic economy, pedagogy and sociology, by doctors of medicine.

Three years of study are obligatory for all pupils. Two years of the course are identical for both hospital and visiting nurses, general nursing training being given for that period, but the third year the student specializes in the branch selected, either hospital or visiting nursing.

After the first probation year *hospital nurses* must have at least two years' study in medical and surgical clinical work, contagious and special diseases, whilst *visiting nurses*, after the first year must take:—

- (1) One year's medical and surgical clinical work, contagious and special diseases.
- (2) Four months' children's medical and surgical clinical work, maternity, infant welfare clinic, crèche and maternal dispensary work, and work in debilitated children's colonies.
- (3) Two months' tuberculosis work in clinics, dispensaries and sanatoria.
- (4) One month's work in clinic for skin and venereal diseases.
- (5) One month's medical school work.
- (6) One month's medical and surgical out-patient work.

At the end of the third year the nurse can present herself for examination before the provincial medical commission, which is under State control.

After passing the examination she will receive, besides her diploma, a badge and identity book. The transitory period before the law comes into

complete force, extends until October 1st, 1924, but from October 1st, 1921, the first examination is dispensed with and no new student will be permitted to terminate her studies without being registered at a recognised training school. Those who have already commenced their studies will be permitted to continue them where started. From now onwards all prospective nurses will have to take a three years' course in a training school approved by the provincial medical commission. It is hoped shortly to have State registration of trained nurses with penalties for illegal practice similar to those pertaining to doctors and midwives.

We most heartily congratulate our colleagues in Belgium on this most useful and progressive Royal Decree. By visiting nurses we surmise nurses to practise in departments of Public Health nursing are so described—and something analogous to this course must be agreed by our own General Nursing Council in the near future, when it defines systems of reciprocal nursing which will qualify for State Registration when the State Examination is in force.

We feel sure Queen Elisabeth will take an earnest interest in the success of this Royal Decree—having during the terrible years of war come into such close touch with the necessity for highly-skilled nursing of the sick, and preventive nursing in safeguarding the health of the people, especially in connection with child life.

We have never forgotten the charming delegation of Belgian ladies and doctors who attended the International Congress of Nursing in London in 1909. They arrived just in time for the opening festivities, and soon won all hearts by their lively interest in nursing questions. It is high time that the nurses of the world met together to compare notes and help one another.

THE GREEK NURSING UNIT.

We hear from an official source that the eight members of the Registered Nurses' Society, who compose the two units working in Athens and Asia Minor, have won warm appreciation from those under whose authority they have tended the sick and wounded Greeks in the war in Anatolia. Thus we may fix one more feather in the cap of the British nurse.

The Sisters speak warmly of the kindness they have received. A fortnight ago those working in Athens were invited to the dance at the British Club, a farewell to Lord and Lady Granville, to whom a beautiful Rose Bowl was presented upon the transfer of the former as British Minister from Greece.

Mrs. Aubrey Smith, the wife of the new Admiral for the Naval Mission, has called on the British Sisters, and most kindly invited the unit to tea—a courtesy they of course greatly appreciated. We know the uprising of the heart at sight of a British boat in foreign waters. It gives a nice warm comfy feeling.

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