

dence of Belgians in other countries, where nursing occupies a privileged place, the growing call for nurses for relief work, led to a thoughtful consideration of a new programme, which would be nearer the Nightingale system.

Many discussions took place at the Federation of training schools between the doctors and a few nurses. They submitted a project to the Board of Health, by whom it was modified.

Then the National Child Welfare Association and the National League against Tuberculosis insisted on the necessity of a long and serious training.

At last, after more than a year's work and discussion, the Royal Order of September 3rd, 1921, appeared.

This Order instituted three different diplomas:—

- i. Hospital nurse.
- ii. Visiting nurse.
- iii. Mental case nurse.

(The course of study for each of the three years' training is then given in detail.)

FIRST YEAR.

Studies: ethics of the profession, anatomy, physiology, general hygiene, bacteriology, hygiene of nurse, patient and surroundings, domestic economy common to all three categories.

Training: the members of the two first categories must live in the school for six months. Those of the third have to spend one year in a hospital or colony for the insane.

SECOND YEAR.

Studies: pathology, materia medica, nursing, practical dietetics, first-aid, massage, infant care, obstetrical nursing, child care, common to the two first categories.

For the mental case nurse the studies are:—psychiatry, special nursing, ethics, hygiene of communicable diseases, first-aid.

THIRD YEAR.

Studies:

I. Hospital nurse: more advanced teaching of the preceding studies—duties of the nurse in the operating theatre and the dressing room—notions of methods of relief, prevention and assistance.

II. Visiting nurse: Hygiene and welfare of the child; notions of pedagogy; control of communicable diseases specially applied to home nursing; control of tuberculosis; school medical inspection; home nursing; the legislation and control of social evils; moral duties of the visiting nurse.

Training for the second and third year:

I. Hospital nurse: two years' hospital training; medical, surgical and contagious wards and specialities.

II. Visiting nurse:

12 months—hospital work in the same wards as above;

4 months—children's wards (medical and surgical), maternity—infant welfare centre—mothers' conferences and pre-natal work-school colonies;

2 months—tuberculosis nursing in sanatorium and dispensaries;

1 month—skin and venereal diseases;

1 month—school dispensaries;

1 month—outside patients dispensary.

Total 21 months.

Conditions of admission:

The probationer must be at least 17 years of age, must have good health and physical aptitude, and have a doctor's certificate to this effect. She must be in possession of a diploma of elementary teacher or have a certificate equivalent to our "études moyennes." Those candidates who began their studies under the old régime may continue them along the same lines until October 1, 1924.

Unions Professionnelles d'Infirmières.

Before the armistice, in spite of the work accomplished, nursing was not organised in Belgium.

The many nurses busy in our hospitals, sanatoria, dispensaries, caring for our invalids did not know each other and had no bond between them. Their isolation placed them in a very painful situation both materially and morally; insufficient payment, long hours of duty, lack of comfort and distraction, lack of moral support in their duty.

It was necessary to unite these shifting members of the profession in a stable and firm bond, an Association which would raise the standard of the profession and bring it honour.

At the end of 1918 a few nurses gathered together in the aim of forming this Union.

Their efforts were crowned with success. On February 11th, 1919, forty of the nurses from the Brussels hospitals met and founded a temporary Committee—the Association was given the name of "Union professionnelle des Infirmières Belges."

The Committee at once placed itself in touch with the nursing associations in America, Denmark, Holland, England, &c., who welcomed us and helped us.

With the data which they gave us we drew up our statutes, which were submitted at the second general meeting and approved.

The guiding principle of the Association is democratic: that of self-government. The Committee is composed of nurses elected by the nurses themselves, and excludes those who do not belong to the profession.

As a means of propaganda a humble magazine "L'Infirmière Belge," appeared in July, 1919, and became a link between the members of the Union.

On December 12th, 1919, the Association obtained lawful recognition and its statutes appeared in the official Government journal, "Le Moniteur."

After having affiliated its members in a mutual help society which assures them an indemnity in case of sickness, the Committee approached the important subject of conditions of work.

An inquiry was made, and, according to the reports given by the delegates of the different hospitals, a report of the general situation was

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)