

Voluntary Nurses of the Italian Red Cross, which are, of course, intended only to train members of the Red Cross to nurse the sick and wounded in times of war or calamity, but which give a much better course and longer practical training than is the case in most Red Cross schools of other nations, and have therefore done much good work by teaching a large number of educated women to understand the nursing question and to spread this knowledge and desire for better nursing methods all over the country. About 20,000 women have attended the Red Cross schools, have done most splendid work during the war, and are a force that must be reckoned with and can be most useful in helping on the reform if properly guided. Several of these Volunteer Nurses, after their long war service, have been judged by the American Red Cross fit to join the ranks of the professionals, after going through the special courses in Public Health Nursing started by the American Red Cross and now taken over by the Italian Red Cross. These special courses, originally lasting five months, now last one year, and only candidates with a good nursing certificate and practical experience are admitted.

From what has been said it will be understood that with only a limited number of real training schools, the number of trained nurses in Italy must necessarily be low and can only gradually rise as new graduate nurses are formed, and therefore this Association, which has about 500 members, can only hope to grow slowly, while a great deal of work—especially propaganda work—must be done to get new training schools started, to enlighten public opinion on the question, to overcome the prejudices of the present nursing personnel in the hospitals and secure their co-operation, and to get well-educated girls to enter the training schools!

We have the most invaluable supporters in a large number of the most distinguished medical men of Italy, and we feel it a duty to mention some of their names, so that our international colleagues may share our feeling of gratitude for these good friends of modern nursing. They are Professors Lutrario (Director-General of Public Health), Ascoli, Bastianelli, Ferreri, and Levi of Rome (of whom the latter is doing most excellent health propaganda work) Bastianelli, Sclavo, Picchi of Florence, Senator Mangiagalli and Professors Devoto, Medea, Ronzani and Ronzoni, of Milan Foà and Battistini of Turin, Poli, Vittorelli, and Skultecky of Genoa, and many others in various towns of the Italian Peninsula.

Although the amount of work to be done is undoubtedly great, much has already been accomplished in the four years since this Association was first thought of and the interest of the medical men enlisted. The medical press and medical congresses and meetings now never neglect the nursing question, and the general public is at last awakening to an interest in it.

Per propaganda work the Association publishes the *Bollettino*, a monthly journal of nursing, distributes pamphlets, leaflets and postcards, and

sends delegates to meetings of medical and scientific societies. The trained nurses are invited to meet and discuss professional subjects such as nursing education, hours of work, salaries, &c., propaganda work is done among young girls to induce them to enter the training schools, and plans for the schools are studied and discussed in order to find a type of school which will exactly suit the Italian temperament.

Italy certainly has a big job before her to improve and bring up to date a huge mass of nursing personnel that has hardly progressed in centuries, but Italy is a country where, when once things get moving, they go quickly; and where once public opinion takes a new thing up, prejudice is soon broken down. In the late war the world got a chance to see to what heights Italy can rise, when she means to; therefore, we may be sure she will make the great effort required of her, and "get there" perhaps sooner than it seems possible.

Mention has been made of the Bill presented to Parliament by the Director-General of Public Health. It may be long before it becomes law, but anyway, it is in itself a step which other nations have reached only after years of struggling; therefore, we may justly feel proud of it. And there are many other signs of progress to be seen. The introduction of Public Health Nursing has done much to awaken interest in nursing questions, and a great interest is being taken in our cause by all the large women's associations, among others by the great and powerful "Union of Catholic Women."

Plans for training schools are being discussed in many quarters, while lately, even some high member of the church has shown a readiness to discuss the possibility of starting better schools for the hospital nuns.

Our colleagues of all countries who have kindly given us their attention will, therefore, understand the great interest we feel in the "International Standard of Nursing Education" which we hear will be discussed at this meeting, and how much we hope Italy will soon be ready to accept such a standard as may be judged best by the International Council. But first of all we have to establish a uniform national standard for Italy and get it adopted all over the country. We, therefore, express a hope that it may be thought fit to leave each country a certain amount of liberty as to means of applying the International Standard, in the choice of types of schools and methods of training, for a type of school that is excellent for one nation may not do at all for another with a different national temperament, and it is no use having good schools if one does not get the best class of pupil.

Each nation must, to a great extent, work out its own salvation in this as in all other branches of national life—and Italy is going to do it and to be worthy of her great past, full of the highest contributions to science and to civilisation.

This is the will of her most enlightened medical

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