

training. Soon after this a committee was organised to revise the curriculum for the course, and Mlle. Hellemans, President of the Federation of Nurses, was appointed a member. When in 1926 this committee discussed the possibility of training practical nurses, the Headquarters of the International Council of Nurses was so interested in our problem and our efforts, that Miss Reimann came to Brussels to assist in our proceedings with the Minister.

The Federation collaborates closely with organisations employing nurses; this provides a wide field of activity and we cannot do justice to the numerous demands which come to us. Certain organisations, because of their importance and the large number of nurses they employ, have delegates in the Council of the National Federation of Nurses; such is the case with the two great associations—the Belgian Red Cross Society, and the National Child Welfare Association.

Since its foundation the Federation has wished to have a uniform which would be worn only by graduate nurses, members of the Federation. In 1924 this desire was realised, and at the International Congress at Helsingfors, in 1925, our delegates were dressed in their pretty grey uniforms.

In 1924 the Federation was legally incorporated, and its constitution appeared in the "Moniteur"; in 1925 the Federation was composed of fifteen associations with a total membership of 750. A national congress took place at Antwerp in 1925, and at Liège in 1926. In 1928 the secretaryship became permanent, under the direction of Mlle. Waterloos, who succeeded Mlle. Parmentier when she left for Africa. As the influence of the Federation became greater, the work increased, requests for information and assistance arrived from all parts of the country, and many steps were taken daily to assist groups or individual cases.

The National Federation of Belgian Nurses works closely with the Federation of Schools of Nursing. Belgium was one of the first countries to obtain State supervision of nursing education; however, it is necessary that the requirements of the Royal Decree are followed up in order not to lose hardly won ground. For this purpose a *Conseil de Perfectionnement* and inspection of schools by a graduate nurse need to be established; and it is toward these that all our efforts are now directed.

There are at present 22 schools of nursing in Belgium following the curriculum of the Royal Decree of 1921; they train hospital and public health nurses for State Diplomas. There are four training institutions for nurses wishing to add to their diplomas the mental nursing certificate.

The University Hospital of Louvain has a school of nursing affiliated, and we hope to see a similar affiliation at the Hospital St. Pierre which is connected with the Medical School of the University of Brussels. The School of Tropical Medicine prepares nurses for colonial nursing work.

The Federation, always being anxious to see its members better prepared for their work, arranges each year a series of Refresher Courses under the direction of superintendents and instructors of schools of nursing.

As an organ was needed which would link its members together and which could be used at the same time for propaganda purposes, the Nurses' Professional Association in 1919 issued a very modest little journal—*L'Infirmière Belge*. This became *La Revue de l'Infirmière*, and later *L'Infirmière*. In 1925 the journal appeared both in French and Flemish, thus serving a greater number. Since 1931, the journal has been published in the two languages in the same edition. The review has now 1,200 subscribers, and is sent in exchange to 12 different countries. The

library of the Federation receives regularly 22 different medical, nursing, and social service reviews.

We shall be glad to show the nurses who attend the 1933 International Congress at Brussels—especially those who advised us about the establishing of the National Federation, what can be accomplished by tenacious work. Certainly we have had difficult times, but those who opposed us gave us the best proof of the importance of our profession; of all the various and changing groups throughout the hospitals of the country, we had to develop a whole, one consolidated body, which would function efficiently and become a support to our profession, thus proving its value.

What has been accomplished in ten years is a guarantee of the development and the future of the Federation.

J. PARMENTIER, Secretary-General,
National Federation of Belgian Nurses.

NIGHTINGALEIANA.

A STIMULATING ALLY.

We quote the following paragraph from "Albert the Good: A Life of Prince Consort," by Hector Bolitho, which proves once more the influence exercised by Florence Nightingale for the benefit of humanity:

England was already becoming complacent over the Crimean peace, self-satisfied, deluding herself that peace was an excuse for disarmament, for the scattering of her armies and the reducing of estimates for both services. Herein lay Prince Albert's new fear. He caused the Queen to write to Palmerston, complaining of the retrenchments and reminding him of the state of helplessness in which England was found when the storm of the Crimea broke over her. He did not want this to happen again. So Prince Albert persisted and worried the generals in their armchairs. "I am constantly at work," he wrote. His main duty at the moment was another memorandum of 28 pages, urging the Ministers not to squander the good lessons of the war, not to allow the old dangers of unpreparedness to grow and perhaps destroy them.

He had one new and stimulating ally. When Florence Nightingale was back in England, she went to Balmoral. The quiet figure had an astounding effect upon all the Court. She walked in the garden, against the background of new granite walls and towers, modest, retiring and fearful of notice; a slight, delicate frame, containing such depth of character and thought.

She seemed to strike awe into the ladies and gentlemen. Wearing a high black gown and a plain little morning cap, she sat beside the Queen, pleading for the soldiers, telling her of this wretched man and that poignant scene in the wards of Scutari. She told them that the Scottish soldiers bore pain best, then the English, and last of all, "poor Paddy." There was one armless soldier who had become the Queen's own charge. The poor fellow had friends who helped to the brandy bottle. Prince Albert thought him incorrigible, but the Queen insisted—she would never give him up. Miss Nightingale smiled her thanks. A power of sense was contained in the modest, frail body. When she talked alone with Albert, Miss Nightingale told him stark truths about the army, about the hospitals, and about the miserable defects of the organisation as she found it in the East.

The Prince used her knowledge and swelled his memoranda; he had the satisfaction of seeing his suggestions adopted. One improvement he urged was in the standard of education in the army. He helped to cleanse the system of promotion and the buying of commissions and an almost immediate brightening of conditions followed his endeavours.

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