

## BEFORE MANY MOONS.

The fact that Miss Florence Nightingale was born in Florence makes us all the more eager that our colleagues in Italy should build up a strong, self-governing national organisation, so that they may be qualified to join the International Council of Nurses before "many moons."

The generous hospitality and great courtesy shown to the members of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain who visited Rome in 1930—when we met so many delightful Italian people, including the great Duce himself, made us more eager than ever to have Italian Nurses form part of our International Council. The following article which appeared in the March issue of our *International Review* will, we feel sure, be read with deep interest.

### ITALY.

#### THE STORY OF A NEW NURSES' UNION.

Miss Rosanne Fambri, General Secretary of the *Sindacato Nazionale Fascista Infermiere Diplomate di Scuola Convitto* (Union of Graduate Nurses), has very kindly sent us the following interesting account of the foundation of the Union. (Fascism demands that both employers' and employees' organisations shall be recognised and invested with responsibility. Graduate nurses in Italy are now considered as belonging to the professional or intellectual group, while the hospital attendants still performing the nurses' duties in some of the Italian hospitals are classed as manual workers).

#### Hospital Nurses.

The story of our organisation does not go very far into the past, but though it is a very young institution it is developing its work with great courage and enthusiasm. The reason that it has been organised so much later than similar associations in many other countries is due to the fact that educated and trained hospital nurses belonging to the middle and upper-middle classes (or even to the aristocracy), have only recently become available in Italy. In 1910, however, Queen Elena founded in Rome the first important school of nursing, which proudly bears her name.

Since then the number of schools has considerably increased. At Florence, Naples, Venice and Bologna, and more recently at Milan and Turin, new schools were established from which nurses graduated every year. Consequently we began to feel the need for organising ourselves, stating definitely our professional aims, and emphasising the clear line of division between the nurses of the old type and this new professional group of trained and enthusiastic women which was gradually being formed.

#### Public Health Nurses.

In 1919 the first school for public health nurses in Italy was organised. The first few graduates of this school carried out so well the responsible work assigned to them that they soon gained a high professional reputation. Other schools were gradually founded and their graduates, steadily increasing in number, began to feel the need of a protective organisation.

In 1929 such an association was started at the Palazzo Littorio, under the direct control of the Women's Fascist Organisations. Subsequently, by order of the Head of the Government, it took its place among the Unions of Workers in Professions and Arts, and was soon able to enlarge and co-ordinate its activities.

#### Principal Activities of the Association.

We are very proud of the fact that an employment bureau was established at the very outset. Through this office, the "Social Insurance Fund," the largest insurance company

in Italy, chose its staff for the first model sanatorium that it set up under the Anti-Tuberculosis Insurance Act.

We can point with pride also to the success we have had in bettering the material welfare and professional standing of many hospital and public health nurses. We are now making a comprehensive study of the working conditions of the numerous public health nurses employed by the Anti-Tuberculosis Committees. We have also carried on effective propaganda for interesting the right type of nurse candidate by means of lectures, addresses, etc., especially at girls' schools, which has enabled us to interest many girls of the best families and to induce them to join the nursing and allied professions.

The approval of the National Association is necessary for legal recognition of schools of nursing, the Organisation also sees that all positions on the teaching staff and of head nurses of such institutions are filled by graduates of recognised schools.

#### Now We are a Union.

We have finally succeeded in having the Association changed into a Union, a very important move from a legal and professional standpoint. It is probably needless to mention that in the Union, as formerly in the Association, the Governing Board or Executive Committee must be composed entirely of graduate nurses; and, naturally, the General Secretary must be a graduate nurse.

The new Union which hopes, of course, to be able in due time to voice its own ideas through its own review, has at present space reserved for it in the Review of the Federation of Workers in Professions and Arts, and also in another important review, *L'Ospedale Maggiore*,\* published in Milan.

#### Aims and Aspirations.

Our aims are partly legal in aspect.

(1) To secure the complete replacement, in hospitals, sanatoria, asylums, institutions for patients with mental diseases, etc., of the old type nursing staff by graduate nurses, ethically and technically trained for their work.

(2) To enlarge the field of action of the public health nurses so that in future all Anti-Tuberculosis Committees, all Provincial Federations of Maternity and Child Welfare Associations, all hospitals, asylums, prisons and public and private social welfare institutions, shall enjoy the benefits of these outstanding missionaries of health.

The graduate nurses have already shown some surprisingly successful results in malaria work, and they are gradually displacing the great-hearted but untrained lady volunteers who previously took care of the tuberculosis patients. Soon they must be ready to take their places in the field of sickness insurance.

And while the Union is working for proper remuneration for these two groups of nurses, the knowledge that they are doing a patriotic work for the improvement of their people will afford them the highest moral satisfaction they can desire.

\**L'Ospedale Maggiore* is the official organ of the Italian Hospital Association.—ED.

#### A WORD FOR THE MONTH.

"Fascism does not only make laws and found institutions; but it educates and promotes spiritual life. It wishes to remake not the forms of human life but its content, the man, the character, the faith. And to this end it requires discipline and authority." *Signor Mussolini*.

"Surgery is more than science, more than art, it is a sacrament, and for the surgeon no training can be too arduous and no discipline too stern." *Lord Moynihan, The Romanes Lecture*.

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