

in certain directions. We may *criticise* her for this but may not *judge* her, because we have to remember that she was naturally a very forceful and a very intellectual woman with a vision that reached far beyond her own times; also we have to bear in mind the conditions of those times.

But it was not merely in pious meditation and fastings that Margaret sought to fulfil the religion she professed. Her works of charity are the source of many a legend. Says Turgot "She would give and give again until she had nothing left to give." She would sell her garments to feed the poor and when sore put to it to meet their necessity she did not scruple to take gold from the king's treasury or pilfer the store of money he had put aside for his charities. He, on his part, Turgot relates, would pretend not to notice that the money had been taken or, catching her in the act, would playfully threaten to have her arrested, tried and found guilty. When we read the story as told by that monkish writer we sense in him a kindly sympathy with humankind and indications that human nature has not changed so greatly with the passage of the centuries.

(To be concluded.)

TO COMMEMORATE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE *

TOWARDS A FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.

It is significant that the chapter in Sir Edward Cook's life of Florence Nightingale which is entitled "The Founder of Modern Nursing" relates to the year 1860. The Nightingale School at St. Thomas's Hospital in London was started on June 24th of that year. Seventy-two years later almost to a day—on June 9th, 1932—there was held in the Nightingale School the inaugural meeting of the Florence Nightingale International Memorial Committee of Great Britain. *This meeting was the first official step taken with a view to the establishment of a permanent international memorial to Miss Nightingale.*

As all the world knows, her work in the Crimea was done more than half a century before her death in 1910. It was her Crimean reputation—her refusal to be daunted by the obstacles in her path while the Crimean war lasted, and her equally determined refusal to allow the lessons of that war to be forgotten in the years that followed—which won her the respect of Ministers and an enduring place in the heart of the public. From those initial victories over difficulties she derived the strength to realise her vision; and it is because she realised that vision, and because her vision was keen and penetrating and farsighted, that those who think of Florence Nightingale to-day think of her as the founder of modern nursing.

The movement to commemorate her life and work was initiated within two years of her death. A meeting of the International Council of Nurses at Cologne, in 1912, formulated a definite proposal in this sense, but no measures had been taken during the ensuing two years and, of course, from 1914 onward action on a really international basis was for a time rendered impossible. It was not until the 1929 meeting of the International Council of Nurses that the matter was brought forward again.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, and one of the pioneers of the activities of the International Council, was then appointed chairman of a committee to examine and consider the question of the proposed memorial. This committee reported in Geneva two years later a recommendation "that the Foundation should be in London, that it should be of an international character and a living memorial, not a museum.

The suggestion . . . is that the memorial should take the form of an endowed foundation for post-graduate nursing education."

This recommendation came at a most opportune moment.

One of the earliest and most substantial enterprises fostered by the League of Red Cross Societies had been to arrange, in 1920, for facilities to enable outstanding nurses, on the recommendation and with the support of the national Red Cross Societies of their countries, to obtain post-graduate education of a very distinctive kind. Thanks to the interest shown in this scheme by the British Red Cross, which in its turn enlisted the support of the College of Nursing, a system was worked out by which Bedford College for Women (University of London), in conjunction with the College of Nursing, provided special courses in public health nursing each year for a group of fifteen to twenty international students presented by the League. In 1924 the initiative of the President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, Dr. Masarykova, supported by generous help from a number of countries, the American and British Red Cross Societies taking the lead, produced a conspicuous improvement in these arrangements; and the League became proprietor of the lease of a house in Manchester Square, where the students were housed during their year in London. A further improvement introduced somewhat later was the institution, parallel with the public health course, of a second course designed specially to meet the needs of nurses destined to undertake important responsibilities as administrators or teachers of nursing.

In 1931, when Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's resolution was adopted in Geneva, the facilities for post-graduate nursing provided by the League of Red Cross Societies had had ten years to prove their value: and they had proved it most abundantly. In almost every European country, in China, in Japan, in South Africa and New Zealand, leading posts in the nursing profession were already occupied by "Old Internationals"† and their achievements everywhere had shown how immense a contribution able women, backed by such training, could make. In many countries they had been instrumental in raising the status of the nursing profession; in some they had shown themselves successful pioneers of modern methods and modern technique in the public health field; in almost all they had proved towers of strength to their national Red Cross Societies, and attained positions of leadership in the campaign for the improvement of health and the prevention of disease.

About a year earlier, at the meeting of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies in 1930, it had become evident that the League could not indefinitely continue to carry the whole burden of this enterprise. The economic crisis then impending could not be expected to spare the Red Cross Societies on whose support the League's resources depend; and the continuance of that support could only be ensured by budgetary restrictions, of the most rigid character compatible with the vigorous pursuit of the essential parts of the League programme. The value of the London courses was contested by nobody—but while it was admitted that their abandonment by the League would entail the loss of a most valuable asset, it could not be claimed that their continuance was a matter of life and death. They represented an enormous contribution to the cause of nursing; but the number of nurses possessing the high qualifications given by the London courses, who could be directly employed by Red Cross Societies at a time when these Societies had to husband their resources most carefully in order to meet increased responsibilities on restricted budgets, was obviously limited. These considerations prevailed, and it was

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† The nurses who have graduated from the London courses speak of themselves always as "Old Internationals" and keep in touch through their "Old Internationals' Association."

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