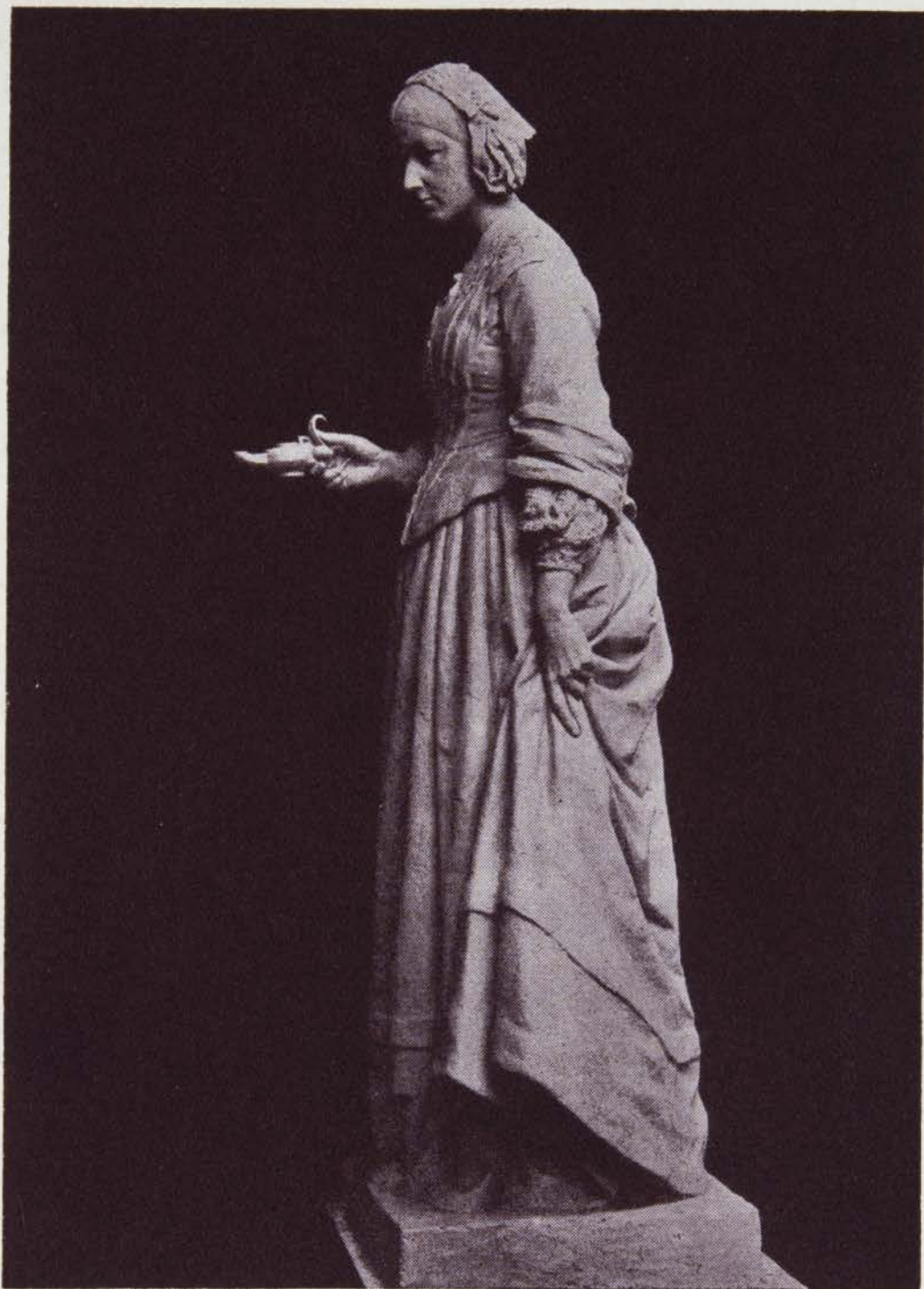


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**TOWARDS THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE  
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION**

**LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES**

**1934**

TO COMMEMORATE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

TOWARDS THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE  
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

**The Founder  
of Modern Nursing**

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 strength to realize her vision; and it is because she realized 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.

### **First Proposals for a Memorial**

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.

### **The International Nursing Courses of the League of Red Cross Societies**

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 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" (1), 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 part of the League

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(1) 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". There are now 221 representing 42 countries.

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programme. The value of the London courses was recognized—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 resolved that, unless the financial support of the London courses could be ensured from outside sources, they must be closed down in 1932.

In October 1931, the Executive Committee of the League took definite action with a view to closing down the courses this year in July 1932.

**The Memorial** But barely two months later came the Geneva resolution followed by the informal suggestion that the courses initiated by the League might be considered the best available basis on which to build the proposed memorial to Florence Nightingale. The leaders of the Red Cross movement in Great Britain and in the United States were deeply impressed by this suggestion, and the American Red Cross, with its usual generosity, promptly agreed to underwrite the expenses of the Courses for an additional year, in order to give time for the proposal to be carried out. Immediate advantage was taken of the breathing space thus secured, and a scheme was drawn up, in consultation between representatives of the League and the International Council of Nurses, through the initiative of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Chairman of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, and Miss A. Lloyd Still, Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, and under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Stanley. The scheme was approved by the Board of Governors of the League in 1932 and by the I. C. N. at its meeting held in Paris and Brussels in 1933. It has been com-

municated to national Red Cross Societies all over the world and to the national nursing organizations represented on the International Council of Nurses.

**Organization of the proposed Foundation** Briefly summarized, it provides that the Florence Nightingale International Foundation shall be governed by a Grand Council comprising, in addition to representatives of the International Council of Nurses and the League of Red Cross Societies, delegates from each country participating in the scheme. Subject to the policy decisions of the Grand Council, the management of the Foundation will lie in the hands of an Executive Committee consisting of representatives of the International Council of Nurses, the League, and the educational bodies in London co-operating in providing facilities for post-graduate nursing education. The scheme contemplates the formation, in all countries where interest can be aroused, of Florence Nightingale Memorial Committees, and it is hoped that those committees will be formed on a broad basis through the joint initiative of the national Red Cross Societies and the national nursing organization in each country.

**National Committees and their functions** The task of these committees will be no easy one, for it is upon their success in raising funds for the Foundation that the future of the scheme must ultimately depend. They will also make recommendations to the Grand Council with regard to its policy and will be responsible for the selection of candidates for scholarships in their respective countries. It is recognized, however, that the present moment can hardly be regarded as a favourable one for the raising of large sums of money for international purposes. The endowment of the scheme on a permanent basis, so as to enable the Foundation itself to cover all expenses, will require a capital in Sterling running well into six figures. The endowment even of the essential overhead charges would call for a capital of forty thousand pounds sterling.

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Fortunately, however, the problem of complete endowment can be allowed to wait for the return of better times. The scholarships provided for nurses following the courses, either by national Societies or by the League, have of late years been fixed at £200 a year, this representing the student's board and tuition expenses, while all other overhead charges have fallen directly upon the budget of the League? Since this charge upon the League's budget is no longer possible, the amount of each scholarship has been raised to £250. With the scholarships at this figure, it will be possible for the Nightingale Foundation, when it is constituted in 1934, to carry the present work on a satisfactory basis, if a minimum of twenty such scholarships can be guaranteed.

It is confidently felt that there need be little doubt as to such guarantee being obtained. In addition to the British Committee inaugurated in July 1932, similar committees are already formed in France, Belgium, South Africa, Canada, Latvia, Holland, Great Britain and the United States and it is hoped that other countries will shortly follow their example. It will be hard indeed if the combined efforts of these committees, backed by the enthusiasm and the money-raising capacities of the Red Cross and the nursing profession in their respective countries, cannot provide the Foundation with £6,000 a year for the next few years; and their eventual success in placing the scheme on an endowed basis may, it is hoped, be predicted with equal confidence.

The question today confronting the sponsors of the scheme in each country is a simple one: can they, between now and the end of 1933 collect contributions and obtain promises which will justify them in guaranteeing one or more such £250 scholarships for the year 1934-35, and, if possible, for the four ensuing years?

If the Nightingale Committees are quickly formed, and fix their attention resolutely on obtaining an affirmative answer to that question, the maintenance of the courses will be assured and the Foundation satisfactorily established. Arrangements can go forward once the National Committees are formed and funds are assured. The joint committee representing the

International Council of Nurses and the League of Red Cross Societies will take the necessary steps for the formal constitution of the Foundation. The scheme itself may, of course, undergo revision at the inaugural meeting which it is hoped to hold in July 1934 in order to adopt the Statutes and bring it into official existence.

It can be no mere coincidence that Sir Edward Cook's summary of the essential principles underlying the training school which Florence Nightingale founded in 1860 can be applied with equal accuracy to the facilities provided at Manchester Square, at Bedford College, and by the College of Nursing: "1) *Technical*, a training school; lectures, examinations, reports, etc.; 2) *Moral*, a home."

If events so shape themselves that the League of Red Cross Societies may prove to have made an essential contribution to the institution of a worthy permanent memorial to Florence Nightingale, this will be something more than an honour to the League: it will be the payment by the Red Cross of a just debt. Florence Nightingale was not only the founder of modern nursing; she was and remains in the public imagination "The Lady of the Lamp"—the precursor, the example, and the collaborator of Henri Dunant. "What inspired me to go to Italy during the war of 1859", said Dunant thirteen years later, "was the work of Miss Florence Nightingale in the Crimea".

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PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE  
FOR THE PROPOSED FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE  
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

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Members :

Sir ARTHUR STANLEY, G.B.E., C.B., M.V.O.,  
Member of the Board of Governors of the  
League of Red Cross Societies, CHAIRMAN.

Miss LLOYD STILL, C.B.E., R.R.C., President  
of the International Council of Nurses.

Mrs. BEDFORD-FENWICK, S.R.N., Chairman, Flo-  
rence Nightingale Memorial Committee of the  
International Council of Nurses.

Miss MUSSON, C.B.E., R.R.C., Treasurer of the  
International Council of Nurses.

ERNEST J. SWIFT, Secretary General of the League  
of Red Cross Societies.

Mrs. CECIL CARTER, A.R.R.C., Chief, Nursing  
Division of the League of Red Cross Societies.

