

Nurses are still trained in the Nightingale Tradition

By P. D. Nuttall

Editor of the "Nursing Times", London

THERE are more than 66,000 young women and men training in Britain's 950 nurse training schools. Britain, indeed, has more nurses per head of population than any other country in the world; and the vast majority are being trained within the National Health Service.

This is a different picture from that of 100 years ago when, in 1860, Florence Nightingale founded the first training school for nurses, at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, with 15 probationer nurses. "People's expectations are highly wrought," wrote Miss Nightingale. "They think some great thing will be accomplished in six months, though experience shows that it is essentially the work of centuries."

One century has now passed and the effect of Florence Nightingale's work has been felt throughout the world. Nurses trained under her system (which spread to all the

nurse training schools in Britain) are to be found in the remote island of St. Helena, in the sunny Caribbean, throughout the length and breadth of Africa, in the icy wastes of Labrador, in Turkey and the Middle East, in India and Ceylon, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Two-way Traffic

Although nursing on the Nightingale system is a United Kingdom export, nurses form a two-way traffic stream. Men and women from all over the world go to the United Kingdom to be trained as nurses or for post-registration courses, and take away with them valuable knowledge and experience gained in Britain's hospitals.

Countries where the emancipation of women has developed later than it has in Western Europe, have invited nurses from Britain to start

Florence Nightingale founded the first training school for nurses at London's St. Thomas's Hospital 100 years ago, in 1860. This article describes how the Nightingale traditions have spread all over the world.

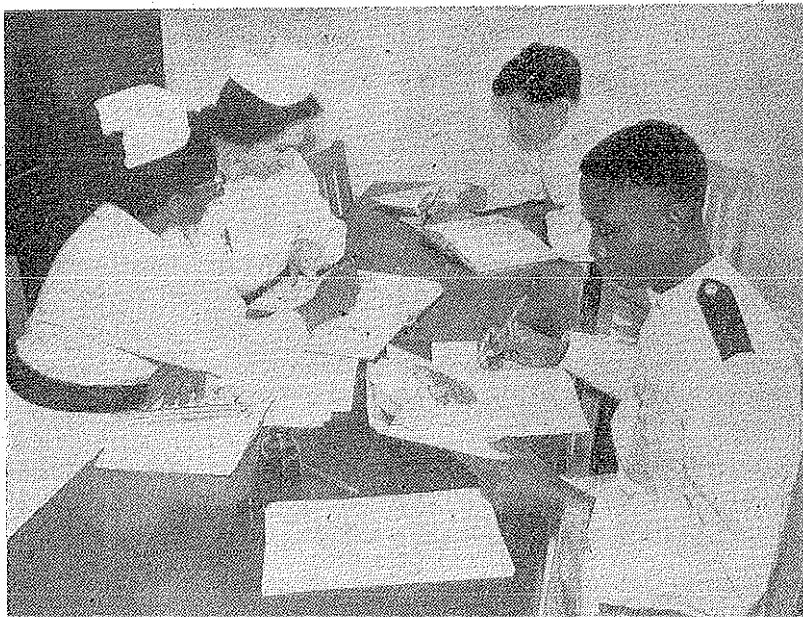
training schools. The Royal Ashraf School of Nursing of Teheran has a Matron from the United Kingdom, while nurses from hospitals in Britain can be found in Tabriz, Istanbul and Ankara. Throughout Africa, the Queen Elizabeth's Overseas Nursing Service has sisters and matrons working and training local nursing staffs.

Earn while they learn

In Britain the largest number of nurses train for the "general" part of the State Register. There are also courses for mental nursing and three other different types. All the training is controlled by the General Nursing Council, a body set up by the United Kingdom Parliament, which plans the syllabus, examines and registers the nurses as well as inspects the training schools where the nurses earn while they learn.

The United Kingdom Government, recognising the importance of a well trained and efficient nursing service, gives training allowances to men and women training as nurses, so that no one need suffer hardship while studying to earn the title of "Nurse", which is legally protected in Britain.

After the basic qualification (known as State Registration) the nurse has a wide choice of post-registration courses and certificates that can be taken after she has had some experience when fully trained. Ward sisters, sister tutors, health visitors, occupational health nurses, matrons and administrative sisters



African Nursing Students studying for their post-registration tuberculosis certificate at the Pepperel Chest Hospital, near Reading, Berkshire, England.

GREETINGS

To our members here, there and everywhere.

May this festive season bring to all,

A wealth of joy and gladness.

all need extra training and certificates before they can fill these specialised posts.

Royal Interest

The Universities in Britain also take a hand in nurse-training. The University of London offers diplomas in nursing and nurse teaching. The University of Edinburgh has a Nursing Studies Unit in its Faculty of Arts; and the Universities of Manchester and Southampton are engaged in experimental schemes with five-year training courses whereby students can become community nurses after spending some time in a nurse-training school.

Since, in 1860, Queen Victoria allowed all the wards of the new St. Thomas's Hospital to be named after each of her children, the Royal Family has taken a deep and personal interest in nurses and nursing. Several Royal ladies have become State Registered Nurses, the most recent being the Duke of Edinburgh's niece, Princess Margaret von Baden, who, on completing her training at the Nightingale Training School, received her hospital badge and certificate from her aunt, the Duchess of Kent.

ABC of Nursing

Visitors from overseas are some-

times surprised at the uniform worn by some of the nurses in Britain, but many of the styles are continued because they are 'traditional'. Despite many hospitals adopting a simpler style of modern dress, apron and details, the London Hospital Sisters wear goffered lace streamers which reach half way down their backs; the sisters of



A Charming statuette in Worcester China of a Modern Ward Sister at St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

St. Thomas's Hospital wear the spotted blue material like Miss Nightingale first saw worn by the Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth in Germany in 1850 where she trained, while the nurses of the Liverpool Royal Infirmary wear tiny starched caps with a butterfly bow at the back.

Several Ministers of the Crown are advised in nursing matters by senior civil servants who are themselves nurses with staffs of nurses. Miss Nightingale was the first to advise Ministers of the Crown; and this custom has sensibly continued. Every nurse training school in Britain has its portrait of Florence Nightingale; every nurse who has trained in any of Britain's hospitals is aware of her influence. Her ABC of Nursing was this:

"The 'A' of a nurse ought to be to know what a sick human being is; 'B' to know how to behave to a sick human being; and 'C' to know that her patient is a sick human being and not an animal."

This deceptively simple definition is one of the first lessons taught to nurses in training schools throughout Britain.

(Acknowledgments to British Information Services)