

WORLD'S NURSES ARE COPYING BRITAIN

284 A

Evening
Standard.

9-7-37

FIGHT AGAINST SUPERSTITION AND PREJUDICE

3000 Life-savers to Meet in London

From a Special Correspondent

EIGHTEEN women from fourteen countries have been presented with certificates on completing the international course of the Florence Nightingale Foundation at Bedford College.

This ceremony marked the opening of a reunion week (held at the college), during which many nurses belonging to the Old Internationals' Association met and talked over old times and compared notes about the work they are now doing in all parts of the world.

Later in the month 3000 nurses will meet at Central Hall, Westminster, for a five-day conference of the Quadrennial International Council of Nurses.

The Old Internationals' Association was founded to enable nurses who have taken the post-graduate course of the Florence Nightingale Foundation to keep in touch.

Women from every country in the world have been to Manchester-square, headquarters of the Foundation, and the secretary of the Old Internationals, Miss Nan Dorsey, receives an enormous amount of correspondence.

NO DISAGREEMENTS

Whereas the actual work of the Foundation is to provide a post-graduate course which will give the greatest impetus to nursing throughout the world, the O.I.A. provides a valuable second activity.

Wherever an English nurse goes she can meet a familiar face, or at least someone of whom she has heard.

This league of nurses has established a League of Nations which never disagrees.

Here are no national or racial prejudices. All have one common ideal—to bring relief to the sick and suffering and to make the conditions of life better for all.

To-day I met some of these nurses who have only just arrived in London.

Miss Natsuye Inouye, from Japan, is the tiniest nurse I have ever seen. She is on the staff of the nursing division of the Japanese Red Cross and she is also matron's secretary at the Red Cross Hospital, Tokyo.

"Nursing and hospital work in Japan is now very up to date in the towns," she told me.

"But there is a great deal of tuberculosis in my country. It is our aim to open more and more 'preventoria' for children in different parts of the country, particularly where there are pine forests."

She told me how Japanese nurses, inspired by British traditions and training, are fighting against superstitions, particularly in the villages.

The old village midwife is being replaced by an educated trained woman, but the old custom of the home helper is not to be abolished.

It has always been the custom in Japanese rural districts for certain women to act as home helpers in the homes of women who have just had a baby, cooking, caring for the smaller children and so on.

Health centres are being established and the district nurse is another innovation.

Miss Inouye comes to England as frequently as possible and admits that she seldom returns without some new hygienic idea which she can introduce at home.

The largest hospitals in Japan are the military hospitals, but these are not, as one might think, run entirely for soldiers. They are so called because they are State controlled.

Another interesting visitor is Miss Justine Kushké, of Latvia, who in 1935 was president of the O.I.A.

ONLY THE BEGINNING

Latvian health centres and children's clinics are planned exactly on English lines, even to the styles of the babies' clothing. As in many other countries there has been a great fight to establish modern ideas of hygiene.

From Greece has come Miss Athina Messolora. She is directress of the nursing division of the Greek Red Cross and chief of the Red Cross School for Nurses in Athens.

She told me how, under the auspices of the Red Cross, work for women and children particularly is being carried on in the country districts.

Old customs and prejudice die hard, but people are being taught cleanliness and hygiene. Thousands of babies every year are now saved which would under the old conditions have succumbed to fever and improper feeding.

"We feel, though," she added, "that we are only at the beginning of things yet. There is much to be done."

Miss Eeva Aitto has come from Finland, which like Czechoslovakia, Esthonia and Latvia, has established British ideas throughout its medical and nursing services.