

## The Work of Nursing the Insane.\*

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The instruction in the Training School includes the general care of the sick, the managing of helpless patients in bed, giving baths, keeping patients warm or cool, preventing and dressing bed-sores, bandaging, applying of fomentations, poultices, and minor dressings, the preparing and serving of food, the feeding of helpless patients, and those who refuse food, the administering of enemas and use of the catheter, attendance upon patients requiring diversion and companionship, the observation of mental symptoms, delusions, hallucinations, delirium, stupor, etc., and the care of excited, violent and suicidal patients. Nurses are given instruction in the best practical methods of supplying fresh air, warming and ventilating sick rooms in a proper manner, and are taught to take proper care of rooms and wards, in keeping all utensils perfectly clean, disinfected, etc., in recording accurately observations of the pulse, temperature, respiration, expectoration, the secretions, state of the skin and eruptions, sleep, appetite, effect of diet, of stimulants and medicine, in the giving of massage and electricity, and the managing of convalescents. Instruction is given in light gymnastics.

The class-room teaching is done by the resident physicians and matron, who is also Preceptress of the Training School; in the clinical instruction the above are assisted by the supervisors and charge nurses.

The examination for entrance to the Training School is held in September, after which the class-room work begins; the final examinations are held in May. The text book in use is by Dr. P. M. Wise, President of the Commission in Lunacy; it is in two volumes, the first volume is used during the first year, and the second during the second year. The other standard text books in nursing are used for reference. The curriculum at the Rochester State Hospital is arranged so that a quiz on each chapter is held before the lecture on the subject of the chapter; a lecture and quiz for each class are held every week. Questions are given for the students to answer in writing, in addition to the real quiz. Each nurse has to spend at least three months in the hospital ward where the greatest number of bed patients are; one month in the diet kitchen; one month in the dispensary, putting up the daily medicines, and assisting the physicians in the operating room. The women students

have to spend a month assisting at the gynæcological work, the rest of the two years is divided amongst the other wards.

The nurse thus gains a very fair knowledge of the work required in caring for the different kinds of cases of insanity. Graduate nurses are in charge of all of the wards and of the industrial departments. Thus the work of the student nurse may be closely supervised during the whole of the course. Clinical instruction is systematically given, and demonstrations are frequently held. Experience in obstetrical and surgical work is limited, but every opportunity is embraced to teach the nurses as much as possible about these cases. With reference to ordinary sickness the word "treatment" as used by the physicians and understood by the public is somewhat restricted in significance and application. When employed with reference to the insane, "treatment" becomes one of the most inclusive words not only for the relief and cure, but for the general welfare of the patient. Great stress is laid upon the moral treatment of the insane, and a nurse may spend hours in getting a patient to do what it would require a few minutes of the nurse's time to accomplish, simply for the good it will do the patient.

The way patients spend their time is such an important part of their treatment that the physicians carefully prescribe how each patient's time shall be passed. Work, exercise, amusement, and rest follow each other, and great efforts are made on the part of physicians and nurses to break up the monotony of institution life.

Because keeping the insane employed is such an important element in their treatment, each Hospital has a number of industrial departments. The women patients sew, do housework, knit, crochet, etc.; the men work in the tailor shop, shoe shop, carpenter shop, paint shop, printing department, stables, laundry, kitchens, dining-rooms, soap factory, blacksmith shop, on the farm, with the florist, plumber, engineers and electricians, at mattress, broom, brush and comb making, and upholstering.

During the summer, tennis, croquet, picnics, walks, drives and field sports help to afford entertainment. In a Hospital for the insane every question has to be decided by a physician; the lock of a door, the string of an apron, or skirt, the metal polish, the care of a disinfectant, all may require a great deal of thought on the part of the physicians.

One great difference between general hospital cases and those in hospitals for the insane is, that amongst the latter, treatment usually has to extend over a period of months, sometimes years; therefore, hospitals for the insane have to be

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