

The American Nursing World.

"THE WORK OF NURSING THE INSANE."

Discussion on Miss Mary E. May's Paper.

(Continued from page 378.)

Miss Brown, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston:—

In 1879, it was determined to establish a school for the training of attendants at the McLean Asylum, in Somerville, Massachusetts. In 1882, the school was formally organized, and in 1886 six pupils were graduated.

In 1886 an arrangement was made with the Boston Training School, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, by which any female graduate of the school who wishes to have additional practical experience and instruction in general nursing has the privilege, under the usual conditions, of entering that school and receiving its diploma, after completing satisfactorily the studies of its senior year. It should be noted that the formal training of men was begun in 1886, which marks the beginning of one of the earliest successful attempts to train men systematically for the profession of nursing. At the close of the year 1898, after seventeen years of existence, the school has a roll of graduates including 328 names—221 women and 107 men. Of the women, 148 continue their professional work, 28 at the McLean Hospital, 30 in other institutions, 51 have married. Of the men, 56 continue their professional work, besides 27 who are either physicians, medical students or dentists. Fifty-four women have taken the course at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

The number of applications on the waiting lists have increased so much that, although the requirements are higher, those accepted must wait often a year before there are vacancies for them.

Candidates apply from distant parts of the country, especially from the Middle and Southern States, and frequent inquiry is made for a post graduate course from "general hospital nurses." The most desirable age for candidates is from 21 to 35 years. Candidates are received for two months on probation, and, if accepted, agree to complete the prescribed course of two years. At the end of the first six months the record of each pupil is again carefully scrutinized, and the right is reserved to terminate then, or at any other time, the connection of any pupil or nurse with the school and hospital, for inefficiency, misconduct generally unsatisfactory record, or for any other reason which may be deemed sufficient.

The instruction includes, in addition to the general care of the sick, attendance upon patients requiring diversion and companionship, the observation of mental symptoms, delirium, stupor, etc., and the care of violent and suicidal patients. Instruction is given in physical training and massage, and each pupil spends three hours each day for one month in the diet kitchen.

Written examinations take place every six months, and pupils must obtain on critical marking at least 60 per cent.

The women are paid 12 dols. per month during the first year and 15 dols. per month during the second year. Women graduates of the McLean Hospital, who

remain in the service of the hospital are paid 25 dols. per month during the first year and 30 dols. per month thereafter. Graduates of the school who are also graduates of the Training School for Nurses at the Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, are paid 35 dols. per month.

Dr. Cowles says: "The one fundamental thing which makes the success of these schools possible in hospitals for the insane, is the teaching of general nursing where that is possible."

I gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Dr. Edward Cowles, Medical Superintendent of the McLean Hospital who has afforded me valuable aid by furnishing me with a file of his reports.

Miss McDonnell, of Albany, thought it necessary to have nurses trained to care for the insane, but if they were trained only in hospitals for the insane, they were not fitted to do general nursing. There is little surgical or medical service and no obstetrics in a hospital for the insane.

Miss Maxwell: I have no experience in the actual care of the insane myself, and I was rather opposed to having our school attached to the McLean Hospital when I was in charge of the school at the Massachusetts General Hospital. The McLean Training School wanted to have their pupils receive one year of training at the Massachusetts General Hospital supplementary to their two years' course. I opposed the measure on the ground that the nurses from the McLean Hospital would have to be trained over in many things in order to fit them for the work of a general hospital, and, although I had some very satisfactory women sent to me, this proved true. They were unable to cope with the active hospital work. Training in the care of mental diseases is important; it should not be a thing apart, it should be one branch of general training. I do not think it is possible to teach general nursing theoretically.

Miss McDonnell: I think training in nervous cases should come after general training.

Mrs. Robb: Do the Massachusetts General Hospital graduates take the McLean course afterwards?

Miss Drown: It is optional, I think.

Miss Newman: At Dr. Blumer's suggestion, I have tried during the past year changing services of my nurses with those of the school connected with the Utica State Hospital. I regret to report that the experiment has not been a success. Of the twelve nurses sent to me only one has been in the least satisfactory, and she would have made an admirable general nurse. They expected services in two months which I was unable to give them owing to the fact that they were not prepared for the work.

I think the idea of training schools in connection with State Hospitals is not to graduate nurses for private work, but to provide better care for the patients of the hospitals. The salary is increased after two years and passing the required examinations. The instruction is given entirely by the physicians connected with the hospital.

In Utica the Supervisor is a competent woman who has been in the service many years which makes it impossible to change or fill that position with a graduate nurse.

Should the position at any time become vacant, I think an effort will be made to place a graduate nurse

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