

would have the right to call himself a medical practitioner if he had only been educated in the treatment of mental diseases. It is universally recognized that a medical man must be a qualified practitioner before he becomes a specialist. Nursing is becoming more and more an integral part of medicine, and the same law holds good in nursing education. Specialists, however highly qualified in their speciality they may be, cannot be recognized as trained nurses without undergoing a general education.

THE TRAINING OF MENTAL NURSES.

How, then are mental attendants to be trained in order that they may take their place in the ranks of qualified nurses, and how are asylums in the future to be nursed? We are in agreement with Dr. Greene in thinking that an interchange of probationers between general hospitals and asylums during a three years' training would not be beneficial. We must also recognize that neither special hospitals nor asylums, which are, in fact, special hospitals for the sick in mind, can ever be recognized as training schools in general nursing. The asylums, then, to be nursed on the best lines, must be officered by graduate specialists—that is to say, by nurses who hold the certificate of a general hospital, and who, after graduation, or during their term of training, have had special instruction in the nursing of mental diseases. It follows, therefore, that the asylum nurse must be a very highly educated person, and this, without doubt, she should be, for there is no form of nursing which needs higher qualifications than that of the sick in mind. The nursing of diseases of the body is comparatively easy beside that of the mind unhinged, and the services of the most highly qualified women should be requisitioned in this branch of nursing. They need not only the best professional qualifications, but also much tact, sympathy and unselfish devotion to duty.

AN ECONOMIC QUESTION.

Arrived at this point, we are immediately brought face to face with the economic question. So far, the nursing of asylums has been done on the cheap. The salaries offered are low, and the hours of labour long. The highly skilled nurse can command high pay under congenial conditions, and, therefore, the asylum branch of work does not at present commend itself to her. In private nursing, graduate specialists can command, in addition to their board, lodging, and washing, fees of from £3 3s. to £4 4s. a week, whether as maternity, fever, or mental nurses. They have, in addition to their general qualification, special skill and knowledge which entitles them to receive extra fees. We do not

see, therefore, why highly trained and efficient nurses in asylums should not receive much higher salaries than at present. To this, however, asylum authorities would, no doubt, object, and it is on the ground that the highly skilled professional worker should receive correspondingly high pay that the battle of the efficient nursing of asylums will be eventually fought out. It is by the introduction of educated women into our asylums as nurses that the leaven, which will eventually leaven the whole lump, will find its way into them, as has been the case in our general hospitals, and the services of such women, and men, are worthy of recompense commensurate in some degree with the value of the work done.

A TINKERING POLICY.

It is by organizing on lines such as those indicated above, rather than by adopting the tinkering policy of the Royal British Nurses' Association, which proposed to confer on asylum attendants the status of trained nurse, which they have not earned, that the interests of these attendants and their patients will be best served. Sir James Crichton Browne and his colleagues who signed the abortive and widely condemned report recommending the admission of asylum attendants to the Register of Trained Nurses, showed themselves intensely ignorant, or wilfully careless, with regard to the best interests of asylum attendants and their patients. It is not by registering unsatisfactory qualifications, but by initiating a satisfactory system of training, that the nursing of the insane will be placed on a satisfactory basis.

In Honour of Mafeking.

WE announce, with much pleasure, and gratitude, that Mrs. Lionel Lucas, the President of Sir Julian Goldsmid's Home of Rest for Nurses at Brighton, has, with characteristic generosity given the Home a donation of £50, to celebrate "The Relief of Mafeking," and we feel sure that hundreds of the nurses who have visited the Home, and appreciate its advantages, will join with us in offering our warmest thanks to Mrs. Lucas for this last of many munificent donations to the Home. We would suggest that it would be a practical proof of their appreciation if the nurses who use and find 12 Sussex Square "a real home," would persuade their friends to increase the Endowment fund. We have also received, during the past week, a guinea donation from "Anonymous," through the kindness of Miss L. G. Scott, for which we offer thanks.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)