

utilising every facility of developing our knowledge of both professional and general matters, so that we may bring to bear on the problems which confront us, imagination, judgment, and intelligent sympathy.

### Annotations.

#### THE CARE OF THE INSANE.

Sir G. P. O'Farrell, Inspector of Lunatics, has done good service to this unfortunate class by the report which he has presented on the auxiliary asylum attached to the Belfast Workhouse. This institution at present contains fifty-three male and forty-three female patients, and the Inspector states that "each succeeding visit only confirms the opinion that the insane and the ordinary paupers should be treated in distinct institutions, and under separate control and management." He further recommends the abolition of the lunatic department of the workhouse, and that insane patients should be sent to the asylum, while persons of feeble intellect, not legally certified as insane, should be placed in the infirm wards in charge of skilled nurses. He also expresses himself strongly on the results of the association of young idiot children with adult lunatics. A further suggestion is that Belfast and other Irish Unions should endeavour to establish a national institution, such as exists in England and Scotland, for the education and training of imbeciles and idiots capable of moral and mental improvement.

We are glad to learn that the Belfast Board of Guardians has resolved to proceed as suggested in the report. The separation of lunatics from idiots and ordinary paupers must be an unmixed advantage to both; the treatment of lunatics should be carried out in asylums or rather hospitals specially adapted for the reception of such patients if the best results are to be obtained; and, further, workhouse inmates should not be subjected to the risk of associating with these patients—a risk which received sad illustration in a recent tragedy at Naas, when an insane patient, during an attack of homicidal frenzy, inflicted fatal injuries on four other inmates.

Short of actual danger it must surely be detrimental to the welfare of sane persons to associate constantly with the insane, and tend to a weakening of mental stability.

We hope other Boards of Guardians may follow the example set at Belfast,

#### COURTESY.

From time to time the charge of want of courtesy is made against nurses, not only by members of the public, but by their own profession also. If this be so, it is surely a matter we should all take to heart, for courtesy is a virtue not only incumbent upon us, but one of the easiest to practise. It costs nothing, either in money or time, and the difference which it makes to everyone concerned is untold. Thus, in a hospital where the authorities by example and precept insist on its exercise the porters are on the alert, visitors are not kept waiting unnecessarily, and inquiries in the Secretary's office are dealt with with dispatch. In the wards the probationers hasten with willing feet to do the bidding of the Sister, the ward-maid is polite to the nurses when duty takes them into "her" kitchen, though at the same time she insists that they shall leave the sink clean as they found it; and the patients, catching the prevailing tone, are helpful, in so far as they are allowed to help, in small ways. The Matron when she makes the round of a ward does not say to the new probationer who ventures to say, "Good morning, Matron," "Speak when you're spoken to, nurse," and the staff treat the nurses with a consideration which begets loyalty and willing service.

In a hospital where such a system prevails the discipline may be strict, for strictness where large numbers of persons are concerned spells efficiency; neither does laxity foster contentment, as is sometimes erroneously supposed. A firm hand in a ruler is a greater desideratum from the standpoint of those ruled than an uncertain one. Once a nurse is convinced that regulations which appear to her irksome are made for the general good—and nothing will convince her of this so readily as their enforcement in a courteous manner—she is generally quite ready to give them her loyal adhesion. If she repeatedly disregards them, it is clear that she is unfitted for community life, and her services were better dispensed with.

After all, courtesy is but the outward token of inward virtues. The habits of consideration for others and of personal unselfishness are the roots from which spring the fair flower of courtesy. If we fail in the latter, therefore, let us look well to our ways, lest we fail also in the less apparent, but not less necessary, virtues of consideration and unselfishness.

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