

into the expediency of the registration of nurses. The most important side of this registration was that it would afford a guarantee that a certain nurse was in possession of certain knowledge. It was a kind of affidavit of her competency at the time of registration.

The Select Committee suggested that in connection with the establishment of a Register, a separate section should be instituted for mental nurses. In regard to eligibility for the Register, 7,000 mental nurses had already gained the certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association. As evidence that the work of the mental nurse covered a wide field, the Chairman said that thirty women were confined at Claybury Asylum during the first year after it was opened, accidents were of frequent occurrence, and there were a number of abdominal operations both on men and women, so that the nurses gained a knowledge of what to prepare for operations; they, of course, also acquired an intelligent appreciation of mental symptoms.

Mental nursing was trying, irksome, and monotonous, so that hospital nurses often could not stand it. A liberal scheme of pensions would help to keep mental nurses in this branch of work. Again, in order to detect mental disorder it was necessary to bring keenness to the work. A fourteen hours' day was too long. The hospital nurse was often helped by the gratitude of her patients. The mental nurse got no gratitude and expected none. Her life was one of abnegation underlying circumstances.

Hospital life was brightened by visits from those interested in the institution, but the asylum was usually regarded as a blot on the landscape; when, however, people did come, they usually spoke most highly of what they saw.

Dr. Jones referred to the lack of organisation of asylum workers previous to the formation of the Asylum Workers' Association, also to the registration of hospital and mental nurses in Natal. He said also that we were progressing towards legislation in this country, and that he congratulated Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on the success of the registration movement. He was glad to know that she felt sympathetic towards asylum nurses. She wished them to have the advantage of as full a curriculum as hospital nurses.

He had visited the hospitals in many countries and found the nursing of the sick regarded as a holy duty. He had been informed by a high official that the feeling on the Continent of Europe in regard to the care of lunatics was that it was sacred work. In regard to such cases the one lamp in the darkest night was that of human sympathy.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF HOSPITAL NURSES TO ASYLUMS, AND THE HOSPITALISATION OF ASYLUMS

(Abridged.)

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In considering the topic of my remarks, the first point that occurred to me was that my audience, judging by the organisations which have promoted the Conference, would consist principally of individuals who were either hospital nurses, or who were interested in and understood all about hospitals. It therefore seemed to me that a suitable subject for my address this evening, would be "Observations on the Introduction of Hospital Nurses to Asylums and the Hospitalisation of Asylums."

I must, in the first place, direct attention to the false ideas of asylums and mental nursing, due to their ignorance of the facts, entertained by hospital nurses, and in these respects I verily believe their ideas are wider of the truth, from the prejudices connected with their special training, than those of the general public. One peculiarity of these false ideas about asylums is that they are uniformly depreciatory, and asylums are imagined to be very terrible places, and as a result of this misconception, acquaintance with the reality when it comes, so far as I have observed, always produces a shock of surprise that insane patients can be so orderly, asylum management so well organised, and asylum wards such pleasant places to live in.

I think the evidence disclosed before the late Select Committee of the House of Commons on Nursing as to the splendidly-organised system of examination and registration for mental nurses established and maintained by the Medical-Psychological Association produced a very strong impression in the minds of all connected with hospital nursing throughout the country. It came, I am sure, as a complete surprise to many who had been connected with nursing all their days to find that mental nursing was, as regards training, examination, and registration, in a condition so nearly perfect that the Committee could scarcely suggest any improvement. On the other hand, everyone knows of the chaos or want of organisation and system existing in the training of hospital nurses. It is admitted that our large general hospitals are turning out very highly-trained nurses, but it is believed to be equally true that numbers of inadequately trained nurses, with three years' certificates from less important hospitals and infirmaries, are admitted to the ranks of the profession. Even in the case of

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