

built and conducted with a view to many of the inmates remaining for years, sometimes for the greater part of a lifetime, while in general hospitals the patients remain a comparatively short time.

Special care is taken to have the day rooms for patients as pleasant, bright, and cheery, as furniture, plants, reading matter, games, birds and music can make them. Many of the patients sleep in large dormitories, in these the beds are aired all day. Patients whose condition requires it, have single rooms and a special nurse or nurses. These hospitals are essentially for the poor and indigent, as no hospital is allowed to take a patient who is able to pay more than ten dollars a week, and the poorest, if his condition requires it, has every care the institution can provide.

There is a day and night nursing service, the day nurses coming on duty at 6 a.m. in summer, and 7 a.m. in winter, and remaining on duty every other night until 9 p.m. They have a half-day each week, and every other week day evening after 6.30, and all of every third Sunday off duty. The night nurses come on at 9 p.m., and remain on duty until relieved by the day nurses. No ward is ever left alone during the day, and only for a short time during the night, whilst the nurses are making rounds. The wards for acute and disturbed cases are never left without a nurse or attendant. Women nurses assist the men nurses on the men's service during the day, except in the wards for the most disturbed patients.

Every patient in the hospital has at least two full baths a week, many are bathed daily, and some several times a day, as their condition calls for. Spray baths are used largely, as these ensure the cleanliness of the bath water and reduce the danger of the patients being scalded; when spray baths were introduced, the patients preferred tub baths, but now there are rarely ever any objections made to the spray bath. Bath tubs are in all of the bath-rooms, and tub baths are prescribed for special cases.

Many of the patients are clothed by the State; with these, care is taken to have as great a variety in the clothing as possible, as sometimes a pretty, bright coloured dress will be the first thing to divert the attention of a disturbed case.

Associate dining-rooms are largely used, thus the patients are taught to leave their wards and go to other parts of the house. This has been of great service in times of emergency, such as a fire, when the patients have had to be taken from their wards. It is a fact that when insane patients have been in the habit of remaining in one part of the house, it is exceedingly difficult

to get them to leave their wards for any purpose, and that is one reason why hospitals for the insane have adopted the plan of getting all patients who are able to walk, to leave the wards frequently.

In caring for violent patients, it is the rule to have plenty of nurses to help; the presence of a number of nurses who are there for the purpose of carrying out the physicians' orders often being enough to quiet the patient, so that the order can be fulfilled without any further resistance. When the presence of the nurses does not suffice and a struggle has to be entered upon, a physician is present. Some patients have to be forcibly fed to keep them from starving. The usual food is milk, or milk with raw eggs, warmed to the temperature of fresh milk, and introduced into the stomach by means of a nasal or esophageal tube. This feeding may be done twice in twenty-four hours, or more frequently, as required by the patient's condition. When forcible feeding has to be resorted to, five or six nurses, and sometimes more, have to assist.

In order to prevent new patients bringing contagion to the hospital, each patient has to be supplied by his friends or the Poor Department with a new suit of inexpensive clothing. When the medical superintendent is notified that a patient is ready to come to the hospital, a nurse or nurses are sent to bring him; if the patient is old, a physician from the hospital sees him and decides whether he is a suitable patient for hospital care. There are a number of formalities to be observed by nurses sent for patients. From some hospitals where the district is large, nurses have to travel a great deal of the time. This ruling has resulted in the patients being brought to the hospitals in a more comfortable manner than when they were brought by relatives, and it is a saving to the State also. A woman must accompany every woman patient. This takes the place of the Ambulance Service of a General Hospital.

As stated before, the length of the Training School course is two years, the subject of a three years' course is under consideration. The Training School in the Rochester State Hospital was started before Training Schools were compulsory, in order to raise the standard of nursing in that Hospital, and the attendants were trained with a view to retaining their services in the Hospital after graduation; this is still the plan, and the graduate nurses remain at the Hospital at increased wages, unless they go to other State Hospitals to fill more responsible positions.

The number of insane under treatment in New York State Hospital October 1st, 1898, was 21,542.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)