

carefully, for the institution is very, very young—the Wilhelmina Home strives to be in the near future a centre where competent mental nurses can be obtained by all who need their services. I have already briefly mentioned the fact that the Wilhelmina Home is also a home of rest for Sisters who are out of health. I should like to call this Home the winter sanatorium of the Wilhelmina Association, which has two other sanatoria, open during the summer season, in which those Sisters who need rest may recruit their health or spend their holiday-time.

At the present time the nursing of the insane is almost the chief topic of the day in our Dutch nursing world. Our leading psychologists are studying exhaustively the different mental diseases, their causes and cure. In our lunatic asylums the utmost care is devoted to finding out and practically applying the best methods of nursing. Dr. van Deventer, the medical superintendent of the lunatic asylum, Meerenberg, near Haarlem, has written a splendid book on "The Nursing of the Insane in the first half of the past century," and when one compares the state of things described in this remarkable work with the present standard of mental nursing, one cannot but feel sincerely and righteously thankful. The treatment of the insane as if they were criminals, shut up in sad, damp dungeons, where the cheering sunlight could not penetrate, and where they were doomed to drag out a joyless life, or, still worse, confined in cages like wild beasts—this all now belongs to the history of the past. A better era has dawned for the insane. The conviction that insanity is an illness, a mental disease, and that those who are afflicted by it are sick persons and should be treated as such, became more and more prevalent till this simple truth, hidden so long from man's sight by the fogs of a most barbarian conception, became a matter of course—an axiom. In the latest annual report of Meerenberg we read that in the past year strait jackets and other forcible means of restraint have been banished. And a little further we are informed that even the employment of forcible feeding is unnecessary, thanks to the tact and care of a more efficient nursing staff.

A more efficient nursing staff! This is one of the most prominent factors that have co-operated to raise the standard of mental nursing. Men of influence and practical knowledge have with inspiring eloquence and great force pointed out the fact that the nursing of the insane needs a special preliminary training. The Dutch Association for Psychiatry and Neurology, which grants certificates for mental nursing (while waiting for a happier future in which the long-cherished ideal of State Registration will be a blessed reality) requires the following qualifications from the candidates who are desirous of passing the examination:—They must have passed through a complete course in sick nursing and mental nursing; they must have been working successively for *at least three years* in one or more hospitals. Two years at least of their three years' training must have been spent in a lunatic asylum or some institution for neurological patients. The Society of the White Cross requires of candidates for examination in mental nursing (a) a certificate for general sick nursing given by the White Cross; (b) a special practical training of at least one year in mental nursing in a lunatic asylum or some other institution in which mentally disordered patients are cared for.

While thus on one side the qualifications required of aspirant mental nurses have been greatly raised, on the other hand the furtherance of their material interests has not been forgotten. The foundation and the working of the Wilhelmina Association most clearly prove this fact. Some time ago an inquiry was made by the medical superintendents of the lunatic asylums in our country into the conditions of work of the male and female nurses employed in them, and now the Dutch Association for Psychiatry and Neurology has appointed a committee, charged with the task of continuing and extending this inquiry in such a way that it may be fruitful of good in the future.

In our lunatic asylums great attention is paid to the methods by which the patients are to be kept busy. Work is always a blessing, as well for normal individuals as for the insane. "Keep them busy! Set them to work!" says Dr. van Deventer in his annual report of Meerenberg. It is one of the best means to bring them back into social life, to make them grow again familiar with social facts and relations. Daily experience loudly proclaims the high value of this prescription. And, in the same report, our skilful psychologist points out the great significance of outdoor occupation, and calls it "the bridge by which the patient comes back to common social life." When doing field work the patients are in the open air; the results of their labour are directly visible to them, and these combined factors have a reviving influence on many a dull and blunted mind.

Family-nursing is nowadays the burning question in the problem of the care for the insane—family-nursing such as has been already practised for many years in the famous colony of Gheel, in Belgium, but which now is connected with the lunatic asylums, of the treatment of which it forms a part. As a matter of course, only quiet patients are sent as boarders into neighbouring private houses. They remain under the direct control and supervision of the medical superintendent of the asylum, which is responsible for their care. The results so far obtained by family-nursing are very satisfactory. In the lunatic asylum at Grave, which institution is controlled by the State, family-nursing now forms a department of the nursing method. The medical superintendent, Dr. Vos, declares himself to be a warm adherent of the system, and it is to be expected that family-nursing in the care of the insane will more and more find its practical application in our country.

HOLLANDIA.

State Registration at the Women's Institute.

A very interested audience listened to an address on the need for the State Registration of Nurses given at the Women's Institute by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on Wednesday last. Many questions, very much to the point, were subsequently asked by those present, who evidently grasped the importance to the public of some reliable guarantee of the efficiency of a nurse's training. Much sympathy was expressed with the movement and offers of help were given. Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, who presided, proved in her opening speech that she had thoroughly grasped the question.

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