

pitals at depôts where Nursing Sisters were not employed, and the idea was that a highly-trained orderly should go to those hospitals either at home or abroad, where he would not require to be looked after by a Sister.

The witness then described in detail the training of an orderly, and showed that it compared by no means favourably with the training of Nursing Sisters, or with that of nurses in London hospitals. The orderly had a good deal of theoretical training, but not so much practical training. This state of things could not be altered. "Everybody," said the witness, "admits that you must have, and it is quite right that you should have, trained Sisters and female nurses wherever you can, and wherever you have them to nurse bad cases the men must be in the background; but in time of war, and in bad climates, where there are no nurses, of course you would never get female nurses for the patients, and you would have to depend upon male nurses; and the only thing to do is what we are doing, and what is done to a very great extent—namely, to interest the Sisters themselves in teaching the men, which they do exceedingly well, and then, when a man is well trained, to put him away where he will be on his own initiative, and give the Sisters more junior orderlies to teach."

The standard of general education required of men admitted to the R.A.M.C. was not high, though higher than that of the ordinary soldier. They must be able to read and write, to cipher, and to read manuscript. Of the 2,100 trained orderlies of the R.A.M.C., 1,700 were sent to South Africa with the 1st Army Corps. They were very short of men throughout the war. At the outside there were 7,000, the vast majority of whom were not only not up to the mark, but were only enlisted for one year, so as fast as some went out others went home. The 7,000 were 5,000 short of the number necessary. It must be admitted that a great many of the 7,000 were altogether inexperienced, and a considerable number not such as they could have wished to have at all if things could have been otherwise arranged.

Miss Nightingale on Private Nursing.

At a recent meeting of the Belfast Nurses' Home and Training School the Secretary read a letter from Miss Florence Nightingale of congratulation on the work which had been done, and expressing her belief in the value of private nursing work to nurses. "It develops their self-reliance, resourcefulness, and tact in a way that even the best hospital nursing cannot altogether do." She also spoke of the power for good of the nurse who works in the homes of the poor.

Modern Methods in Mental Nursing.

We scarcely know whether the Stirling District Lunacy Board, the enlightened Medical Superintendent of the Asylum, Dr. Robertson, the nursing staff, or the patients are to be congratulated on the admirable report for the year ending May 15th, 1903. Probably the patients, who, after all, are chiefly benefited by the efficiency of the institution. Certain it is that the report affords ample confirmation of the wisdom of those nurses who have contended, in the face of considerable opposition, that in the care of the insane, as in all other branches of nursing, the arrangements for such care are best carried out by those nurses possessing a basis of general knowledge.

One point brought out in the report is sufficiently startling—namely, that the night nurses are responsible, on an average, for thirty-two patients. This is in excess of the number of sane patients usually allotted to a nurse at night, and one would have supposed a larger proportion of nurses to be needed for mental cases. Yet the provision in the Stirling Asylum is evidently quite unique in its liberality, a fact which affords food for thought.

REPORT OF HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONER IN LUNACY.

The following entry in the Patients' Book by Mr. John Fraser, Commissioner in Lunacy, is of interest:—

"The Register of Restraint and Seclusion contains no entry. Three accidents are recorded, two involving fractures of bones due to falls, and a kick on the abdomen inflicted on a nurse by a patient. A satisfactory recovery was made in each case. Three escapes have occurred: one was absent over twenty-eight days and was discharged, but has since been re-admitted to the Asylum; and in the others the patients were absent for at least one night before being brought back.

"The staff in this Asylum is unique in many directions. Its special features were detailed in a former report, but since then the number of day nurses on the male side has been increased from ten to twelve, and the night staff has been increased from seventeen to twenty-one, fifteen of whom are nurses. The present ratio of those on night duty to patients is one to thirty-two. Out of 334 males, about 125 are wholly under the care of nurses during the day and about fifty during the night. There are five Assistant Matrons, who are of good social position and are trained hospital nurses. The influence of these officials has been found to be productive of the best results, both from an inhibitory and sympathetic point of view. In assimilating as completely as possible the nursing arrangements of an asylum to those which obtain in a general hospital, an important onward step in the care and treatment of the insane has been made. The arrangements for night supervision were inspected, and found complete and efficient. The few patients who were excited were each in a separate room under

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)