

they have to learn too many things too early. Other influences also are bad for the health of children. Only too often the condition of mind of the parents, who have become nervous patients through the wear and tear of modern life, makes them unfit for the bringing up of their children. Another cause of nervous troubles is feminism. Women are too conscientious. They feel their responsibility too much, and go too much into the details of every thing. These circumstances are very favourable for the development of nervous diseases.

We are now in a time of transition. The progress of civilisation and the many discoveries of recent years make a great change in all the conditions of life. But only a comparatively few persons have elasticity of mind enough to adapt themselves immediately to new circumstances. Most persons keep to old ideas and customs, protesting against the new ones, and these conflicts and mental crises, often occasion nervous diseases.

THE EDUCATION RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MENTAL NURSES.

On Tuesday, September 3rd, in the section on mental nursing, Dr. J. van Deventer, State Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, spoke of nurses, their education, their rights, and their duties. He began his speech by giving a description of mental nursing at the beginning of the last century. Ignorance, cruelty, and criminality were marked features of the nurses of that time. And the medical officers were not much better. Now matters are entirely changed. But the greatest difficulty at present is to obtain persons fit for this work. Persons who are too sensitive are of no use, neither are those who are unfeeling. The nurse must be energetic.

The nurses should have a preliminary course before being admitted into the wards. At Meerenberg* the probationers have a year's course in all kinds of household work and cooking, also lessons in reading aloud, music and singing, so that they may be able to give some diversion to their patients. The course at a preliminary school should be at least one year in extent. The Matron of the school should give a course of ethics.

Dr. van Deventer then refuted the arguments against the nursing of men by women. Physical force is not, he said, the most necessary quality in a nurse, but gentleness, tact, and love. Of course, there are moments when it is more desirable that there should be a male nurse, but if the female nurse has a high character and a good education there is no reason why she should not nurse male mental patients. In general, Dr. van Deventer prefers female nurses to male ones.

In regard to training, he was of opinion that the practical work should be systematically taught. He said that in order to obtain as nurses persons with a good education, and of high character it was necessary to provide them with good food, good lodgings, good salaries, and to make the hours on duty shorter.

* The largest lunatic asylum in Holland.

Only by State intervention would it be possible to give the nurses a lawful position and the security that not everybody can call himself a nurse.

Several doctors took part in the discussion which followed this speech.

Dr. Ley (Belgium) who, it will be remembered, attended and spoke at the Paris Nursing Conference, said that in the asylum of which he is the director it had only been possible to introduce the no-restraint system after he had sent away the religious sisters, and had engaged the services of trained Dutch nurses.

Dr. Bajenof (Russia) protested against this view, and said that it was quite possible to introduce new ways of nursing without sending away the old staff. Of course it had been impossible for him in Russia to restaff his hospital with trained Dutch nurses, but he had burned all the strait-waistcoats and other objects of torture, and taught his staff to nurse according to modern ideas. In the afternoon Dr. Morel (Belgium) spoke about the care of the insane, who are tried for criminal offences. He distinguished two classes: (1) Persons convicted of offences, who are insane and irresponsible for their acts. They are sent to an asylum and kept there. (2) Persons who are partially responsible for their acts. During their detention in prison they should be strictly observed and examined. On this examination should depend the treatment of the delinquent. The practice of these principles entails a thorough revision of the penal code, and the institution of a permanent psychiatric control.

Professor van Hamel (Holland), a barrister, spoke on the same subject. He also divided the lunatics into different groups: (a) those persons whose mental state at the moment when they committed a crime is proved to have rendered them irresponsible, and who are therefore acquitted; (b) accused or convicted persons, who show signs of lunacy when in prison; (c) all other lunatics who have been accused or convicted for offences or crimes. The care of all these groups should, he said, in no wise differ from the nursing given to ordinary lunatics; all, even the dangerous ones, must be considered as sick persons. When lunacy shows itself in prison, the prisoner should be transferred, for observation, to an annexe to the prison specially designed for that purpose.

A long and interesting discussion followed on these two papers.

THE ORGANISATION OF HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

On Wednesday, September 4th, Dr. Ruysch (Holland) spoke on the organisation of "The Superintendentcy of the Hospitals for the Insane, and the State Supervision for the Care of the Insane." He developed the following theses:

The government must exercise control over all asylums.

The government must determine all the conditions to be fulfilled by the asylums, such as the choice of the situation, the number of divisions, the mode of construction, the scientific and hygienic installations, the number of doctors and nurses, etc.

The government must have the right to close

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