

The name of Florence Nightingale is henceforth added to those of the illustrious dead, but for all time she stands before the world a gracious, heroic figure bearing the light kindled by knowledge, by faith, by love, and on the trained nurses of each succeeding generation is imposed the duty of keeping that light burning with steady persistency, and ever increasing brightness.

A Survey of the Nursing of Mental Diseases.*

By WILLIAM L. RUSSELL, M.D.,
Medical Inspector of the State Commission
in Lunacy, New York.

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THE TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR NURSES.

By securing additional training for the best of the graduates, and by the employment of specially qualified graduates of general hospital schools for supervisory and teaching positions, the school organisations have been improved. It has, however, been difficult to obtain both the support and the material for the higher positions needed. Still, in many of the institutions, the position of Superintendent of Nurses commands a good salary. In New York State it is \$1,200 (£240), and there is also a position of Assistant Superintendent at \$900 (£180). Competent candidates for these positions are, nevertheless, very scarce. At a recent examination for the positions, not one of the first lot of candidates met the requirements even for admission to the examination. On a second trial, after the stated requirements had been slightly reduced, eight were admitted of whom three passed. Similar difficulties are experienced in other States. General hospital graduates, who have had merely an incidental or short experience in the care of mental cases, cannot measure up to the full requirements of these positions, which can be satisfactorily filled only when able women decide to specialise in the work, and are willing to face the unquestionable difficulties and unpleasantness which, in the present stage of nursing in mental diseases, must in most places be met in preparing themselves for it. Those who will accept these terms will, I am confident, eventually secure good positions and find an extremely useful and interesting field of work.

In New York State at least, the schools have developed sufficiently to be able to secure regis-

tration by the State Education Department under the Nurse Registration Act. The registration movement has also, I believe, been of assistance to the schools by the stimulating effect and by bringing to their support, and to the support of the better nursing of the insane, the sympathetic intelligent interest of the able body of nurses who act as advisors of the Education Department in executing the law. The pupil nurses of these schools receive a part of their training in general hospitals. Thus far no arrangements have been made for an exchange of pupil nurses and, owing to the lack of private support for the nursing of the insane and for the State hospital training schools, certain difficulties relating to this have not yet been overcome. At one of the New York State hospitals, King's Park, a post-graduate course for general hospital graduates has been organised and a number have availed themselves of it. A demand for such courses would no doubt meet with a favourable response in many places. Wherever there is a well organised school in connection with a well hospitalised institution for the insane, affiliation between it and a general hospital school could be arranged with mutual advantage. This is much to be desired in the interest of the better care of mental cases in the homes and in general hospitals. The lack of provision and the ignorance and indifference which result in such large numbers of insane persons being confined in gaols and lockups merely for safe keeping is a reproach to the medical and nursing professions alike. The earliest developments for the proper care of insane persons in this country occurred in connection with general hospitals, and these hospitals, the Pennsylvania and the New York, have still large departments for this class of work. And yet, at the department for general work of these very hospitals, and at nearly all other general hospitals, no matter how far distant they may be from a special institution for the insane, no obligation is felt to make provision for even the temporary care of mental cases. Enough has, however, already been done in a few places to furnish precedents, and it may be confidently expected that, in the not distant future, every general hospital management will make some provision for these cases. In New York City, a special institution for incipient mental cases is planned for under private endowment. With the growing interest in such cases and in the relation of mental states to disease and its treatment, more adequate provision than at present prevails is sure to be made, and more knowledge and skill in the care of mental cases will be required of nurses.

(To be concluded.)

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