

pected to display more unselfishness or practice more philanthropy than is expected of the physician, the lawyer, or the ecclesiastic. It is the advantages of combination and union that I see in the proposal for the Registration of Nurses, and if such a scheme by proper organisation ensures for the nurse a more adequate return for her services, or a better marketable value for her labours, or if such Registration only secures a higher recognition and appreciation of her devotion than is now current, then I am in its favour. It is not for self-amusement or entertainment that busy and prominent women like Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Isla Stewart, Mrs. Spencer, and others have devoted their time and energies in the cause of Registration. They deem it essential that the nurse should be assured of such a recognition as her special calling or employment demands. Possibly this digression is unnecessary, but the mental nurse, like the hospital nurse, has also a career beyond her institution, and her services are more valuable to the public and to herself when it can be certified that she is fully qualified, proficient, and acknowledged. It is not beside the question, therefore, to reiterate and to emphasise the assertion that mental nurses must be trained, that their wages must not only be adequate, but also their comforts must be studied, their future insured by adequate pensions when strength is failing and the day of their useful activity is drawing to a close.

I have heard it argued by members of Committees of public asylums that the systematic training and teaching of nurses should be discouraged, because it only results in their leaving the service of these asylums to better themselves immediately upon obtaining the qualifying certificates. In spite of such an official view, I venture to assert that all the great public asylums of this country should also be training schools for the nurses of both sexes, and from a long and extensive experience I believe that at those asylums in which such training is systematically maintained and practised not only is a higher class of applicant obtained for the service, but the nurses, in consequence of training and as a result of the teaching imparted to them, take a more enlightened interest in their duties, and the especial repugnance to these duties (a very real feeling in asylums) is more readily overcome, and a humane sympathy is quickened by the knowledge of how to relieve suffering, which helps to make a good nurse a better one, and which cannot but react to the advantage of the patients committed to her care.

There is no doubt in my mind that the oppor-

tunities for training with a view to higher rewards after leaving the asylum are an attraction to the best women, who are ready to enter upon a self-imposed education so as to qualify for future success either in private nursing or in filling up distinguished official posts. So universally acknowledged and appreciated are these opportunities that almost every public asylum in England, Scotland, and Ireland is also a special training school for obtaining certificates of proficiency in mental nursing.

There is also another aspect of training which deserves recognition—viz., that those who support our public and voluntarily aided hospitals and asylums are entitled to consideration, and that those of the nursing staff who serve within their walls should be of service to those who either willingly or by compulsion support these institutions. The patrons of asylums and hospitals are entitled to the best services of such staff when the need arises for their experience outside.

It is, therefore, incumbent upon those who serve in asylums to learn their business within the wards and to render themselves as efficient as possible in the work for which they draw their pay.

It is evident that this training tends to the diminution, if not to the prevention, of mental disease, by educating the public to the value of mental hygiene and by directing attention to the mental aspects of bodily illness. This training also tends to promote the public good by encouraging early and skilled treatment of the insane, for insanity is curable in the inverse ratio of its duration.

It is sometimes argued that the establishment of training schools for nurses in connection with our asylums tends to weaken the notion that the asylum exists primarily for the benefit of the patient. The fact that the asylum is also a school for the training of nurses who are desirous of obtaining higher advancement should convince those whose interests are those of the asylum only that the trained nurse is obviously better qualified to render service than the untrained, also that she is a more effective instrument in the asylum in which she is trained, and that her possible future success stimulates her to do in the best way what is expected of her, she herself being the better for having been taught.

The Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland seriously considered this matter, and in 1885 brought out a handbook for the guidance and instruction of nurses and attendants, of which a new edition has just appeared; and the writer of this paper has by gracious permission of her Royal Highness the

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