

this country led the van; the insane were nursed with a skill unsurpassed elsewhere.

He also remarked that the training received in asylums seasons women for the stress and strain of life, and many asylum nurses were well fitted to adorn a higher sphere. If the scions of nobility were to seek wives in circles other than their own he recommended them to choose nurses from the asylums where they were accustomed to deal with mental foibles and with that unreasonableness which he was informed was not unknown in husbands, in a way that would perhaps make them more useful helpmeets than Gaiety girls in all their glory.

SIR WILLIAM COLLINS, M.D., said that a good mental nurse should be a specialist and something more. Let the base of the speciality of mental nursing be broad, its foundation a training in general nursing, to which is added mental nursing in particular. Mental nurses should also be social reformers of the largest-hearted, broadest-minded kind. Pure altruism had come out of what originally was not altruism, the care of the insane had probably in the first instance a selfish origin, now those studying it were cultivating scientific knowledge, and associated with its development were the names of such great reformers as John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and Florence Nightingale.

The speaker said that he had had the priceless gift of the friendship of Miss Florence Nightingale. He had looked up the last letter he received from her, and found it contained these words, "It is the life-long desire of an old nurse that every good and perfect gift of head and heart and hand should be possessed by our nurses who need them all."

In these days, when so much was thought of physical culture, and attention so largely directed to the development of a good animal, the speaker considered there was some danger of placing physical training before moral education, and the education of the will. It had been laid down that "no one can be said to be truly educated who is not able to do what he ought to do, when he ought to do it, whether he wants to or not."

Sir William Collins suggested that in the past the powers of observation of asylum nurses and attendants had hardly been sufficiently utilised, as the powers of hospital nurses were utilised, in co-operation with those of the medical staff. There were certain reports and records which they could be taught to keep which would add to the interest and value of their work.

Mr. A. O. GOODRICH, J.P., Chairman of the Asylums Committee of the London County Council, who was the next speaker, said that he had expected to see attendants as well as nurses present, and explained that he spoke as a mere layman. He was deeply interested in nursing, and had been on the Committee at the Claybury Asylum for nine years.

Mental nurses had a great deal to put up with: abuse, bad language, rough handling, faulty habits, yet many of the nurses had very fine characters, and recently his Committee were very pleased to congratulate Nurse Wolsey, of Hanwell, who had been honoured by the King by the award

of the Albert Medal; they were gratified also that the first one so honoured was Attendant Dyer of Claybury Asylum.

The speaker urged the necessity for sympathy, gentleness, and tactfulness in asylum nurses. They should also make a point of gaining the confidence of their patients, for mental patients, like deaf people, were apt to be very suspicious. He agreed with Sir William Collins that England led the way in mental nursing, and the London County Council were always happy when foreign doctors came to investigate the system. Recently an application had been received at Claybury from a Swiss Asylum that some of its nurses might be received on the nursing staff in order that they might be acquainted with the methods employed before becoming Matrons in their own country.

DR. ROBERT JONES, Resident Physician and Superintendent of Claybury Asylum, said that the importance of the mental nursing question was evident, when it was realised that in the British Isles alone some 20,000 persons were engaged in the care of the mentally afflicted, of whom 10,000 were attendants and nurses in asylums. In Scotland there were some 1,445, and in Ireland over 2,000. The staff of all ranks in asylums might, therefore, be put at about 18,000, to which must be added some 2,000 nurses and attendants engaged in private nursing. Dr. Jones said that, having lived among the insane for 30 years, he knew how difficult the work of caring for them was. Sir William Collins, in his preface to a book on Mental Nursing by the speaker, had put qualities of mind before qualities of heart, and this he entirely endorsed. No matter how kind and tender and sympathetic a nurse might be, unless her perceptive faculties were quick, and she could grasp the reasons for changes of conduct, unless she could place herself in harmony with her patient, she could not be a good mental nurse. Character was also extremely important, and patients were entitled to the care of nurses of good character. It was often surmised that because patients were defective in their own habits they could not appreciate nicety in others, but this was a mistake.

No greater progress had taken place in any branch of nursing in the last century than in the care of the insane. It is recorded of George III. that in an attack of insanity he was knocked down by his attendant "as flat as a flounder." Patients at Bethlem were treated with "surprise baths" in which they were immersed to the point of drowning, and in the same institution the patients were on show on Sunday much as the animals at the Zoo; in one year £400 was received from sight-seers.

It was 100 years from the appointment of Pinel to the Bicêtre in Paris to the opening of Claybury, with its humane treatment, but one main reason in the alteration in the treatment of the insane was that the minds of people had been changed as to the cause of insanity. It was now regarded as a disease, not a doom, and we had a new conception of mental illness.

In the nursing of the insane the prevention of bedsores in bedridden patients was a matter requiring skill. To-day at Claybury there was not

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