

recovery, and special representations were made by the Board of (Lunacy) Control to the Committee sitting to consider the question of "reconstruction" that the legal treatment of the insane in this country might be considerably improved. The Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland, consisting of medical men who are entrusted with the care of the insane, also appointed a special committee to consider this matter and how to improve the care and treatment of mental disorders. This committee recommended the early care of mental cases in the ordinary general hospitals as well as the establishment in thickly populated urban districts of what they described as "psychiatric clinics" for early unconfirmed cases of mental and nervous disorder, such hospitals, for instance, as the Lady Chichester Hospital established at Brighton through the public spirit of Lady Chichester acting upon the advice and under the direction of Dr. Helen Boyle, and we have the potential "psychiatric clinics" in our splendid Poor Law Institutions throughout the country. The fact that many of the mental and nervous cases which have occurred among our soldiers have been those of wounded men, and that the breakdown of some was caused either by serious injuries to the head or that many of them suffered from debility brought on by malaria, dysentery, influenza, chronic wounds, or from tropical diseases of various kinds, point out the great need there is for mental nurses who are also fully trained hospital nurses so that the supervision and nursing care of those who have broken down in military employ should be in competent hands; more and more does it appear necessary that a mental nurse should also be a fully trained and properly equipped hospital nurse, accustomed to deal in a skilled way with all the conditions of bodily disorders.

It may be truly said that the war has given all thoughtful persons an immense impetus to secure adequate sick nursing for the mentally ill. There are very few women who have not shown ardour and patriotism in helping our sick and wounded soldiers during the war, and the wonderful support given to the Red Cross movement demonstrates how everyone not only sympathised with affliction but gave his or her practical help in the relief of sickness; but the evolution of the feeling of charity and pity for the sick and wounded soldier is not of recent date. It began as far back as the early days of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the time of the Crusades, although in those days it was more of a religious duty and a sentiment. In our days it is the practical appeal of sentiment to science. Every war from that of Cyrus to Napoleon has demonstrated the insufficiency of ordinary measures of relief in war-time, and in previous wars the wounded were often abandoned to the convents and to charitable persons. At the siege of Dantzic there were 1,600 wounded and 2,000 sick, yet not a single straw mattress was provided for them to lie upon, there were no basins to wash their wounds and no nurses to attend them. There was no linen, no food, and there were no candles

to light the hospitals by night and no preparations whatever are recorded for cases of mental illnesses. For five days the wounded never left their wagons, which served as beds as well as transport carts. At the taking of Spire in 1792 the wounded were delayed from 24 to 36 hours before removal, and the greater number of the sick and wounded perished, as certainly did the mental cases. After Waterloo, the wounded were conveyed to Antwerp in boats to the places appropriated for them along the Arsenal Quay, but everything for their care and comfort was wanting; there was no lint, linen, bandages, pillows, sheets, nor blankets. The complete absence of medical comforts was responsible for the dysentery, cholera, diarrhoea and other sickness that occurred in such numbers during the Crimean War, for at the battle of Alma the wounded men were left exposed for two whole days and nights on the battlefield. Even in the last great war carelessness in regard to the sick was in some instances barbarous, and the improvidence in regard to medical nursing was most culpable, as anyone may read who has seen the strictures passed upon those in authority in regard to the early campaign in Mesopotamia yet the medical and nursing care of the sick, taken on the whole, a glorious record throughout the war. Neglect of the sick in war has been previously described as the crime of high treason against humanity and it led a great military medical writer, Dr. Chenu, to state that if the honour and the defence of any State should require of every family—from the most noble to the most humble—the separation from and the sacrifice of a son, a brother or a father, as was the case with our own country in this war, such a sacrifice as is implied in conscription, must be only on the positive understanding that the State shall take the place of the absent family and shall assure to its defenders prompt and efficient assistance whenever this is required. The State must itself undertake those duties which the absent family would themselves at any cost have fulfilled to soothe pain, to save life, or to lessen the agony of any one of its members. As stated, we know that during the past war the medical services rendered to the sick and wounded soldier, as also to the nervous and mental sufferers, were, with the exceptions mentioned, of the most humane kind, and of the very best, and what we provided in war we desire in the name of humanity to secure for the civilian in peace times.

(To be concluded.)

#### HELP FOR OUR OWN POOR CHILDREN.

The Secretary of the R.B.N.A. will be glad to hear from nurses who will give a few hours on Flag Day, Tuesday, July 6th, to sell "Blue Birds" for the Waifs and Strays Society. Last year several were kind enough to do so with the result that a very substantial sum was sent from the office to Prebendary Carlile for this most deserving charity.

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