

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER FROM MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Recently there came into our hands a letter, hitherto unpublished, by Miss Florence Nightingale, and as everything she wrote is of interest to the Nursing Profession, and the letter concerns the training of mental nurses, which, just now, is under discussion, we obtained leave to publish it. It was addressed by Miss Nightingale to the late Rev. Henry Hawkins, for many years the devoted chaplain of Colney Hatch Asylum, and the founder of the After-Care Association, which does such good work for patients discharged as convalescent from Asylums, in answer to one inviting her interest in this most pathetic class of the community.

THE TRAINING OF LADIES IN ASYLUM WORK.

Miss Nightingale wrote in a letter dated London, June 2nd, 1879:—

My Dear Sir,

I wish I could help you, with regard to what you wrote to me about on May 10th, viz., finding a lady "to organise a plan for the after-care of poor and friendless female convalescents."

But alas! overwhelmed with business and illness, I am almost the last person to help you as I would.

God speed your meeting on July 5th.

I am, on the other hand, going to ask you for help. I am frequently written to to know if there are *trained* Lady Matrons and Lady Nurses to be had to attend on and superintend the nursing of Female Lunatics. Latterly I have had two letters from the Chaplain of Robben Island, South Africa, asking for such.

Have you *trained* Ladies and *trained* Nurses for your Asylum Work at Colney Hatch?

Could you recommend such? And above all, have you a *Training School* for Nurses for Lunatics?

Or do you know of one?

When I speak of a Training School, I mean a Training School such as we have for Hospital Nurses and Matrons now at St. Thomas's Hospital, and at several other large hospitals, where the Probationers go through at least a *year of systematic training* in the Hospital Wards, with an organised system of superintendence; where their work is tested, and where they live, under discipline, in a Home adjoining.

All this I should fancy (but I ask one of the greatest experience and devotion in yourself)

was even more necessary for Lunatics than for Hospital Patients.

How I wish that I had time and strength as I have inclination to carry out such work.

But I have far too large a circle of duties already, and I am a prisoner from illness to my room.

I leave out entirely the question of Asylum Nurses being trained *out of*, not *in*, the Asylum, nor about the Patients for their duties, which seems yet more utterly impossible than for Hospitals and Hospital Patients.

In Germany there are Training Schools for Asylum Nurses, and Lady Attendants *in Lunatic Asylums*.

A lady, half German and half English, whose sister died as Lady Assistant in such an Asylum, is likely to come to live in England and might be interested in this work.

Now that *Hospital Nursing* is so largely carried on by ladies, I hope that you will be able to tell me that you have found many *ladies* for your Asylum Attendance, and have trained them in your Wards.

You have, I assure you, my best wishes that you should succeed in all your works.

Would I could give you more than good wishes!

God bless your work!

If the Chaplain of Robben Island should come to England, might I place him in communication with you?

Under severe stress of overwork and illness, but Pray believe me,

My dear Sir,

Ever your faithful servant,

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

The Rev. Henry Hawkins, &c. &c.

The paper of the letter is discoloured with age, but the beautiful, flowing writing is as clear as the day it was penned. We have to thank Miss Henrietta Hawkins, P.L.G., well-known to readers of this journal, for the opportunity of bringing this letter to their notice.

THE TRAINED NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF INDIA.

We regret to note in the *Nursing Journal of India* that Miss Bonser, the Hon. Secretary of the Trained Nurses' Association, has had two attacks of influenza and has been obliged to leave Bombay and to resign the Secretaryship of the T.N.A.

Miss Rawson, the very competent Secretary of 1920, has consented to resume this office, and members are asked to communicate with her at Palwal, S. Punjab.

The Trained Nurses' Association of India is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses.

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