

tion and the cure of mental diseases—for a large percentage of mental disease is preventable and much of it is curable. Despite the statement just made, the rate per 100,000 of general population receiving care has increased from 118.2 in 1890 to 220.1 in 1920. In other words, we had approximately 250,000 patients in hospitals for mental diseases in 1920, a number requiring almost as many hospital beds as all our other classes of patients put together, and yet many registered nurses have never so much as set foot in any of these hospitals.

Dr. Stearns, in his article, "Mental Hygiene for Nurses," says that three of the known causes of insanity—alcohol, syphilis, and heredity—are preventable. It is a statement that nurses may well ponder. Have we yet even recognised our obligation to aid in the campaign of prevention? We know well that we have done little toward curing the thousands who go into these great hospitals year by year. It is estimated that the economic loss to this country due to mental disease is \$200,000,000 annually, but who can estimate the cost in separation, in heartaches, in utter misery to those afflicted and their families? A large percentage of mental disease is preventable and much of it is curable. As nurses, what are we to do about it? Shall the vast majority of us continue to ignore this great obligation and opportunity for constructive service, or shall we endeavour to secure for those now in our schools the knowledge and the training necessary to develop the skill (and it requires exquisite skill and an alert mind) for dealing with the "mind diseased"?

The few graduates who have been so fortunate as to have had a good course in psychiatric nursing included in their training consider the knowledge thus gained one of their greatest assets in caring for all manner of patients. Few indeed are the illnesses that are not accompanied by some degree of depression or other abnormal mental state. It has been said with witty intent, but it is none the less true, that "the mental patient is just like the rest of us, only more so." How then can we continue to ignore their plight?

Pinel heroically struck the chains from the bodies of the insane. Even greater is the contribution to the happiness of the world of those whose teachings avert the forging of the shackles of mental disease or strike off those already formed. If we steadily keep in mind the hopeful message that a large percentage of mental disease is preventable and much of it is curable, we cannot fail to accept the challenge to take a worthy part in this crusade.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The following letter has been received by the President from Miss Christina Forrest, the retiring Hon. Treasurer of the National Council:—

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,—I want to thank you and the members of the National Council very much for your kind reception of my resignation of the Hon. Treasurership. I have been so proud to hold it. I only wished there had been more I could have done—it is one of the things I have been grieving to give up for it takes one out of immediate touch with those who have been my colleagues, and with the cause which has been such a keen interest for over 30 years, and at times given one such keen anxiety, but with this finishing touch of having Qualifying Certificates entered on the published Register, one does indeed feel that all's well, and will you allow me to congratulate you, the leader of what at one time looked like a forlorn hope and now a splendid and victorious cause.

Please tell Miss Breay that I am so glad she is to be my successor.

Very sincerely yours,

CHRISTINA FORREST.

The regrets of Miss Forrest on her resignation of office are not more poignant than those of her colleagues of 30 years' standing in parting with her services. Where are such splendid, self-sacrificing women for the real uplifting of the profession to be found to-day—and we need them now as urgently as we ever did? Let us be very thankful for the generous and steadfast support of right in the past by women like Christina Forrest. Their works do follow them.

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

The Annual Meeting of the Matrons' Council will be held, by the kind permission of the Board of Management, and the Matron, Miss Kathleen Smith, at the Temperance Hospital, Hampstead Road, N.W., on February 25th, at 3 p.m., at which hour there will be a visit to the wards.

After the Business Meeting there will be tea at 4.15, and later Miss Ellen La Motte, R.N., author of "The Tuberculosis Nurse" and other interesting books, will give a short address on "The Illicit Traffic in Opium and Her Experiences of its Results in America."

Miss Ellen La Motte is a highly travelled American Nurse with brilliant literary gifts.

The Annual Meeting of the Central Council for District Nursing in London is being held in the Board Room, Metropolitan Asylums Board, Victoria Embankment, on Thursday, February 23rd. Miss Irene Hett is resigning the position of Joint Hon. Secretary, and the Executive Committee propose that Miss Isabel Richardson, formerly Matron of the London Temperance Hospital, be appointed as Secretary and Visitor for the Council.

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