

THE MENTAL HOSPITAL MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

The formation of the Mental Hospital Matrons' Association is timely, and we foresee a future before it of the utmost usefulness, both for the improvement of mental nursing in the care of border cases and persons mentally afflicted—pitiably beyond all other cases of sickness—and also for the encouragement of nurses devoting themselves to this very important branch of nursing.

So far neither the Matrons nor the nurses in Mental Hospitals have associated themselves together for purely professional purposes, and we heartily welcome the new organisation, and wish it the success it deserves.

Miss Macauley, O.B.E., R.R.C., the well-known Matron of the Kent County Mental Hospital, Maidstone, has been elected Chairman and Hon. Secretary, and Miss Hearder, Matron, Bethlem Royal Mental Hospital, London, S.E., Hon. Treasurer.

The second meeting of the Association is to be held at the Kent County Mental Hospital on Saturday, September 29th, at 2.30 p.m., by the kind permission of Dr. Wolseley Lewis, the Medical Superintendent, and the Matron.

Subjects for Discussion on the Agenda include (a) the Syllabus of the Medico-Psychological Association as compared with the Syllabus of Training for Mental Nurses as laid down by the General Nursing Council (subjects for the Preliminary Examination to be held in July, 1924); (b) to discuss, select and propose a Matron as examiner in Practical Nursing for the forthcoming General Nursing Council Examination.

Miss Macauley extends a kind invitation to tea to all those able to be present. The train leaves Holborn at 12.33, St. Paul's at 12.36, and arrives at Maidstone East at 2.9.

We commend to the attention of the members of the Association the remarks and criticism made by Dr. Bedford Pierce on the Standard of Examination laid down by the G.N.C. in comparison with that now in force by the Medico-Psychological Association, at the recent meeting of the Council, and reported on page 202 of this week's issue.

Mental Nurses owe a great debt of gratitude to the M.P.A., and we hope the rising standard of teaching and examination instituted and carried out by it will not be permitted to be depreciated by the ignorance of the majority of the G.N.C. Here is work to hand for the Mental Hospital Matrons' Association.

LEGAL MATTERS,

A NURSE'S DISMISSAL JUSTIFIED.

At the Gloucester County Court, before His Honour Judge Alan Macpherson, Nurse-Attendant Dorothy Lilian Rose, of 50, Vauxhall Road, Gloucester, sued Mr. Edgar B. Key, Clerk to the Committee of Visitors of the Gloucester County Mental Hospitals, for £8 17s.—a month's wages in lieu of notice.

Mr. C. Taynton, for the plaintiff, said she was engaged at the Second County Mental Hospital, and, when engaged, Dr. Marmon, Medical Superintendent, informed her she would have a whole day and three half-days off duty each week. One day when she was due to go off duty the doctor complained that the heads of the patients were dirty, and the Matron said that none of the nurses were to leave the ward until the heads were clean. The plaintiff considered the order unjustifiable and that she was entitled to her half-day off.

The plaintiff giving evidence, said that the nursing staff was so short-handed it was impossible to keep the patients' heads clean. It would have taken a fortnight to get all of them quite clean. When the order was issued she went to the Charge Nurse, who told her she could not go out, and she said she should. The Charge Nurse then said that she could do as she liked, and that she herself intended to go out on her own half-day. She admitted that she was told by the Matron, Miss Walker, that she could not go, and that she informed the Matron she should do so.

The Matron confirmed this, and said that the patients' heads were dirty owing to the nurses' neglect. She told the plaintiff she could go out after six o'clock.

Dr. Marmon, Medical Superintendent, said he told the plaintiff he considered her conduct a flat refusal to do her duty, and she must be paid off.

The Judge intimated he did not want to hear more evidence for the defence. He was satisfied there had been a gross breach of discipline justifying dismissal.

The plaintiff's solicitor submitted that an employer was not entitled to prevent an employee having a half-day off because he was not satisfied with his work. The proper course was to get rid of an incompetent person by giving the proper notice.

The Judge agreed the point was important and said he would hear the rest of the evidence. Having done so he found the dismissal justified and gave judgment for the defendant, with costs.

We wonder that the nurse was not ashamed to go into the witness box, to admit that she had allowed her patients to get into such a disgusting condition; that she was so selfish that she was unwilling to give up a few hours of her more than ample off-duty time, to rectify this neglect, and so callous that she had no thought for the discomfort of the patients under her care.

We say nothing about the breach of discipline—a serious matter enough—but secondary in importance to the gross neglect of the patients.

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