

Friday afternoon was given up to the President, Dr. White's reception at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, which is one of the largest mental hospitals in the United States. The patients are grouped in different houses according to the variety of mental illness from which they suffer, or its severity. One house is kept for those patients who are nearly ready for their discharge or for very light cases. Here the patients have parole freedom of the really very beautiful and extensive grounds. The rooms are charmingly furnished with gay rugs and basket chairs, the curtains are designed and hand-woven in the occupational therapy department, a piano is there too, that anyone may use who wishes to do so. In another building there is a large library, well-stocked with books of all sorts, magazines and monthly periodicals, for the use of patients who are well enough to enjoy reading.

The Occupational Therapy Department is considered a great success. It seems to consist mainly of a carpenter's shop and a hand-weaving section. In the former, furniture and all the equipment and apparatus used in the workshops are made, and in the latter, curtains are made for hospital use, as well as plain towels and kitchen cloths, while rugs, hangings and beautiful hand-woven materials of all kinds are made for sale and order. It has been found a most successful method of therapy for many types of mental disturbance, and at the same time offers to the student of psychology an interesting study of the influence that handwork and giving an outlet to the creative impulse can offer to the personality.

Once more in the organisation of the great hospital we were reminded of a phrase that appeared in one of the speeches at the opening banquet, that *the test of any public service is that people who need its help can find it*. What, indeed can be a better criterion for the value of the Nursing Service. The message that this Congress has given to the Nurses of the world is that they need training in psychology, so that they may more adequately bear their share of the important responsibility of these serious cases; and of passing on light or early cases for examination and diagnoses, so that by treatment they can be easily and also receive help themselves to carry the burden without undue strain to themselves, which will never be accomplished by the study of old formal or academic psychology. In this way the American training schools show the progressive spirit of being able and willing to accept psycho-analytic discovery.

DISCUSSION OF PAPER BY EDWARD A. STRECKER, M.D. (United States), ON THE TEACHING OF PSYCHIATRY IN MEDICAL, NURSING, SOCIAL WORK AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS.

By Miss Mary Chadwick.

As a Representative of the British Nursing Service, I wish to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Strecker for what he has said about the important question of giving an adequate training to the Nurse, to fit her for the responsible work she has to carry out.

It seems to be of the utmost importance to pay attention to this subject for the following reasons:—

The Nurse, whether working in a General or Psychiatric Hospital, engaged in private practice, as a Visiting or School Nurse, or any other branch of the Nursing Service, is an *integral part* of the treatment of the patient.

The Patient may see the Psychiatric Specialist once or twice, maybe, the Resident Medical Officer daily, or at stated intervals, but the Nurse is always there. In private practice, especially in the case of patients suffering from neuroses or psycho-neuroses, she may be sent away to carry through a Rest Cure, and often is responsible for that patient for the whole twenty-four hours, without inter-

mission, which is necessarily a great strain upon her, both physically and mentally or nervously.

We may say, therefore, that she is prescribed as a special form of treatment, which is actually carried out by her presence, through her *personality* and her attitude to the condition of her patient. This also makes a heavy demand upon the psychological make-up of the nurse, for reasons which I should like to describe in as much detail as is compatible with the brevity the allotted ten minutes this contribution demands.

The first reason I should like to bring forward for giving really adequate psychological training to the nurse, is for her *own help*, which I consider just as needful as that which allows her to regard her patients with wider understanding, even if not more.

When she first enters her training school, often as a girl just from home, she meets a seamy side of life, which may be new to her, and the symptoms of her patients are likely to disturb her own psychology, leading to shock, which often passes on to a greater or less degree of nervous disturbance.

She requires help therefore to understand her own reactions to Hospital Life, to Authorities, Nursing and Medical Staff, to her patients, and those of her patients to herself.

Endless difficulties, which arise within the scope of inter-hospital relationships, will doubtlessly occur to us from our own hospital experience.

There is also another reason why she needs psychological training from a different point of view, in order to understand her patients and herself, which is not often taken into account.

Psycho-analysis has taught us that our attitude to life, to the people around us, and our choice of our profession, arise from our Unconscious Mind, our complexes, the fate of our infantile impulses, and repression. Without some knowledge of these, we are blind to the causes of our difficulties, and many of those which seem to emanate from our patients.

When she has learned to understand herself, she is going to find nursing the sick, and especially those who suffer from nervous or mental diseases a new world to her.

How may she acquire this? From some knowledge of the information, by which psycho-analysis has illumined the subject of neurotic conditions which occur by themselves or in alliance with other forms of disease; by suitable lectures from a nurse, trained in this way herself, who therefore knows the problems which present particular difficulty to the rest of the profession, and the reading of suitable books.

Then she is ready to learn about the mental or psychological difficulties of her patients.

After that is accomplished she will find that she gains the necessary understanding of her patients:—

1. Through understanding her own psychological mechanisms.

2. By means of particularly adapted lectures upon her own psychology and that of her patients.

3. By reading specially selected books of psychology and psychiatry to extend her knowledge.

4. Finally by means of her daily work and the constant study of herself and her patients.

Another most important matter to take into consideration to occupy our attention is the choice of suitable persons for the work; and so that those who have the responsibility of this choice in their hands, they also should be equipped with psychological knowledge, which will give them some clue, from talking to candidates for training, what are the motives for their adoption of this profession and their fitness for the work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)