

when we reflect upon the vast, the fundamental change which cannot but be evident upon the most casual survey of the whole conception and treatment of insanity, beneficent in intention, and increasingly successful in results, we cannot but take credit for our predecessors and for those who yet live to labour.

We venerate the memory of Lord Shaftesbury, leader of men in the long and stubborn campaign against ignorance and prejudice, the intimate history of which is in danger of oblivion. When that true statesman last came among us, then as ever a friend and counsellor, he contrasted the state of lunacy in 1881 as compared with 1828. He called to mind the utter and complete ignorance of the earlier times, when the lunatic was looked upon as beyond cure and care, and said "When I see and know that there is an Association formed like this, and that medical men are devoting their attention so much, *and more than ever*, to the subject, I think there are very great hopes indeed for the future." These are weighty words, uttered in the evening of life, by one who was emphatically a man of the age. It is for us to verify these hopes, to fulfil these high expectations.

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*Certificated Attendants and the Royal British Nursing Association.*

The number of attendants possessing the Certificate of our Association has now reached two thousand five hundred, there is every probability that this number will be very largely added to as time passes, and the status conferred by the certificate in relation to Asylum Committees is already assured, as evidenced by the increased pay and other advantages given to its possessors in many institutions.

The relation of these certificated attendants to the public, however, remains yet to be established, and the importance of the first steps in this practically new relationship cannot be too strongly insisted on or too carefully weighed by the members of our Association. Dr. Outterson Wood's paper on this matter, in which he has taken so active an interest, (published in this issue of the Journal), draws attention very opportunely to this question.

The mental nurse in private practice has not hitherto, as a rule, possessed such training as the certificated nurses now have, and as a result much mental nursing has been done by the hospital trained nurses. The latter have, therefore, a

distinct interest in retaining as long as possible their share in a lucrative branch of nursing. The vituperation consequent on Dr. Wood's proposal that the certificated asylum attendant should be eligible to be placed on a separate register of the Royal British Nurses' Association, may not therefore have been altogether dependent on the want of information so freely manifested.

The correspondence, in various medical papers resulting from this attack, has, however, fairly conclusively shown that the certificated attendant has passed an examination considerably in advance of anything demanded from the certificated hospital nurse, and is therefore in as good if not a better position for seeking the confidence of the public in this special line of work.

Certificated mental nurses in private practice, unattached to asylums, will need some combination which can assure the public not only of their technical qualifications, but of their moral character. The question the Medico-Psychological Association has to consider is whether this can be supplied by its own organisation or by adopting the proposed alliance with the R.B.N.A., or by other means.

The small number of private mental nurses would render an independent organisation difficult, and an organisation in connection with our own body would not be easy to establish, if indeed within the scope of our work; so that an alliance with some other body would seem to be almost necessary.

If such association be made, as for example with the R.B.N.A., we must insist that no inferior or second rate position be accorded to the bearers of our certificate. These are worthy, even now, to rank with the certificated nurse, and the standard both of instruction and examination is rising much more rapidly with the former than with the latter.

Certificated attendants, therefore, need no patronage or condescension, and the Association, so far as it acts for them, should insist on the fullest recognition of the high standard of moral character and of special instruction necessary to obtain their qualification.

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#### *Nursing in Belgian Asylums.*

This question of nursing is not insular; it is debated at home and abroad. It is an outstanding fact of the age—symptomatic indeed. While the modern training of asylum nurses has been in active development in this country and in