

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## ASYLUM NURSES AND HOSPITAL TRAINING.

FROM DR. YELLOWLEES.

I wish to protest against a practice which is becoming too common. When a vacancy is advertised in the higher ranks of asylum service, it is frequently stipulated that the applicant must be a hospital trained, certificated nurse.

It surprises me greatly that any asylum superintendent can approve of such a limitation; for it utterly disparages the training prescribed by our Association and the certificate it grants, while it greatly discourages and disappoints every asylum official who is striving to excel.

What can have suggested such a condition? Four-fifths at least of our asylum patients are in excellent general health and need no medical "nursing." The remainder, whose insanity involves much disorder of bodily health—the epileptics and paralytics, the cases of senility, or of gross brain disease—are far better nursed by an asylum nurse, who is familiar with the work and with the allied mental states, than by any hospital nurse. Our asylum training is sufficient, under the resident doctor's guidance, for any medical case, and the rare event of any serious surgical operation can easily be met by obtaining, if necessary, a special nurse.

Is our certificate of so little value that it is ignored even by our own members? Possibly the certificate, when first instituted, was granted to some whose experience had been far too limited; possibly the examination may have been in certain cases deficient in scope and strictness. These defects, if they existed, have been remedied; but most assuredly similar faults could be alleged against many hospital certificates, though these are now deemed essential.

Is it, then, that hospital training is so vastly superior to asylum training? A hospital trained nurse who has learned to carry out carefully and intelligently the doctor's instructions, to record accurately the patient's symptoms, and to minister kindly, patiently, and cheerfully to the patient's wants, is, of course, invaluable and worthy of all due consideration and esteem. But an asylum trained nurse must learn to do all this and much more. She has to deal, in addition, with all the vagaries of talk and conduct developed by a disordered mind, to calm the restless, to guide the perverse, to rouse the apathetic, to comfort the desponding, and to continually be on watch against dangerous impulses or suicidal attempts. Thus she must be constantly alert and observant, must exercise unfailing self-control, and must frequently and without hesitation act on her own judgment and responsibility in dealing with critical emergencies.

Of course proficiency in any kind of nursing must largely depend on the individual nurse, but surely no one can question which of these has the highest, the more difficult, and the more important duty.

The hospital wards of a good asylum afford ample opportunity for learning the bodily nursing of the insane, as well as their mental nursing; and to make ordinary hospital training indispensable for promotion in asylum service is, in my opinion, quite unjustifiable, and an unworthy slight on the staffs of our asylums.

## THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHICAL INSTITUTE.

FROM MR. O. MURRAY.

Permit me to point out that the paragraphs which appeared in the *JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE* for October, dealing with the foundation of the International Psychical Institute in Paris, require supplementing by further information to prevent misconception. The objects of this Society are stated in the programme drawn up by Dr. Pierre Janet to be as follows:

1. To collect in a library and museum all books, works, publications, apparatus, etc., relating to psychical science.
2. To place at the disposal of researchers, either as gifts or as loans, according to circumstances, such books and instruments necessary for their studies as the Institute may be able to acquire.
3. To supply assistance to any laboratory or to any investigators, working singly or unitedly, who can show that they require that assistance for a publication

or for a research of recognised interest. This function, which has been fulfilled so usefully by the Société pour l'Avancement des Sciences in relation to the physical sciences, must also be discharged by the new Institute in relation to mental science.

4. To encourage study and research with regard to such phenomena as may be considered of sufficient importance.

5. To organise lectures and courses of instruction upon the different branches of psychical science.

6. To organise, as far as means will allow, permanent laboratories, and a clinic where such researches as may be considered desirable will be pursued by certain of the members.

7. To publish the *Annales de l'Institut Psychique International de Paris*, which will comprise a summary of the work in which members of the Institute have taken part, and which may be of a character to contribute to the progress of the science.

This sketch of the aims of the organisation is but an outline, and will be subject to modification.

This programme was discussed at the Third Meeting of the Paris Congress of Psychology last August.

An account of the discussion is given in the *Journal of the International Psychical Institute*, which may be obtained at the offices of the Society, 28, Rue Serpente, Paris. The advisability of altering the title of the Institute from Psychical to Psychological was considered.

It is felt that the organisation has unavoidably been too purely French, and it is desired that psychologists of other countries should contribute their views with regard to the aims to be pursued in such an institute, and the methods to be followed.

The Committee will be glad to receive contributions on that question.

The first work undertaken by the Institute is the organisation of a course of lectures, in which various aspects of Psychology will be dealt with by Professor Duclaux, of the Pasteur Institute; Professeur Richet, Professor van Gehuchten, Doctor Vogt, Professor Boirac, Professor Tarde, Professor P. Geddes and others.

It has been proposed to organise an English branch, and Dr. Edridge-Green has consented to act as Secretary.

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#### OBITUARY.

##### PROFESSOR LANGE.

We regret to record the death of Professor Lange, of Copenhagen, on the 29th May last. Professor Lange's last work was reviewed at considerable length in this JOURNAL by Dr. Friis in the number for last January.

##### PROFESSOR KORSAKOFF.

By the death of Professor Korsakoff, at the early age of 46, our specialty has been deprived of one of its best and ablest members. He occupied the Chair of Clinical Psychiatry in the University of Moscow, and was the author of many contributions to the scientific literature of insanity. An appreciation of Dr. Korsakoff appeared in the JOURNAL for January, 1898, at the time of the Congress in Moscow, and his latest work on the pathological anatomy of idiocy was presented to the Congress in Paris in August last. We record his untimely death with great regret.

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#### NOTICES BY THE REGISTRAR.

##### *Examination for the Nursing Certificate.*

Fifty-seven candidates applied for admission to the November Examination for this certificate. Of this number 45 were successful, 11 failed to satisfy the examiners, and 1 withdrew. The following is a list of the successful candidates: