

superficial and unconvincing, the essay as a whole is an interesting example of the French school of psychology. Perhaps its chief interest and value lie in the emphasis which is laid upon the important relation between sleep and the will. This aspect of the psychology of sleep is of considerable clinical importance, and it deserves full recognition and study. The want of sleep in neurasthenic and psychasthenic patients, a symptom often so prominent, is often no more than a want of confidence, a lack of will-power in respect to sleep. It is one expression of a general inability to perform acts under the control of the will. For this chapter alone, as well as the general discussion upon automatism and volition, the book well repays attention.

H. DEVINE.

The Ideal Nurse. By CHARLES A. MERCIER, M.D., F.R.C.P
F.R.C.S., etc.

Although delivered some eight years ago in the form of an address to the nursing staff of the Retreat at York, this little *brochure* belongs to that class of publications which time cannot wither nor custom stale. Embodying, as it does, an ideal to reach which should be the aim of all those who have adopted as their *rôle* in life the nursing of the insane, it at the same time gives practical instruction and guidance as to how this object is to be attained. Nor is its use intended to be limited to those only who are engaged in asylum nursing. It contains matter which cannot fail to attract the attention of all those who follow any branch of the nursing profession, and to afford help, teaching, and encouragement to them in their daily work.

Some people have hands and no brains. Others have brains and no hands. The fortunate ones have both. Perhaps in no case is this more obvious than in that of the operating surgeon, whose success will be proportionate to his possession of these two essential attributes. But Dr. Mercier holds, and rightly holds, that the same is true as regards the nursing avocation. The ideally endowed nurse is one who has both keenness and agility of brain, and skill and dexterity in the use of her hands. The first depends largely on heritage; one must be born with it, and those who have it not are in nowise deserving of blame. The last can be acquired; and even persons who are naturally slow and plodding in their mental operations by sheer hard work and untiring perseverance can eventually become really efficient nurses. In this connection Dr. Mercier puts in striking contrast cleverness and capability. "A person who is not clever may make a first-rate nurse; but a nurse, however brilliantly clever, who is not capable is worthless. . . . If you are not born clever, no amount of pains and study will make you so; but anyone may become capable by taking pains." Sympathy is another prime essential. Someone has said that success in the medical profession depends on one part knowledge, and three parts sympathy. The same, no doubt, is true in the case of the nursing profession. This consideration leads not unnaturally up to what is practically a lay-sermon with 1 Cor. xiii as its text, St. Paul's well-known eulogy on Charity, which occupies almost the whole of the latter half of the address, and is full of practical suggestions as to how

to carry out in one's life and work the principles enunciated by the great apostle. It might well be designated the philosophy of loving-kindness, a term which the preacher prefers to the Biblical word Charity.

Some of Dr. Mercier's observations come almost under the category of aphorisms, such as: The only way to learn how to do a thing is to do it.—The intelligent worker is he or she who knows when it is proper and necessary to break a rule. Rules are necessary because workers are stupid.—Never, under any circumstances, attempt to coax a patient by a lie.—Rejoinder and retaliation is a confession of defeat.—I have spent a lifetime amongst the insane, and the most salient result of my experience is that I never despair of a patient's recovery.

We can confidently recommend this little book—unique of its kind—not merely to attendants and nurses, but to every one who is engaged in the treatment of the insane. It might, with great advantage to both nurse and patient, be carried in the pocket, and referred to with the same regularity and constancy as that with which a priest peruses his breviary. The principles there laid down should be known by heart, and thoroughly assimilated, and every effort made to carry them out in practice. The keynote of the address is encouragement, its motto "Sursum corda," and we cannot conclude this notice more appropriately than by quoting the inspiring words which occur just at its close: "When you watch the subsidence of excitement, the removal of depression, the dispersion of suspicion, the gradual return to sanity; when you open the gates and say farewell, and bid God-speed to a patient whom you have nursed through the valley of the shadow of death, and raised out of the mire of tribulation; when you send him home clothed and in his right mind, and think of the load of misery you have been instrumental in removing from him and from his family; you taste a joy as refined and as pure as that of the angels of heaven over the sinner that repenteth."

The Third Annual Report of the Board of Control for the year 1916.

The third report of the Board, ordered to be printed on October 17th, 1917, is very much abbreviated as compared with the first. In Appendix A there are only nine tables instead of twenty-four, and in Appendix B only five instead of fourteen.

This economy of printing is no doubt justified by the state of war, but it could be wished that similar care had been exercised in matter in which the saving, instead of amounting to a few score pounds, would have amounted to so many thousands. The want of these tables reduces the report to a stereotyped repetition of the baldest facts and renders any attempt at criticism or interpretation almost impossible.

The decrease in the number of the notified insane is again a striking and interesting phenomenon, opening the door to much speculation in regard to the influences producing this result.

The actual decrease for the year 1916 was 3,159, the total 134,029 on January 1st, 1917, being less by that number than at the commencement of the year under review. The number on January 1st, 1915 (the highest recorded) was 140,466, and if the average annual increase