

them, but this report suggests a desire to see a really vigorous and determined attempt at imitation on this side of the border.

In the millennium, when the English Lunacy Commission is strengthened in its medical element, this may, perhaps, be again attempted; at present it is obviously impossible for the three medical commissioners to add to their present work the inspection of a few thousand additional homes.

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*Hospital and Asylum Training of Mental Nurses.*

Discussion has recently arisen in regard to the introduction of hospital-trained nurses into asylums, and the experiment has even been tried of placing them in charge of wards without having had previous experience of the insane. With careful selection and enthusiastic co-operation, this has even worked satisfactorily.

Extraordinary conditions must be carefully excluded in dealing with large ordinary affairs. The question is really whether the ordinary hospital nurse is as good for asylum work as the nurse trained in the asylum. To this question we believe that the majority of medical superintendents would give an emphatic negative.

Attendance on the insane, at its best, demands a much higher quality of intellect and of personal character than is ever required by hospital nursing, and the extent of experience is of much greater value and importance.

The asylum nurse has to deal with the disordered working of the most complex function of life; the hospital nurse is principally concerned with material details of a routine character.

Self-control, alertness, sympathy, patience, cheerfulness, sense of justice, keenness of observation, discrimination, firmness, courage, promptness, initiative, are only a few of the characteristics demanded of a mental nurse; the majority of these qualities may be absent from the hospital nurse without detracting from the efficient performance of her duties.

Whatever may be the actual average of individual education and capability of the two classes at the present time, there can be no doubt that the asylum nurse has scope for a much higher ideal, even if it is rarely attained.

The public and even the profession need to appreciate that although some cases with slight mental symptoms (which are merely epiphenomena) may recover under unskilled nursing, such care may often do infinite harm when there is serious disorder. Many epiphenomenal cases, from want of proper discrimination, are unnecessarily removed from home, and by their recovery encourage the belief that skilled nursing is not needed in mental disorder.

There have been, and no doubt still are, many indifferent mental nurses, but there is a wide gulf between the hospital and the efficient mental nurse.

The high personal qualities demanded of asylum nurses, which are too frequently passed over as a matter of course, cannot be too forcibly and publicly insisted on, both to overcome the prejudice that survives from a time when asylum keepers were untrained and uneducated, and to draw to the service people of a higher grade.

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*Lunacy Prophecy.*

A contemporary reports a Detroit "doctor and scientist," "after a careful investigation of existing conditions," as asserting that "260 years hence everyone in the United States will be insane." The population by that time will amount to a few hundred millions, so that this prophecy affords an opening for much speculation. Imagination paints the General Paralytic Progressive Party contesting with the chronically Hallucinated Conservative faction.

Religion would certainly be the province of an epileptic priesthood, with many melancholic devotees.

Paranoia would add interest to philosophy, while confusional cases would probably revel in metaphysics.

Literature and science would be the province of the idiot *savants*, whilst the labour of the community would no doubt fall to the dements.

Similar predictions were no doubt made some fifty years ago in regard to criminality, but fortunately they are not being fulfilled. Eternal hope suggests that perhaps lunacy may not continue to progress by leaps and bounds, and that three centuries hence America may not be more mad than England at the time of Hamlet.