

D. H. J. Tizard entered the service as Assistant Medical Officer at Seacliff. He previously served in the same capacity for about eight years at the London County Council Asylum of Colney Hatch.

Mr. F. Newman's resignation, after nearly twenty years of exceptional service as plumber at Seacliff, is noted in the February report on that Hospital.

THE STAFF.

The average length of service of the members of the mental hospital staffs is as follows:—

	Number in Service.	Average Number of Years' Service.
Head attendants	8	15½
Matrons	7	8½
Artisans, farm-managers, &c.	33	7
Charge attendants	44	9½
Charge nurses	31	6
Attendants (including probationers)	107	3
Nurses (including probationers)	156	2½

N.B.—Forty-four attendants and sixty-nine nurses have not completed one year's service.

The care of the insane requires on the part of the attendant or nurse good health and peculiar qualities of head and heart. Naturally a number of probationers fall short of requirements, and others, who are able to pass muster for three months and get on the staff, are found unsuitable thereafter. The period of probation should be twelve months. During unexampled prosperity one must look for changes in the junior male staff and the marriage of nurses. The paramount necessity for discipline is recognised by all the older hands. Experience has taught them that anything which tends to destroy discipline in an institution lowers the standard of comfort of the patients, for whose care and comfort alone the institution has being. The complete freedom enjoyed by ordinary workmen no doubt has its attractions, and especially potent with many is residence in the heart of a town, and doubtless many juniors succumb to these temptations, forgetting that their work is easier in proportion to the humanitarian and intellectual interest they take in it—the measure of their fitness—that their longer hours are not hours of hard work, and are compensated by long holidays; that, their wants being supplied, they have the opportunity of having a respectable deposit in the savings-bank which the ordinary labourer, unless an exceptionally thrifty man, has not. The question of salary will be dealt with more properly when reviewing the changes of the two last decades.

REGISTRATION OF MENTAL NURSES.

As promised when the revised regulations were issued in 1904, an examination will be held at the end of the present year for members of the staff who have been in attendance on the insane in our mental hospitals for three years and over, and have gone through a course of training. Hereafter a similar examination will be held at the end of each year.

The candidates are expected to have a knowledge of their work up to the standard of the handbook issued by the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland, but they understand that mere memorising will not avail them much either at the written or oral examination. Those candidates who have cultivated powers of observation, who are resourceful, who answer correctly and promptly how they would act in specified emergencies will naturally be the ones who will find their names on the register.

I hope to have the co-operation of the Department of Hospitals and its good offices in enlisting the sympathy of hospital authorities for a scheme by which certain selected nurses from our register may get two years' training in a general hospital, be allowed thereafter to enter for the final State examination for general hospital nurses, and be registered in ordinary course, save that their certificates would be distinctive, being indorsed with facts as to training.

It can hardly be contended that a number of years in a mental hospital, and an examination test are not equivalent to a single year at a general hospital. Should the scheme commend itself to Hospital Boards and Trustees we should soon have a number of nurses in the service from whom to draw our future Matrons, our infirmary and other responsible charges. In the event of the scheme being approved I would ask your permission, Sir, to give the selected nurse two years' leave of absence without loss of seniority. The succession of nurses passing to the hospital (provided the nurses see where their best interests lie) will always leave a vacant place for the returning nurse.

Every nurse passing through the general hospital will raise the status of the profession of mental nurses, and help to place it where it should be.

PROSECUTION UNDER "THE LUNATICS ACT, 1882."

V. A., admitted into the Auckland Mental Hospital on the 27th September, 1906, was stated in the medical certificates to have been under care and treatment at a Home for mental cases at Epsom, kept by Mrs. Emily Hopkins. There being no "Home" coming under the above description licensed for the reception and detention of persons of unsound mind, a prosecution was instituted. Mrs. Hopkins was charged before Mr. Kettle, S.M., on the 29th October, with breaches of sections 91 and 122 of "The Lunatics Act, 1882." The defendant chose to be dealt with summarily under the amending Act of 1891, and pleaded guilty to a breach of section 122. She was convicted and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon, and was further ordered to pay costs. The alternative charge was then withdrawn.