

for mental attendants. A most important fact, recorded in its pages this month, is that "Amended Regulations for the Training of Attendants," are before the Medico-Psychological Association, and probably, after October 31st, 1899, a period of three years' training will be demanded, instead of two years. In the cases of Certificated Hospital Nurses, a period of two years' residence in an asylum will be considered sufficient. As the only professional journal which has uniformly drawn attention to the fact that the training which mental attendants receive at present, is insufficient, we take some credit to ourselves that this is now receiving wider recognition. We have always contended that the present experience of mental attendants does not entitle them to be placed on the register of trained nurses, because they need never have been within the walls of a general hospital for a day during their training, or have received any instruction in general nursing. Under these conditions, to place asylum attendants upon the register of hospital-trained nurses is, in our opinion, to attempt to deceive the public; it is unjust to the thoroughly trained nurse, depreciating her status, and placing her on a level with those ignorant of the basis upon which efficient nursing of the sick depends. It strikes at the root of a fundamental principle held in medical, as well as nursing circles, that a general training should always precede a special one, and, on all these counts, is entirely to be condemned. If, however, the standard of training of mental attendants be raised, and includes sufficient experience in the wards of a general hospital, under trained supervision, no one will welcome, more warmly than ourselves, mental nurses into the ranks of the Royal British Nurses' Association. We think that *Asylum News* is to be congratulated upon the line which it has throughout taken upon this most important subject.

WITCH DOCTORS.

HUMAN nature is much the same all the world over, and it is noteworthy that, even in Central Africa, the struggle for existence has led the doctors of the country to use unjustifiable means to keep their practice in their own hands. Ever since the days of St. Paul, at least, when the silversmiths of Ephesus, becoming apprehensive that their "craft was in danger," because, owing to the apostle's preaching, their sale of silver images

diminished, made an "uproar," and cried for two whole hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," any encroachment upon the pecuniary profits of mankind seems to have aroused their worst passions. The last example of this is the attack made by witch doctors, upon the medical mission recently established at Zimunya, a lonely station among the mountains, twenty-five miles from Umtali, Rhodesia. Dr. Dunley Owen is in charge of this station, and, happily for him, Mr. Caulfeild, with his dog "Stan," went over to Zimunya to stay for a few days with the doctor and his wife, just before the attack was made. To the warning given by the dog, which was immediately speared with an assegai, and died shortly afterwards, it is believed that all three Europeans owe their lives, as they were awakened by his barking, and the terrible cry which he gave when wounded. The doctor, rushing out of his hut, saw lighted torches on the mountain side, but these were immediately extinguished, upon his firing his gun. The reason of the attack appears to have been that the witch doctors, who are well paid by the natives for their medical treatment (such as it is), find their profits decreasing, as the natives, since the advent of the "wonderful white doctor," have presented themselves in hundreds for treatment by him. As the witch doctors sometimes get £4 or £5 for treating a single case, we are not surprised that they are indignant; at the same time there is no excuse for their attacking the mission station in the dead of night, with the intention of spearing the offender in his sleep. Everyone will, we think, regret the death of the collie, whose fidelity saved the lives of the three Europeans.

TERRIBLE MORTALITY.

THE terrible effect of a course of campaigning in Cuba upon the Spanish soldiers is strikingly exemplified by the arrival of the transport *Isle de Panay* from Havana and Puerto Rico. The vessel was bringing 324 soldiers invalided home. On calling at Puerto Rico, it was decided, in anticipation of bad weather, to leave there fifty men who were in a dying condition. This was done, but on the homeward voyage no fewer than sixty-four more died of various complaints engendered of the Cuban climate, more than one-third of the sick thus dying before reaching home.

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