

to the inquiry system at the London Hospital. It is asserted that it was originally instituted to determine whether the patient could afford to pay for private treatment, while now the question is whether he can pay the hospital.

The most practical suggestion in connection with the question of hospital abuse, which is certainly detrimental to the average practitioner, is that a Minister of Health should be appointed whose duty it would be to encourage the prevention of disease. With the establishment of this State department all hospitals would be placed under State control and made a charge upon Imperial taxation. In Germany, as in Scandinavia, everyone admitted to a hospital, who is in a position to do so, pays according to his means, while the State pays for the really necessitous. By this means the hospitals would become to a large extent self-supporting, and they would be legitimately available for the treatment of many who now hesitate to use them. A further result, and an advantageous one in our opinion, would be that by this means the hospitals would be brought under public control.

Annotations.

CHIMING CLOCKS IN HOSPITALS.

Mr. James A. Lester's protest in the Press about chiming clocks in hospitals is very timely. One would imagine that such a useless annoyance would never be sanctioned by a committee of an institution for the care of the sick. The great clock at the Middlesex Hospital is the particular offender of which Mr. Lester complains. He writes:—"Last November my mother was persuaded by our local doctor to go into the Middlesex Hospital and undergo an operation. Whose fault it was I shall never know, but, after undergoing a most prolonged one, I was told the next day that she must die unless I gave my consent to a second being performed. After agreeing to this being done she died after six days and nights of agony. The authorities allowed me to remain all night as well as day, and all this time I heard this clock hammer out, not only the hours, but every quarter besides. The ward in which she lay (the 'Prudhoe Ward') is next to the roof and the operating room, and this clock is in the roof. As it strikes one feels the vibration through the room.

"I was allowed in and out at any hour of the day and night, as she was on the dangerous

list, and I have gone in at all times, early morning, broad noon, midnight, and morning again, and have seen the dear face I loved contract as though struck, the eyelids quiver, as the machinery relentlessly beat out the quarters, half-hours, three-quarters, as it were, in the ward itself.

"I burn with indignation, and meant to write to the Press before, but felt I could not, as by so doing I partly, at least, bare my private feelings to public view . . . ; for the sake of all poor souls within those walls, lend me your influence to get the clock taken down, or at least silenced."

We have no doubt that, this senseless abuse having been so forcibly brought to the notice of the Middlesex Hospital Committee, they will at once take steps to stop it. We hope that the warning may not be lost on the managers of other hospitals which offend in a like manner.

THE INSTITUTE OF HYGIENE.

On Friday, Sir Joseph Fayrer will open a permanent Hygienic Exhibition at the new premises of the Institute of Hygiene in a house in Devonshire Street, W., which, it is hoped, may prove instructive and interesting to the medical and nursing professions, to the manufacturer and the general public.

It is proposed that the new Society may in the near future become incorporated, in the same way as the Sanitary Institute. Only "medical capital" is invested in the Institute, and it is thought that rent from show-cases in the exhibition may make the scheme self-supporting.

Certificates of efficiency will be given to exhibitors, but these will only be of value for the space of a year following their award. Exhibits will be changed every quarter, but anything new and interesting may be admitted at any time.

Educational schemes are in prospect; lecturers and examiners are being appointed, and the governing body is on the look out for class-rooms in the immediate neighbourhood.

There will be on view hygienic appliances, food products, and beverages, and, in a private room, medical specialties.

There is to be a women's section dealing with domestic hygiene, and, free of cost, information will be given on all questions relating to health.

If worked without reference to "ads." and "puffs," such an institute may become extremely instructive and helpful to the community in general.

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