

between 45 to 50 is apt to disturb the nervous system of normal women. In men, a gradual decline in sexual capacity between 55 and 60 plays a less conspicuous part.

Senility is a natural degeneration commencing at about the age of 70, but in certain people the brain is affected to some degree.

Stress comprises all agencies, therefore, which affects the nervous system, whether physical or mental. Toxins and blood conditions, the history of either or both, not infrequently occur in many cases of insanity.

Climate also has relation to the incidence of mental disorders by infectious agents, namely malaria, typhoid and dysentery, which lower the general resistance, giving mental instability a chance to show itself.

Trauma, either causes a structural injury to the brain or emotional disturbance, which in one form or another is prolonged for some time. Injury to the brain from concussion or laceration produces profound mental changes, often in the nature of dementia.

Mental Factors. Financial and business worries, domestic difficulties, disappointments and worries in the sexual sphere, render it impossible to carry on the ordinary daily life properly. There is generally some previous weakness or predisposition; the worry or anxiety is not the cause but a symptom.

Endocrine Factors. The adrenals, although discovered in 1564, were not known to have any function until the work of Addison in 1855. Earlier experiments on the adrenals showed that they were essential to life.

In 1895 Schafer and Oliver proved that an extract from them raised the blood pressure.

Other principal ones are those of the thyroid gland, pituitary body, parathyroids, the testicles and ovaries. These influence the balance of power between the two great divisions of the involuntary nervous system and autonomic and sympathetic. These two divisions have opposite effects on the viscera and the blood vessels which they control, and it is said that according to which of them has the greater influence in a particular person depends to a great extent his temperament, energy and ability for mental work. They also play an important part in instinctive behaviour and emotional life, as well as in determining growth and evolution.

The types of disturbed endocrine balance in childhood have been classified as:—

Thyroid.—Cretinism.

Pituitary.—Anterior, General—Gigantism.

Partial—Hemihypertrophy.

Lorain type of infantilism.

Posterior, Diabetes insipidus.

Both lobes, Brissaud type of infantilism.

Adrenal.—Cortex—Sexual precocity, progeria and infant Hercules type.

Parathyroid.—Tetany.

Thymus.—Status lymphaticus.

Lastly, influenza must be mentioned, for, since the epidemic of 1890, it seems to be a frequently assigned cause of insanity in this country when correlated with other causes; 3.4 per cent. of males and 3.2 per cent. of females.

Reception to Delegates at Annual Conference of Women Public Health Officers' Association.

THE L.C.C. HELD a reception at the County Hall on Saturday, October 24th, to entertain to tea the delegates attending the annual conference of the Women Public Health Officers' Association. The delegates were received by the Vice-Chairman of the L.C.C. (Mrs. I. M. Bolton), the Vice-President of the Association (the Countess of Radnor) and the Chairman of the

Health Committee of the L.C.C. and the other leading members of the Council.

Nursing Echoes.

A MEETING OF THE GRAND COUNCIL of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been arranged to take place on November 26th, 1953, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, E.C.1.

The morning session will commence at 11 a.m. when a report will be presented on the meetings of the International Council of Nurses held in Brazil in July, 1953.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH has appointed Mr. F. J. Ely to the post of Mental Nursing Officer on the staff of the Chief Nursing Officer at the Ministry. He will take up his duties on November 16th. Mr. Ely is at present Chief Male Nurse at St. Audry's Hospital, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

It will be recalled that the Minister announced last June his intention to appoint two mental nursing officers, a man and a woman, to deal with nursing matters, and, in particular, staffing problems, in mental hospitals and mental deficiency institutions. No appointment to the other post has yet been made.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH recently received a deputation from the National Society of Children's Nurseries, National Association of Nursery Matrons, National Association of Certificated Nursery Nurses, Royal College of Nursing, Association of British Paediatric Nurses and the Nursery School Association. The members represented that the provision for children in day nurseries and nursery schools and classes was inadequate, and that a working party should be set up to consider the whole question of the day-time care of children under five years of age.

In thanking the members the Minister said that he would consider carefully the points made, including the suggestion of a working party, with the other interested Ministers. He emphasised that there were many competing claims for priority in the health and education services, and that he was in favour of leaving local matters, including the making of charges for day nurseries, to the discretion of the local authorities. He asked the deputation to let him have further information to support their view that child minder schemes were at present often unsatisfactory.

THE *Evening Standard* REPORTED on Monday, October 12th, that the Windsor Group Hospital Management Committee has decided to close the Royal Victoria Cottage Hospital at Ascot, Berks, owing to the falling off in demand for treatment there. The hospital will be used for training nurses for the Heatherwood Orthopaedic Hospital.

During this year only three in-patients and one out-patient have been treated at the Cottage Hospital each day, but it has been costing £5,600 a year.

As the Heatherwood Hospital Nurses' Training Centre is closing this month, the Committee and local doctors agreed that the transfer was a good solution, although the doctors would like the Hospital as a general practitioners' maternity unit, when funds allow the necessary reconstruction work to be carried out.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)