

Superintendent of Nurses; they have everything the way they wish it to be, and this is it!

In some few of the wards I found religious sisters in charge, and could not find out any reason why. Their hours are the same, but they do not sleep in cubicles in the wards. Whether they are being gradually withdrawn, or whether they are preferred for special work, I could not learn either from themselves or from the lay nurses, who, however, are greatly in the majority.

In one ward where I stopped to ask questions a male convalescent patient came sauntering in and took out a thermometer from his axilla, though no one could possibly have supposed that there was one there. He examined it and then went over to his bed and wrote the result on his chart, afterwards handing it to another patient! I spoke of this, and the sister said he had been in the hospital a long time. But I could not see why any of the patients should have anything but normal or subnormal temperatures under this system.

The wards looked clean and orderly, though bare, and were painted in clean, light colours, and though the furniture was plain and homely there seemed to be plenty of glass jars and appliances for everything the doctors had to do. Everything necessary for clinical work was there in abundance.

A striking and unpleasant feature of this hospital was the unrestrainedly free and easy way in which the convalescent patients and their friends mingled in the green, park-like courts. There seemed no privacy or supervision. In the obstetrical division the waiting women sat on the garden benches and strolled about, and men employees and visitors strolled through and sat about. Young girl convalescents wandered at will through the nine courts, sat on benches with the men, and frolicked, and even love-making was going on. As all convalescents wore gowns of heavy white linen they were quite conspicuous, and it was impossible to mistake them.

The numbers of young girls among them filled one with amazement. It was impossible to understand why so many girls of sixteen and seventeen, apparently quite well enough to go home, should be kept in the hospital. Groups of them would wander to the great main entrance-gate, through which the visitors came, but here, when they became too giggling and noisy, a guard did make some attempt at discipline by chasing them periodically with a cane.

The whole thing was dreadful. But this hospital exists solely for scientific research and the study of clinical material. Within the wards strict order and discipline were maintained outwardly, but the moral atmosphere, the spirit of guardianship of the feeble and the young, the feeling of security given by the presence of women of character and education, were entirely lacking. So far as I had gone over Europe it was the worst that I had seen.

L. L. DOCK.

Practical Points.

An Appalling Assertion. A Chicago scientist has asserted, says a contemporary, that all human beings will have gone insane within 700 years.

He gives as the cause of the increase in insanity, drink, over-indulgence in drugs, the mad rush for money, over-exertion, physically and mentally, the high nervous tension of life, and the present condition of woman as wage-earner and mother. He says: "The society woman and the working woman both live a strenuous life of constant exhaustion. The gay life of pleasure of the one woman and the drudgery of the other are continuously decreasing their nervous strength and energy, and when brain-fagged and physically exhausted they marry; they become the mothers of physical starvelings, who develop into men and women unfit for the burdens of life. These in their turn live in the manner of their parents, weaker and even less able to stand the nervous tension of work and dissipation. These people are often predisposed to insanity and nervous diseases, while often the result is degeneration and imbecility. When men make it possible for women to return to their proper place of home and motherhood, and they can cease the pitiful struggle for existence, leaving the obtaining of a livelihood to the men of the family, then the conditions that produce insanity will diminish. Among the poor, bad whisky and beer cause more insanity than does anything else. In other words, drugs and whisky combined are a good combination upon which to build a lunatic."

Effects of Food Containing Boric Acid. Professor Wiley, of the Department of Agriculture, has performed many experiments, testing the effects of boric acid when mixed with foods, with important results. We note the following:—

When boric acid or its equivalent in borax is taken in food in quantities not exceeding half a grain daily, no immediate effects are observed; in time, however, loss of appetite occurs, and there is a feeling of fulness in the head with gastric discomfort and general ill-feeling. But these symptoms are noticed only in very sensitive persons when this amount is given. When the drug is given in larger and increasing doses the symptoms are more severe and are developed earlier; the most persistent symptoms are headache and a slight mental confusion. The amount of boric acid required to produce marked symptoms varies greatly with different individuals; in some, one or two grains daily produce decided distress, while in others three grains daily cause little, if any discomfort. The conclusions reached were that it is not advisable to use borax in articles of food intended for common and continued use, and that when placed in foods used only occasionally and in small amounts the quantity of the preservative should be stated plainly, so that the consumer may know the amount and the kind of adulteration he is taking.

Old Mother Nature Again.

Dr. Hector Mackenzie writes in the *Lancet* that the most marked advance in the treatment of pulmonary phthisis, and one which he believes will have far-reaching effect on the health of the human race, is the recognition of the vital importance of fresh air to breathe.

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