

The legend "Abandon hope all ye who enter here" might in days gone by often have been inscribed over the threshold of institutions in which lunatics were detained. Happy were they if the care given to them was kindly. The curative aspect of such institutions as houses of healing, and restoration to health, was almost wholly lost sight of. Now it is realised that asylums should not only be houses of detention providing "the best means of taking care" of this afflicted class of patients, but that they should really be hospitals for the insane, the primary object of their existence being the cure of all curable cases.

The perverted mental bias, the direct result of disease, frequently apparently changes a patient's whole nature, and before this was understood it led to a great deal of cruelty to and ill-treatment of lunatics, physical force being often used in their management. Now it is beginning to be realised that the nursing of bodily ailments is comparatively easy when compared with ministrations to a mind diseased, and that only nurses of the very highest type, really patient, sympathetic, and high principled should be selected for this duty.

At the Annual Meeting of the Cornwall County Nursing Association, recently held at Truro, attention was drawn in the report of the Executive Committee to the experiment being tried in the Treslothan District, of having two nurses, one for maternity work and one for ordinary nursing. It is an experiment which we hope will find wide support, for the combination of general and maternity nursing is based on utterly unsound principles.

An examination of the outlines of the courses of study in a number of different schools for nurses recently has, says the *National Hospital Record*, forced on us the impression that, while an apparently full and elaborate course is planned, some of the most important branches in a nurse's education find no place in the published curriculum. If there is one thing concerning which a nurse in a hospital in the twentieth century ought to be thoroughly instructed, theoretically and practically, it is in the science of nutrition. Feeding a patient intelligently and properly is certainly no small nor unimportant part of a nurse's duty. She would know something of the composition of food substances and their food value, but

what is of more importance she should know how to prepare those food substances so that the patient will want to eat them. No hospital is doing its duty by its nurses that neglects to give instruction, theoretical and practical, on this subject. A nurse can do good work if she never hears of stratified epithelial tissue, or the blastodermic membrane, or embryology, or the hypoglossal nerve, or a hundred and one things described in some text books written for nurses and prescribed for study in some training schools; but if she cannot make a piece of toast fit for a patient, or cook for him a beef-steak that is neither scorched nor overdone, nor underdone, if she does not know something of the changes that take place in the process of digestion of milk, and how to administer it in the manner least likely to cause digestive disturbance, then there is something wrong in the training school from which she graduated. The curriculum of some schools would be more sensible if there was some cutting out of unnecessary study in anatomy, embryology, &c., and more instruction given in such practical subjects as feeding the sick and private nursing.

A contemporary, reporting the appointment of Miss K. Fremmen, of Rondebosch, as Matron of the Craddock Hospital at a salary of £80 per annum, speaks of this salary as "very suggestive of hard times pressing on nurses as well as medical practitioners." English nurses will do well to observe, that salaries which may appear good in this country have to be estimated in connection with the cost of living in South Africa.

The Passing Bell.

A sad fatality occurred on Monday on the nursing staff at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Two of the nurses, Miss Aldridge and Miss Skipworth, engaged a Canadian canoe for a trip up the River Granta. Upon reaching a picturesque stretch of the river the canoe capsized, and both nurses were precipitated into the water. Miss Skipworth managed to cling to the upturned canoe, and was eventually dragged ashore by means of ropes. Miss Aldridge disappeared, and when her body was recovered life was extinct.

She was the daughter of the University Reader in Burmese, and was a good swimmer, while Miss Skipworth could not swim. A verdict of accidental death was returned at the inquest.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)