

room (80 deg. Fahrenheit). A Dr. Aitken thought that air was fatal during the operation, and suggested performing the operation while the patient was immersed in a warm bath!

Thanks largely to the improved technique of the operation, due to Sanger's method of suturing the uterus, and to surgical cleanliness, the operation of to-day has lost its horrors; the mortality is now about 3 per cent., with a foetal mortality of about 5 per cent., and the performance of Cæsarian Section has become more frequent owing to its comparative safety.

M. O. H.

Nursing of the Insane in Germany.

By MISS MARTHA OESTERLEN,
Member of the German Nurses' Association.

When we look back on the conditions of nursing in asylums not many decades ago, where there was little idea of the possibility of cure, and where it was thought necessary to use brute force in subduing a raving patient, and when we consider times still further back, when the wretched lunatics were chained as being possessed with devils, or were even burnt or beaten to death, we must allow that there is a striking contrast between such conditions and those of our asylums of to-day, with their classification of mental disease.

And yet great progress in this direction is still necessary. We must win over educated women to nurse in asylums. It is the doctors who have developed the new ideas in this branch of medicine who call for the help of thoughtful women, trained in the care of the insane; whereas the greater number of asylum doctors are probably of opinion that simple, good-natured, robust country girls are the women best fitted for nursing the mad.

It is to be feared that our modern generation of women, who are often physically not very resistant, and whose nervous systems are weak, will not furnish a large number able permanently to fulfil that exceedingly difficult task. But more often than one would expect, a special talent and peculiar interest in such patients and their care is to be found.

Of the members of the German Nurses' Association, numbering over 2,000 Sisters, 38 were last year at work in nerve sanatoriums and 24 in asylums. Most of them, of course, fill posts of authority. In the nerve sanatoriums, 13 of them are Lady Superintendents, 9 are Head Sisters; in the asylums, 10 work as Lady Superintendents, 11 as Head Sisters. But these figures are infinitely small when com-

pared to the large number of Sisters engaged in the nursing of the bodily sick.

The number, too, of Sisters belonging to Church and Secular Sisters' Associations, who work in asylums, is so small that it is of no account when we consider the great number of nurses who are necessary for this branch of nursing.

A person intimately acquainted with the conditions estimates the number of insane in Germany to be at least 120,000. He is of opinion that at least 7,500 women nurses are needed, of whom not the thirtieth part belongs to the higher social classes.

This is not surprising when we look into asylum conditions.

In the East of Germany the salary begins with 226 marks (£11 6s.) a year, the highest salary after a very long period of service is 600 marks (£30), with the prospect of a pension.

In Saxony the salaries amount from 300-600 marks; in Baden 450-730 marks; as a rule there is a prospect of a pension after at least ten years' service.

In consequence of our legislation, insurance is everywhere provided for in case of illness or accidents. The food is generally indifferent. On an average the free time given amounts to forty hours a week.

In the West the conditions are in every way far more favourable than in the East.

Regular instruction is given in 47 institutions in courses of 25-30 hours; in 22 institutions some instruction is given during the doctor's visits; only in 9 institutions no such instruction is given at all. No examination, however, takes place, as in some foreign countries, forming a definite conclusion to the instruction besides increasing its importance. It is anticipated that the State examination of nurses will bring about the material and social improvement of nursing in asylums.

The position of the few educated women in asylums is, of course, better. They receive 420-720 marks; Head Sisters from 800-1,200 marks; one Baden Government institution pays the Lady Superintendent, who has filled her post there for twenty years, a salary of 1,500 marks, and later on she will have a considerable pension. This sum, however, must be considered entirely exceptional.

In Government asylums they receive these salaries, with corresponding pension after ten years of service; in private asylums sometimes with a prospect of a pension after fifteen years and a bonus of 500 marks after five years.

In the Government asylums the work is, as a rule, well regulated; in the private institutions the work is often incredibly heavy.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)