

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

A MODEL MENTAL HOSPITAL.

An American Consul-General at Berlin stated in 1905 that "among the valuable lessons which most other nations can advantageously learn from the experience and practice of Germany is the scientific treatment of insanity in its incipient stages, as a physical and possibly curable disease." A short account, therefore, of the Munich clinic, which heads the list of the world's mental hospitals, and where insanity is daily proved to be both preventable and curable, should have some interest for readers of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

Unfortunately for our insane, England is, in my opinion, far behind, not only Germany, but other civilised countries of the West and East—notably Japan—in the equipment of her mental hospitals, in her unscientific treatment of patients suffering from mental diseases, in the facilities she offers students and others for research into mental diseases, and in the slight preparation our medical students receive during their college days for treating the mentally afflicted, when, having become general practitioners, they are called upon to attend these, and to certify for admission to asylums. A natural consequence of this serious indifference to diseases that affect some 170,000 of the population of these islands, and which are alarmingly on the increase, is that the sufferers from them are deprived of their right to recover their mental health, are in many instances attended by the ignorant and untrained, and are condemned to a "system" of unscientific treatment that actually increases their maladies, and results in a degeneracy into chronic imbecility in the case of at least one half of the patients under "treatment" in our asylums to-day, although insanity has been proved again and again to be both preventable and curable.

Rich philanthropists endow hospitals for diseases of the body, almost entirely ignoring those of the mind. Royalty patronises and visits hospitals for physical ills, and gives daily practical proofs of generous sympathy with every form of physical suffering, but neither the patronage nor the sympathy is extended to mental suffering. No effort is made to improve the social status of the lunatic, who ranks below the criminal in the social scale, and is dead in the eyes of the law; and, what is of far greater importance, little is done to help him to recover his mental health by the aid of science, or the best skilled nursing.

Happily, England is altogether singular in these respects, as everyone must admit who has seen what other countries do for their insane.

A noted American scientist has drawn up essential conditions and requirements for a modern hospital for mental diseases. It would be interesting to visit a few of our asylums, and to see how many approach this standard which is surpassed in a number of points by the Munich clinic, the subject of this paper. Here are some of the conditions insisted upon by the American specialists:—

1. Ease of access, near to, or within the limits of a city.
2. A limited capacity, in order that every individual may be made the subject of special study.
3. A relatively large staff of physicians and nurses.
4. Ample provision, not only for the teaching of students, but also for the prosecution of post-graduate investigation and research in clinical psychiatry, psycho-pathology, and in the anatomy and pathology of the nervous system.
5. The ready admission of patients, and provisions for outdoor and voluntary patients.

Neither ideal nor Utopian; yet our best hospitals are very much below this standard. Not so the clinic of Munich, which was built at a cost of half-a-million dollars by that city, which has a population of a little over half-a-million. It includes the central and administration buildings, with two wings forming the front and sides of an open court or garden. In the central structure are located laboratories for pathological, chemical and psychological studies, a fine medical library, rooms for the reception and examination of patients, and the private rooms of the Director. The apparatus and facilities for every form of research connected with any question relating to *preventing*, *detecting* and *curing* insanity are as elaborate and perfect as experience and up-to-date science can suggest.

It has accommodation for one hundred and ten bed patients of both sexes, and a large dispensary on the ground floor, for the treatment of voluntary patients, who live in their own homes. In the first year of its existence, it treated over two thousand sufferers.

Among various special features are bath-rooms, arranged with tubs in which the water can be maintained indefinitely at a given temperature, and in which excited patients may be kept *without restraint* for hours—a soothing and highly efficacious form of treatment at certain stages of mental disease. A small iron

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