

door opens into an oven, in which hot towels are always ready to be used by patients on leaving the bath.

A ward of the ordinary size contains space for from five to ten beds. Among its equipment are a small electric cooking stove, a movable bath tub on castors, and electric lights that can be so controlled as to give any desired degree of illumination.

The lecture room has accommodation for two hundred and forty students, and if during the day, the lecturer wishes to use kinetoscope or magic lantern illustrations, he touches a button, and black shades running in grooves at each window drop, and make the interior dark. Another knob is touched and the kinetoscope or picture is thrown on the screen, and the lecturer proceeds without a moment's interruption.

The hospital is not free. Patients are divided according to their means into three classes, but the treatment and medical services are the same to all. All the wards are perfectly warmed, ventilated, and lighted. *Absolutely no restraint is used.* The medical staff consists of Germany's foremost specialists in mental diseases. These, and two assistant physicians, are paid, but young physicians receive for their services board and lodging only. The educational advantages are this clinic's most valuable asset. These include oral and clinical instruction not only to medical students, but to practising physicians. The clinic serves, too, as a tribunal of highest authority to determine the conduct of patients who are involved in litigation which hinges on the fact or degree of mental aberration. Such a patient is kept under expert observation, and subjected to tests that finally give a definite diagnosis of his condition, which is not left to be decided by the academic opinion of a mental expert, caught by the artful hypothetical questions of a shrewd, opposing attorney.

Thus constructed, equipped and administered this modern psychiatric clinic meets and fulfils two fundamental needs that exist in every city in Europe—viz., that of better facilities for the skilful treatment, care and possible cure of cases of incipient and acute insanity; and in the investigation of practical problems upon the solution of which must depend the arrest of increasing insanity among the people of the community. Its inestimable service to the country is that it saves an indefinite but considerable percentage of the victims of incipient mental disease, and restores them to lives of usefulness to society, instead of leaving them to degenerate into a menace to society, and a

burden to the State. It provides the most consummate examination and treatment at a stage of the disease when there is the most chance of averting or arresting an attack of real insanity. It detects and takes timely charge of the smaller but important class of patients, who, without the knowledge of their friends, are on the border line of insanity, and liable at any time to become suddenly dangerous to themselves and others.

Notwithstanding the rapid and deplorable increase of mental diseases, which has followed the stress and strain of modern business and social life, it must be admitted that in Great Britain, governmental beneficence has not progressed beyond the eleemosynary function of providing asylums in which the more or less hopelessly incurable victims of insanity, who have become a burden or menace to their friends, can drag out in safety and some slight physical comfort the remnant of their stricken lives. If here and there a private clinic has made a hopeful beginning with the pathological treatment of mental diseases, it has been due to individual initiative, and the ministrations of such institutions are restricted mainly to patients of the well-to-do classes, leaving the great majority of poor unfortunates to drift on to a stage of mental alienation, in which they become dangerous to themselves and to those about them, and, therefore, entitled to the attention and support of the State. Germany has taken a long and important step beyond this, for there are twenty-two psychiatric hospitals for the treatment of mental diseases. Of these Kiel, Giessen, Strassbourg and Berlin are worthy of study, but the clinic of Munich stands undoubtedly at the head of all institutions of its class in Germany, or any other country. Our rivals, with the foresight and thoroughness that distinguish them so markedly, discovered long ago that a preventive and curative system of treatment of mental diseases, if costly, was the most economical. When will the British nation arrive at the same conclusion?

A permanent agency for reform and education in the field of nervous and mental diseases is one of the great needs of the day and hour. To cure the disease by preventing it is the only effective cure known. A campaign of education, rigorously carried on, would, in time, lead to the rescue of thousands, who, left in ignorance, must of necessity, drift into a state of actual and perhaps incurable insanity. Surely these thousands are worth saving! What has been done for consumption might be accomplished for insanity. The need for a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)