

THE MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL. PREVENTION OF INSANITY.

There is no more urgent problem in the hospital world at the present time than the prevention of insanity. The words are used advisedly, for hitherto the prevention of insanity is not a question which has entered largely into the spheres of practical medicine or nursing, the reason being the antiquated regulations in regard to admission to asylums, so that sufferers from mental disease must be certified as insane before they can have access to the treatment obtainable in asylums under mental specialists. By that time the disease is well established, and the prognosis as to permanent recovery seriously lessened.

Matters of vital importance in regard to those suffering from mental disease are: (1) That they shall be brought under treatment by experts in mental diseases at the earliest possible moment; (2) that the stigma associated with admission to an asylum shall be removed, and that certification as insane shall not be a necessary qualification for treatment in an asylum or mental hospital; (3) that opportunities shall be readily accessible to the medical profession for investigation and research into the causes, with a view to the prevention of mental disease.

The late Dr. Henry Maudsley, who was an earnest student, from a scientific standpoint, of the causes of insanity, and an enthusiast as to the treatment and care of sufferers from mental disease, gave £30,000 during his lifetime, and bequeathed another £10,000, to found a hospital where such disease can be studied and its causes investigated. The Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, which was opened at the beginning of February, under the control of the London County Council, and where 150 patients are received, who are in the early and uncertified stages of insanity, is the result, nor can any one be certified while in the hospital.

The Hospital, which is close to King's College Hospital, on Denmark Hill, has accommodation for 150 patients. Some are received in ordinary wards, to which large and cheerful dayrooms are attached, and from which there is ready access to verandahs overlooking the gardens, where patients are wheeled in their beds so that they get a maximum amount of fresh air and sunlight. There are also a number of single wards. The charges made are, in the case of patients from the County of London, by arrangement as to what they can afford. In the case of other patients the charge is £5 a week. Whether they are placed in a general or a single ward is determined not by the payment made, but by the necessities of the case.

The Medical Superintendent is Dr. Mapother; and the Matron is Miss Walker—trained at the Royal Infirmary, Hull, and at the Royal Edinburgh Asylum, in Mental Nursing. She, of course, holds the certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association. It was good to notice, when accompanying her round the hospital, how the faces of the patients lit up with pleasure when

she stopped and spoke to them. The soft colouring and harmonious tones of the wards must be soothing to the mind diseased.

There are two very important features of the Maudsley Hospital. One, the pathological department, where research work for all the Mental Hospitals in London is carried on, and the other, the practice of the medical officers of spending much time in the wards with the patients. "The proper study of mankind is man," and while study of disease must be based on investigations made in the laboratory, nothing can take the place of clinical study of the patients.

The nursing staff of the hospital consists of the Matron, Assistant Matron, seven Sisters, all of whom have received general training; 50 female nurses and three resident male nurses, as well as others non-resident. It will be remembered that, at this hospital, the experiment of a nursing staff which, for the most part lives out, is being tried. Only ten of the female nurses live in, the rest living at home or in rooms in the neighbourhood.

The salaries paid are: Probationers, £118 14s. 8d.; Staff Nurses, £141 9s. 8d.; and Sisters, £154 1s. In the case of those living in, there is a deduction of 28s. per week for board and lodging, but an allowance at a fixed rate is made for meals taken out of the hospital. Those who live out can also have meals in the hospital at this fixed charge, *i.e.*, breakfast, 8d.; dinner, 1s. 1d.; tea, 4d.; and supper, 6d.

The hours on duty of the nursing staff are 96 per fortnight, with a six-day week, arranged as follows: *Day Nurses*—On duty, first week, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.; second week, from 1.45 p.m. to 10 p.m., and one day on from 7 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., with one hour off for dinner and half-an-hour for tea. *Night Nurses*—On duty, from 9.45 p.m. to 7.15 a.m.; the Night Nurses' dinner is at 7.30 a.m., but none of the night staff are resident in the hospital, and few stay to have dinner there.

The evident content and happiness of the patients and the knowledge that everything possible is being done, not only to alleviate but to cure their disease, the pleasant surroundings, the atmosphere of kindness, make the Maudsley Hospital a pleasant place to visit. One left it with a feeling of great gratitude to the distinguished scientist whose picture hangs in the entrance hall, feeling assured that his benefaction to science in the service of humanity will earn compound interest many times over. M. B.

TO PRESERVE CHILDREN.

AN AMERICAN RECIPE.

"Take one large grassy field, one half-dozen children, two or three small dogs, a pinch of brook and some pebbles. Mix the children and dogs well together and put them in the field, stirring constantly. Pour the brook over the pebbles. Sprinkle the field with flowers. Spread over all a deep, blue sky, and bake in the hot sun. When brown, remove and set aside to cool in a bath tub."—From *Public Health*.

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