

Paul, a Lady Julian, a Saint Francis, a Saint Cuthbert? The family begotten of such ardour is as wide as the human race. The great lovers of their kind in history were mostly childless men and women.

We have reached the conclusion of our argument. There is only one way in which we can stop over-production of population in regions like the Kentucky Mountains, and that is the way of economic justice. When an education is available for every boy and girl, and a family scale of living has been arrived at which will lift the economic status of the mother to the level where her intelligence places her, when marriages no longer take place in the early teens, but sports and play and studies in relation to environment occupy this period, we shall find that there is no longer a problem of over-production. Nature takes care of that. We need not work against her—we have only to work with her. The economic solution of the problem created by too high a birthrate is not only the best and fairest solution, it is the only solution that works."

COURSES AT BEDFORD COLLEGE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

The presentation of certificates to the Students completing the International Courses held at Bedford College for Women (University of London), in conjunction with the College of Nursing, is always a most enjoyable function. This year it was held on June 29th and a glorious day added to the pleasure of the afternoon.

The Chair was taken by the Honble. Sir Arthur Stanley, G.B.E., Chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Red Cross Society, and an Address was given by the Vicomte B. de Rougé of the League of Red Cross Societies. He was followed by Miss G. E. M. Jebb, M.A., Cantab., Principal of Bedford College. The successful students for the Session, 1930-1931 were:

STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE PUBLIC HEALTH COURSE.

Irmgard Fussenegger, Austria; Eveline M. Crothers; Eleanor J. Merry; Gladys Parker; Eliamma Thomas, India.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE COURSE FOR NURSE ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS.

Elisabeth Petschnigg, Austria; Zafira Christova, Bulgaria; Enni Voipio, Finland; Irmgard Staehle, Germany; Thora Gudmundsson, Iceland; Violetta Besesti, Italy; Elza Nulle-Sienceniaks, Latvia; Jadwiga Zukowska, Poland; Phorn Diskul, Siam.

The certificates were presented by Lady Galway who reminded the students that they should be firmly rooted in their own soil first of all, and then unite hands with others.

A very interesting address was given by Mlle. Cecile Mechelyneck, herself an old International and now President of its Students' Association. Votes of thanks were proposed by Miss Irmgard Staehle of the German Red Cross, and Miss Phorn Diskul of the Siamese Red Cross.

Then followed the presentation by Sir Arthur Stanley of the Nightingale Medal of the International Red Cross to Dame Ann Beadsmore Smith, after which there was an adjournment to the garden and an opportunity to meet old friends while partaking of the hospitality of our hosts.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

MENTAL HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

An important circular on mental hospital accommodation has been issued to Local Authorities by the Board of Control. The principal points to which the Board draw attention are as follows:—

The Mental Treatment Act came into operation on January 1st, 1931, and as the facilities for mental treatment without certification under the Act become more widely

known, there may be an increasing demand for treatment under those provisions, which will necessitate a review by Local Authorities of the accommodation available. At the same time the shortage of mental hospital accommodation generally has become acute, and will oblige many Local Authorities to consider what steps should be taken if they are to maintain a reasonable standard of efficiency and progress in this service. Though there is no increase in the incidence of mental disorders, the number of persons under care continues to increase because the total population and the average age of the population are both increasing.

There is now practically no margin of accommodation in the public mental hospitals. On January 1st, in the present year, there were only 27 hospitals with ten or more vacant beds on the male side, and 19 with ten or more vacant beds on the female side. There are practically no unoccupied beds, the use of which Authorities can obtain by contract with other Authorities. Moreover, the practice of taking beds on contract, though useful in special circumstances, is strongly to be deprecated if it involves sending patients so far from their homes as to make visiting by their relatives prohibitive by the expense.

Local Authorities will, therefore, have to consider increasing the accommodation for mental patients, and there are two main ways in which this can be done, viz.:— Either by redistribution of patients among the various types of institutions now under the control of the Local Authority, or by the provision of new mental hospitals.

As regards redistribution there are four possible alternatives:—

(1) The utilisation of beds in Public Assistance Institutions for the quiet chronic cases or senile cases, whose condition does not necessitate treatment of the kind that can only be given in the relatively more expensive beds of a mental hospital.

(2) The removal from mental hospitals of mental defectives, who can be far more economically provided for in Poor Law premises or in Mental Deficiency Colonies.

(3) The granting of leave of absence on trial and boarding out, or discharging suitable patients to the care of relatives or friends.

(4) The provision in connection with an existing mental hospital of an admission unit and convalescent villas where these do not already exist.

In this connection it is pointed out that every mental hospital, whether full or not, should have this accommodation which has become imperatively necessary in view of the provisions made for the treatment of Voluntary and Temporary patients under the Mental Treatment Act.

The second main alternative is the construction of new mental hospitals, and the Board point out that there will be some Authorities who will find themselves compelled before long to build such institutions. Local Authorities who have no right of ownership in any mental hospital and who, therefore, have to secure by contract beds for patients for whom they are required to provide accommodation, are particularly concerned with this aspect of the question. As the shortage of accommodation generally becomes more acute, notices terminating existing contracts are being given, and some Authorities will have no alternative but to make provision themselves. The circular suggests that the problem could best be approached by means of local regional conferences when consideration might be given to the possibility of uniting for the purpose of providing a joint mental hospital. It is the Board's intention to stimulate the holding of such local conferences for this purpose; and the circular has been issued to assist the Local Authorities in envisaging the main considerations which should determine the extent and nature of any additional accommodation that may be necessary.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)