

establishment of such an institution as that of Claybury within each of their areas.

We must again repeat our admiration of the public spirit and advanced views, in this matter, of the London County Council.

Mental Disease Out-Patients.

We have pleasure in drawing attention to the fact that an out-patient department for mental disease has now been established for upwards of two years at Sheffield, under Dr. Crochley Clapham.

Dr. Clapham reports that it has been successful in attracting a considerable number of patients, in a fair proportion of whom he believes that the necessity for asylum treatment has been avoided, therein confirming the experience of a similar department at St. Thomas' Hospital.

Dr. Clapham is also of opinion that his department has exemplified the greater readiness of such patients to be associated in treatment with other diseases rather than to attend as out-patients to an asylum or lunatic hospital. Those patients who will go to the latter are mostly cases who have been in-patients or are already qualified to become so.

That Dr. Clapham may soon be imitated in other large towns is a wish that will occur to everyone interested in the prevention of insanity.

The Registration of Mental Nurses.

The Royal British Nurses' Association has of late passed through stormy times. It is hardly our province to discuss the difficulties that have arisen, but we must enter with interest into the proposal of Dr. Outterson Wood that mental nurses should be admitted to registration and membership of that Association. Apparent misunderstanding and gross misrepresentation have been in the air. The old, old story of the inferiority of asylum nurses has been retold; the echoes of the bad old times have been re-echoed; the iniquity of Dr. Woods' insidious arguments has been laid bare in the columns of *The Hospital*. It would seem that the work of the Medico-Psychological Association and its most active members for the last decade is as naught. The Handbook, the Educational Committee, the Registrar are but figments of a depraved imagination. Ignorance cries aloud in the market-place, naked and unabashed!

We are confident, however, that the persistent, quiet, disciplined labours of so many medical officers have not been in vain. The Nursing Register of the Association has grown to bulky proportions year by year. It is an assured fact, not to be shaken by empty asseverations, that the trained attendants and nurses of our asylums will favourably compare with any body of nurses in other realms. We have, indeed, given the world a lead in this direction.

It is not so much an affair of examinations as a course of education in which reason and practice go hand in hand. We are alive to the importance of the medical aspect of this work, and lunacy is an affair of medicine.

Put aside for a moment the argument that medical officers should train their nurses in the care of bodily sickness. That is founded on a total ignorance of the course of education required by the Medico-Psychological Association. What mental nurse can be considered efficient who does not practically know how to manage cases of ordinary physical disease? It may be, indeed, that the syllabus and regulations should more definitely state that a certain period should be passed in the infirmary section of each asylum; but there is, and has been, but slight chance of success in gaining the certificate of this Association, for candidates unable to satisfy the examiners that their knowledge of the details of sick nursing is adequate for their calling. We cannot, however, but see indications of danger in this latter-day education of nurses. It is given to the medical profession to direct the treatment of the patient; it falls to the nurses to carry out that treatment in an intelligent, methodical manner. Any nurse who aspires to direct medical treatment must change her profession and take the higher place as best she may. It is no part of the programme to provide a short cut to the healing art.

A fully-trained nurse cannot emerge from a general hospital armed at every point like to Minerva from the head of Jove. It is mere arrogance to assert that she is competent to deal with disease in its protean manifestations. She has still got to reckon with the dangers of maternity cases, the phases of fevers, the crises of mental disorders. We hold, therefore, that a well-trained mental nurse is just as worthy of a place on the register of the Royal British Nurses' Association as her general hospital sister. Her suitability is attested, her experience is indubitable, her knowledge is tried.

After all it is but few who will press their claims. The great majority are attached for better or worse to the institutions where they have qualified for their high vocation. The public interest, however, is paramount. Certain attendants and nurses, after their training is completed, enter the field of private work, and the medical profession should be assured that those whose services are available in that domain are trustworthy and efficient. If the Royal British Nurses' Association is to command the confidence of the nation, it must hold at disposal the names of those of the nursing profession who are qualified to minister to the sick in mind. It is possible that some may be found to combine in one person a knowledge of surgical and mental nursing, as well adapted by nature and training to tend an ovariotomy case as a general paralytic, just as a country practitioner has to face all sorts and conditions of diseases. For good or for evil, nevertheless, specialised work is the order of the day; and we are convinced that the man in the street will have his doctor's approval when he secures a surgical nurse for a surgical case, and a mental nurse for a mental case.

The question has been carefully considered by the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association, and a trustworthy committee has the matter in hand. We hope that their deliberations and consultations with the officials of the Royal British Nurses' Association will result in an open register for every nurse who is qualified to act in relief of human suffering.

The New Divisions.

At the last meeting of the Council, held in Nottingham, a most important and far-reaching decision was achieved. In accordance with the Articles of the Medico-Psychological Association, application had been made to constitute two new divisions for England. These representations were backed by some of the most active and influential members of the Association, and two capable and tried physicians have been named as divisional secretaries. There can be no doubt that the time had fully arrived for this evolution of energy; and the success of the South-Western Division in the hands of Dr. Macdonald will be emulated by Dr. Crochley Clapham in the north and by Dr. Ernest White in the south-east. It is many years since Ireland and Scotland attained the