asylums there was still indisposition to recognise the urgency of the demand for a reduced consumption of certain kinds of food. In one of these institutions he was present at dinner-time, and he saw a shameless distribution of bread. He understood that the staff had not been quite willing to co-operate with the authorities in reducing the rations. He saw great quantities of bread handed out to the patients, with the result that after the dinner a very large amount of bread was left on the tables, crumbled, broken, and in such a condition that it could not be used for human consumption. He spoke about it at the time, and he wrote strongly to the Committee on the subject. This Association might use its great influence to promote a strong movement for the economising of food in asylums throughout the country, and he hoped that the Committee and officers would consider the suggestion. If they acted on it they would add to the good works already standing to the credit of the Association.

Asylum and General Hospital Nurses.

Dr. Hubert Bond (Commissioner of the Board of Control) seconded the motion, remarking that the work of officers of an association of this kind was much greater than could be realised by people who had not experienced it. In the present instance it must not be forgotten that the Hon. Secretary and Editor (Dr. J. Farquharson Powell) was at the Front, and that once again Dr. Shuttleworth had come forward in his ever-ready way to fill the vacant place. Referring to asylums converted into war hospitals, Dr. Bond said that the War Office had gladly taken over, not only the buildings, but the staffs, and it had been a great privilege to him to go among them and see what they were doing. As very few members of those staffs had received the training of a general hospital, they had been obliged to subordinate themselves to new-comers who had gone through such training. The patriotism of the old staffs had enabled them to accept the change without a murmur, so that in no case had there been trouble. He was glad to see in the Association's Annual Report an allusion to the action of the Executive in connection with the proposed State registration of nurses. Here was an opportunity for reciprocity. Mental nurses required three years' training to earn the final certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association, but candidates who had had three years' general hospital training were exempted from the preliminary examination and from one year's mental hospital training. It seemed to him that two years' general hospital training should be enough for those who had already gone through three years' asylum training.

Presentation of Medals.

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Association, then presented medals for long and meritorious service.

Dr. R. H. Steen proposed a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor, which was seconded by Dr. Shuttleworth.

The motion was adopted amid cheers, and the Lord Mayor having remarked that it was very pleasant to lend the Mansion House for such a good cause as that of the Association, the meeting came to an end.

HOSTELS FOR HEROES.

Under this heading an account of a meeting held on April 28th, at 15, Grosvenor Gardens, by invitation of Eleanor, Viscountess Gort, in connection with recuperative hostels for nerve-stricken soldiers appeared in the *Daily Graphic* of April 30th. Sir Frederick Milner presided, and amongst those present who addressed the meeting was a Dr. White, B.Sc., M.B., who, in the course of her remarks (we understand she is a lady member of the profession), according to the report in the *Daily Graphic*, "protesting against nerve-stricken men being sent to lunatic asylums, said that soldiers who had served our country were put, here in England, into worse prisons than our prisoners in Germany. After three years of war they had been absolutely unable to make any impression on the War Office with regard to these men. There were 200 uncertifiable men in one of the blocks of the Middlesex County Asylum at Wandsworth. They were not insane. Such men needed cheer and employment."

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Such statements as these, unjustified as they are by facts, are likely to make a very unfavourable impression on the minds of the public, and are not creditable to any person who makes them. We thought that this idle tale had been extinguished by the report in *Truth* of February 23rd, 1916, but there appear to be some that still give credence to the legend. For this reason we think it well to reproduce the articles which appeared in *Truth à propos* the alleged outrage.

The first was published in that paper on February 9th:

"MAD-HOUSES FOR SOLDIERS.

"Owing to the inadequate manner in which Parliamentary proceedings are nowadays reported in the daily press, it will be news to a great many people that numbers of invalided soldiers suffering from nervous and mental disorder, but not certifiable lunatics, are at present being treated in lunatic asylums. At intervals during the latter part of last Session several members of Parliament have been agitating against this proceeding by the only means at present available, namely, harrying with questions the representatives of the War Office in the House of Commons. They have, however, found themselves, as too often happens in such cases, up against an official stone wall—a wall more than usually impregnable at present owing to the absence of any organised Opposition. In this state of things the only remedy lies with public opinion, and fortunately this is one of the rare cases in which public opinion can be appealed to and can express itself in opposition to the Government without any fear of assisting the enemy. For these reasons I draw special attention to the following letter from a correspondent thoroughly familiar with all the facts of the case:

"'SIR,—A good deal of attention has been given lately in the medical world to a vast number of instances of strange and perplexing nerve-disturbance occurring as the result of prolonged stress, exhaustion, sudden shock, or even (it may be) the intolerable strain on natural human susceptibilities unstrung by scenes of horror. It has been pointed out how varying must be the treatment adapted to these many different manifestations. And in the case of officers all kinds of interesting methods are resorted to for linking up again with stable normal life the transiently shattered threads of consciousness.

"'With the *rank and file*, however, the case is sadly different. The Under-Secretary for War, when questioned on September 30th, 1915, admitted that all that is done for 'uncertifiable' nerve-shaken soldiers of the rank and file is to place them *in a block of a county asylum, and under the same management as the rest of the asylum, which is in use for certified lunatics.*

"'He acknowledges that these soldiers, being uncertifiable, could not, if they were civilians, be *legally* placed in such a position (see Hansard, September 30th, 1915). Yet this is the way in which our brave soldiers are treated (who have been willing to sacrifice life, limb, and prospects in their country's cause) when sent home to recuperate after the fearful strain through which they have been passing. The Director-General promised a year ago that special treatment in hospitals should be provided for them, *apart from lunacy*. But this is how this promise has been kept.

"'There are numbers of such cases among the wounded, who are every whit as much shaken, yet who recover in a short time with rest and sleep and medical care in the base hospitals. Why, then, are the unwounded sent to blocks of county asylums, where the public know well that all the inmates are *certified as insane*, and naturally conclude that the soldiers are regarded as insane, too? A taint so undeserved and so unnecessary should be removed, and our soldiers of the rank and file treated with the same consideration as officers, who are kept free from any association with asylums. It is a more serious risk for the men than for officers, since they have to depend on their own exertions for their livelihood, and (as pointed out by the Murray Commission on Disablement) the existence of such a taint may easily prejudice their future chances of employment.

"'The Chairman of the Labour Party asked in the House of Commons on January 26th, 1916, why the rank and file are exposed to such a risk, and why hospital treatment is not provided for those who are uncertifiable.

"'A sum is paid by the War Office to the asylum authorities in respect of the 'care and treatment' of these uncertifiable soldiers, and the arrangement relieves the War Office of responsibility. The Lunacy Board of Control may have the best

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of intentions, but it is not its proper function to deal with the *uncertified*. When once placed under the wing of lunacy authorities these soldiers may readily be certified at any moment, without appeal, at the will of the asylum doctor and commanding officer.

"'It will not look well at the end of the war if many of our soldiers are found in asylums, and their families in trouble, and perhaps without support.

"'Yours faithfully,

"'PRO PATRIA.'

"In view of the reference made in the above letter to promises made by the Director-General of the Army Medical Department which have not been kept, it should be explained that about a year ago a very weighty memorial upon this subject was addressed to Lord Kitchener by a large body of M.P.'s and medical men. The matter was referred to the Director-General of the Army Medical Department, who received a deputation of the memorialists, and in what passed subsequently Sir Alfred Keogh certainly conveyed the impression that the views expressed in the memorial would be carried out. They certainly have not been. No doubt officialdom will be ready with plenty of excuses for what has been done, and at times like these it is as well to give those who have to deal with unprecedented difficulties under emergency conditions credit for a sincere desire to do their best. But I am inclined to think that the excuses, when brought out into the light of day, will not do, and that the public will decide that the best which officialdom has yet been able to do is not good enough. The official mind evidently recognises that it is important to save the men whom it is putting into lunatic asylums from future stigma as having been under treatment as lunatics. How does it seek to avoid this? By temporarily rechristening an asylum or a block of buildings in an asylum 'Army Hospital So-and-So.' Is this good enough? The plain facts are that because they are soldiers who cannot help themselves the men are being put into asylums in circumstances where this could not be done if they were civilians. This is a very wide stretch of military law and military authority. That it should happen in consequence of what the men have already suffered in war will be repugnant to the feelings of almost everybody, and the more so because it has not been found necessary to extend this method of treatment to officers in the same condition. It will take a very strong case to justify what is being done, and the public are entitled to know what the justification is. We are not only entitled to know it, but bound to find out, for the men concerned are perfectly helpless, and we all have an imperative duty to look after them."

The second article appeared in the issue of February 23rd:

"NERVE-SHOCKED SOLDIERS.

"On February 9th a letter signed 'Pro Patria' was published in *Truth* severely criticising the method which has been adopted for the treatment of soldiers suffering from nerve-disturbance in consequence of the shocks of war. The gravamen of the criticism was that such soldiers are treated in 'blocks of county asylums,' and that this was being done in violation of a promise given a year ago by the Director-General, Army Medical Department, that such 'special treatment in hospitals should be provided, apart from lunacy.' In reply to this, it was suggested that the Editor should see for himself the principal establishment to which these observations apply, and judge for himself of the justice of the accusation. He did so. The establishment in question is the Springfield Military Hospital, Beachcroft Road, Upper Tooting. Having visited it and seen everything there was to see material to the charge, under the guidance of Major Worth, M.D., R.A.M.C., the Commanding Officer, the Editor comes to the conclusion that the accusation is absurd, and feels it his duty to say so, for the sake of everybody concerned, and especially of the men.

"The sole foundation for the accusation, so far as the Springfield Hospital is concerned, is that the building is situated on land attached to the Wandsworth Asylum of the Middlesex County Council, and that the Commanding Officer is also the Superintendent of that institution. The asylum stands in its own ground, surrounded by a high wall. The hospital was erected on the other side of this

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wall at some time subsequent to the asylum, as a special institution for imbecile children. The War Office has taken over this building, and controls and conducts it as an ordinary military hospital. The second in command is a quartermaster of the R.A.M.C. He has under him a staff of R.A.M.C. orderlies in uniform, and a certain number of female hospital nurses. There is a military sentry on duty at the gate, which is at the end of a lane leading from Beachcroft Road to the hospital and leading nowhere else. The whole atmosphere of the place is that of a military establishment. The hospital itself is, externally and internally, a delightful building, in the designing of which the greatest care must have been taken, and little expense spared, in order to provide the original inhabitants with a beautiful home. In going over it I was chiefly struck with wonder as to what some of the ratepayers would say if they knew how much of their money had been spent for this purpose. The house stands in a splendid situation on the brow of a slight hill, with a broad outlook westward and southward over open fields. It must have several acres of ground round it for the use of the patients. Except for the high wall on one side, the whole surroundings are as rural as they could be on the outskirts of a London suburb. In short, the place is an ideal one for the purpose for which it is being used, and the soldiers must be hard indeed to please if they do not thoroughly enjoy their residence there. They present no visible sign of not doing so. Some of them, poor fellows, can hardly be in the mood for enjoying themselves. Two or three were in bed when I passed through the wards, suffering more or less painfully. A few others were sitting in wheeled chairs, more or less without the use of their legs; a few others deaf or speechless. But the great majority of the 230 inmates were strolling about or sitting in the grounds, or lounging in the spacious and comfortable rooms, smoking, reading, or chatting with their visitors, who were numerous. In short, they were evidently enjoying what Major Worth told me is the first essential of cure, rest, and enjoying it under as comfortable conditions as you or I would if we went for a rest-cure to a well-equipped country hotel. They are under no more restrictions than their wounded fellow-patients in any other military hospital; indeed less, for Major Worth says that he believes in letting them as far as possible do what they like, and he thought that military discipline in his establishment was rather slack.

"In such circumstances I can only say, as said above, that it is absurd to suggest that these men are being treated in 'blocks of a county asylum,' or that special treatment in hospitals, 'apart from lunacy,' has not been provided for them as promised. The expression 'a block of a lunatic asylum' suggests something which bears no relation at all to the circumstances of Springfield Hospital. The condition 'apart from lunacy' is carried out in the spirit as well as in the letter, for I repeat that the hospital has in all respects the character and atmosphere of a military establishment. The ground of complaint amounts to this, that there is a lunatic asylum next door, and that the same medical officer is in charge of both houses. The first point is frivolous, and could hardly have been raised if the two buildings belonged to separate landlords. The second point, so far from being a reasonable cause of complaint, is really the crowning merit of the arrangement, because it enables the men to enjoy all the benefit of hospital treatment under the immediate eye of a highly qualified and experienced specialist. By all accounts, Major Worth is as good a man for this job as could be found in all England, and from what I saw I should think the patients are lucky to have him so close at hand.

"The charges made in the letter published on February 9th referred to more than one establishment. As to others than Springfield Hospital I cannot speak from personal knowledge; but I am credibly informed and believe it to be the fact that there is only one other where any association with lunacy law treatment can possibly be suggested. This is the Maghull Hospital, Liverpool, which was built for a lunatic asylum, but was taken over by the War Office for use as a hospital for nerve disorders before it was ever occupied as a lunatic asylum. Objection to the use of this building in this way seems a degree more absurd than the objection to the Springfield Hospital. That being the state of the case, I must withdraw the observations made in *Truth* of February 9th on my correspondent's letter. So far from reproaching Sir Alfred Keogh for not having carried out his promise in regard to providing hospital treatment, I think, after seeing Springfield Hospital, that he is to be congratulated on finding the chance of carrying it out in such an

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admirable manner. And if anybody feels any doubt on that point, I recommend him before he opens his mouth on the subject to do as I did, and go and see for himself."

The incident was also commented on in *The Hospital* of March 4th, 1916, as follows:

"THE SPRINGFIELD MILITARY HOSPITAL.

"The Editor of *Truth* recently gave publicity to an accusation of broken pledges directed against the Director-General of the Army Medical Service (Sir A. Keogh) in connection with the arrangements for 'nerve-shocked' soldiers. Having availed himself of an invitation to inspect on the spot the Springfield Military Hospital, Wandsworth (around which the contention seems to have arisen), he very emphatically refutes the whole of the criticism which he formerly printed, and incidentally testifies to the efficiency of the Springfield Hospital in a manner which must be highly gratifying to the Commandant, Major Worth, who is also Superintendent of the neighbouring Wandsworth Asylum, under the Middlesex County Council. An enthusiastic description is given of the hospital buildings themselves, and of the extensive grounds in which they stand; while the system of treatment as Major Worth administers it is also spoken of in the very highest terms of praise. Altogether both the Springfield Hospital and the Army Medical Department get a very excellent testimonial over the incident, which may be regarded as most satisfactorily closed."

We must say that it is a matter for surprise that at a meeting held more than a year after the occurrence of an incident which received such publicity at the time, there was apparently no one in the audience acquainted with the facts, and that not the slightest attempt appears to have been made to refute an absolutely groundless *canard*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WAR EMERGENCY FUND OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

SIR,—The time has come to make a further appeal for the War Emergency Fund.

This Fund was instituted last year to afford assistance to members of our profession who, in consequence of having joined the Army Medical Service, find themselves in temporary difficulties.

Many medical men, when called up, had to leave on very short notice, without time to make adequate provision for the continuance and maintenance of their practices during their absence. As a result they have had to face a severe fall in income even when supplemented by Army pay; while many expenses, such as rent, insurance, taxes, family maintenance, and education, could not be reduced. Although in a year or two after their return it may be hoped those affected will recover their position, still, in the interval help is, and will be, necessary, and it is to meet these needs that the War Emergency Fund was established.

To be effective the grants must be made on a liberal scale, and the fund from which they are to be drawn must be a large one. The sum obtained last year was about £4,000. This is quite inadequate, as at least £25,000 will be required if even a small proportion of those requiring assistance is to be helped. From the wealthier members of the medical profession, it is hoped, substantial sums will be received, but everyone should feel it a duty which he owes to his less prosperous colleagues to give the most liberal donation he can afford.

At the same time the appeal is not, and ought not to be, restricted to the medical profession. The public, too, may be rightly called upon to bear its share, and to show, by liberal contributions, its appreciation of the special services so freely rendered by the medical profession to the country.

The War Emergency Fund is a special department of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund. It is kept separate and distinct from the ordinary operations of the general fund, and is under the management of a committee specially appointed for the purpose.

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