

London were appalled that Mary should accept a position at such a small institution. Dr Rice at the Hellesdon wrote to her,

What right have you to bury yourself and your abilities in a little out of the way, one horse, dead-alive, luxurious place like that? ... You would be simply chucking yourself away and robbing the community as a whole of your services, which seems to me an absolute scandalous waste of abilities.<sup>20</sup>

Mary was fully aware of the fact that she was isolating herself from her professional community. However the Lawn offered her what she had struggled so hard to achieve and had been denied elsewhere: the opportunity to be in control of a hospital and to test her own ideas. She consoled herself with the thought that the small number of patients would ensure that she had plenty of time for research.

From her earliest days at the Lawn Mary was aware that the hospital had been badly managed and was burdened with an uninterested and inefficient Board of Governors. She attempted to remedy the situation by increasing the number of patients and placing the hospital's finances on a sounder footing. Her efforts were rewarded by early success, and in April 1930 she was able to report an increase in the number of patients and £10 credit! Moreover she was exercising considerable selectivity in her choice of patients, avoiding those with chronic mental illness whom she could do nothing to help. At the same time she attempted to raise the hospital's professional standards by encouraging her nursing staff to undertake courses of study. However the hospital was poorly equipped and the staff were underpaid. With these handicaps it could not hope to compete with even the most backward public institutions. In August 1930 Mary confided in her father: 'I'm pretty "fed up" with "The Lawn"—there seems no hope of getting any "forrarder" in improving the place, as the Governors won't make any effort to collect funds—and I am seriously thinking of trying to find "a better hole".'<sup>21</sup>

By 1931 England was firmly caught in the grips of the Depression. The Lawn's accounts for the quarter ending 31 March showed a loss of some £750. Mary predicted that the hospital would be bankrupt by the end of the year. The anxiety resulting from financial and staffing problems was compounded in August when a patient committed suicide. Mary's confidence was dashed and she gave up hope. She wrote to Fred:

I feel generally that I'm a complete failure, and think I shall insist on resigning and letting them get some one else, as a last hope at setting the place on its feet. ... Anyway, I've had about as much as I can stand and shall be off my head completely if things go on much longer like this.<sup>22</sup>