

On Monday afternoon a visit was made to the San José Institution for poor epileptics who are not insane, imbecile, nor idiotic. It is situated some distance from Madrid on a large table-land, a considerable height above the level of the sea. It was founded by the Marquis of Vallejo, who gave a large part of his fortune in order to build an institution for epileptics in memory of his son, who died of epilepsy. The institution consists of eleven pavilions, five of which are used respectively as an administrative block, a chapel, a home for the monks who attend to and, if necessary, nurse the epileptics, a kitchen, and an infirmary, to which is attached an operating theatre, which was fitted up with the most modern appliances. The dispensary contained drugs of all kinds, not only for the treatment of epilepsy, but apparently for all kinds of diseases. Of the other pavilions, two are for boys, two for young men, one for those of faulty habits, and one for dangerous cases. In two of the pavilions there were schools and workshops, and in the basement of another there was a gymnasium. The institution is intended to accommodate 120 male patients, but at present there are only 55 in residence, some of whom are boys. The pavilions are separated from one another by plantations, but an unnecessary feature of the institution was a very high wall which surrounded the pavilions. In England this is not considered necessary, and as no patients were to be admitted if insane, imbecile, or idiotic there appeared to be no reason for it. The patients seemed to be well fed, and were happy and contented.

On the same evening the President of the section, who is the proprietor of the Maison de Fous, gave a banquet to the members of the section in the dining-hall of the institution. It is not, as may be imagined, an asylum for idiots, but a private asylum for the treatment of the insane. Bread is made in the establishment, and the cattle are put to death in a slaughterhouse fitted up for the purpose. Dr. Esquerdo possesses vineyards, and makes the wine which is used by himself and the patients. The writer of this notice had no opportunity of seeing the wards and dormitories, but he was informed by Dr. Macdonald, of New York, that the arrangements made for the patients were much inferior to those in use in English and American asylums.

The members of the Association may be pleased to hear that three of their number were made Honorary Presidents of the section. Dr. Wiglesworth, our President, whom the papers persisted in calling Ughiwerth, or some such name, was elected an Honorary President at the commencement of the work of the section, Dr. Sutherland was elected and took the chair after reading his paper, and Dr. Fletcher Beach was elected on the concluding day, and took the chair for two hours until called on to read his paper. During the time he occupied the chair, among other papers that were read two were by Americans, Dr. Hughes, of St. Louis, and Dr. Hoppe, of Cincinnati; the former's paper was entitled "New Views of the Virile Reflex," and the latter's "A Contribution to the Study of the Cortical Origin of Disturbances of Sensation."

SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES FOR SCOTTISH ASYLUM WORKERS.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE SCOTTISH DIVISION OF THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

1. Provision has been made by the Legislature for the granting of Superannuation Allowances to the Officers and Servants of the County and Borough Asylums in England. (53 Vict., Ch. 5, Sect. 280, 281, and 282.)
2. Similar statutory provision has been made in the case of the District Asylums in Ireland. (53 and 54 Vict., Ch. 31; also Loc. Gov. [Ireland] Act, 1898, Sect. 83 [13] and Sect. 84 [13]).
3. The Directors of the Chartered Asylums in Scotland are also empowered to grant Superannuation Allowances. (29 and 30 Vict., Ch. 51, Sect. 25.)
4. In other departments of the public service generally the Superannuation of Officials is provided for.

5. In the Scottish District and Parochial Asylums alone no Superannuation Allowances are obtainable by the Officers and Servants, however long and meritorious their services may have been, or however much they may be incapacitated by injury, ill-health, or other conditions arising from the nature of their employment.

6. The Officers and Servants of the Scottish District and Parochial Asylums have exactly the same kind of duties to perform, and they run the same risks as the employees in other Asylums.

7. Of all public employments, Asylum service is the most anxious and responsible, and the most dangerous to the health of both body and mind.

8. The omission from the Scottish Lunacy Acts of a satisfactory scheme of Superannuation Allowances for the Officers and Servants of the District and Parochial Asylums entails a peculiar injustice on a highly important body of public servants, for which they receive no compensation in the shape of higher salaries and wages or otherwise, their remuneration being such as to render it quite impossible for them to make adequate provision for old age or infirmity.

9. This exceptional and anomalous treatment of Scottish Public Asylum workers is not only grievously prejudicial to these individuals, but it is also opposed to public policy and detrimental to the best interests of the insane. It is in the highest degree necessary, for the efficient and successful administration of our Asylums, for the protection of the insane and the promotion of their welfare and cure, to secure and retain the services of the best possible officials, and to do all that is reasonable to remove any cause of discontent and restlessness. It cannot be expected that such persons will be induced to take up and continue in a line of work, in itself in many ways repugnant, unless terms are offered to them at least as good as those obtainable in other Asylums and in other public departments, which draw their recruits from the same class of people. As a matter of fact it is found extremely difficult to obtain the services of persons possessed of the qualifications requisite for the proper care and treatment of the insane, while the number of the changes which take place annually in the staffs of the Asylums is deplorable. It is believed that this very unsatisfactory state of matters is largely due to the fact that in the Asylums in question the employees have no prospect whatsoever of receiving annuities when they retire, worn out by the exacting duties of their calling, or incapacitated by the various accidents to which it renders them liable. The General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland have frequently referred to this matter in their Annual Reports, and they have pointed out how prejudicial these frequent changes are to the interests of the patients in the Asylums. The General Board have long been, and still are, in favour of the provision of a scheme of Pensions for all Scottish Public Asylums.

10. Members of Parliament are respectfully invited to give this Statement due consideration, and they are earnestly desired to support in Parliament any measure calculated to satisfy the reasonable claim of Scottish Public Asylum Officials to be treated on the same principle as the Officials in English and Irish Asylums.

THE FOLLOWING MEMORIAL WAS, ON THE 16TH MARCH, 1903, AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, ADDRESSED BY THEIR HONORARY SECRETARY, DR. FLETCHER BEACH, TO THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND.

I am requested by the Parliamentary Committee of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland to bring before your Lordship the subject of retiring allowances for the officers and servants of district and parochial asylums for the insane in Scotland, and to beg your Lordship's favourable consideration of the following statement.

It is a remarkable fact that these officers stand by themselves in the public asylum service of the United Kingdom in not having any prospect whatever of receiving annuities when they retire, worn out by the exacting duties of their calling, or incapacitated by the various accidents to which it renders them liable.

In the public asylums of England and Ireland some provision for the granting of pensions has been made by the Legislature, and similar provision has been made in the case of chartered or royal asylums of Scotland; but in the Scottish district and parochial asylums alone retiring allowances are not obtainable, although the workers in these asylums have exactly similar duties to perform and run the same risks as other asylum employees.

How trying and arduous these duties are, how numerous and serious are the risks which they entail, must be well known to your Lordship. The nature of asylum work is such that few can hope to continue in it for a prolonged period without incurring the hazard of mental or physical break-down, while the workers are also exposed to those dangerous assaults which are from time to time committed by homicidal and violent patients. I beg to draw your Lordship's attention to the following extract from the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Lunatics, 27th July, 1860:

"It would further seem desirable to reduce the time at which committees of visitors may grant superannuation allowances to their medical officers. Their duties are so peculiar, and such painful consequences are known to result from incessant intercourse with the various forms of this distressing disease, when prolonged for many years, that your Committee believe it would tend to greater efficiency if the period which stands at present at twenty years were reduced to fifteen." Although this recommendation is confined to medical officers, it is applicable with equal force to all others employed in the care of the insane.

Your memorialists venture to think that no argument will be required to convince your Lordship that the anomalous condition under which the great majority of Scottish asylum officials labour amounts to a grave injustice.

While this actual and relative injustice to a large body of individuals engaged in the public service appears of itself to call for a change in the law, it is urged that the interests of the community in general, and of the insane in particular, are likewise involved on the following grounds. Public economy demands that our asylums shall be so served as to secure the speedy and effectual recovery and restoration to civil life of all persons suffering under mental disorder to whom recovery is possible. Public sentiment insists on the care and treatment of all insane persons being conducted on lines which call for exceptional tact, intelligence, and temper on the part of the guardians of this afflicted and helpless class. It is obviously necessary that everything possible, that is fair and reasonable, should be done to obtain and retain the services of persons possessing these peculiar qualifications. In private administrations, which require special services, the first and principal step taken to attract suitable employees is to offer terms in advance of, or at least equal to, the average. In all other departments of public employment candidates are attracted and their services secured by the prospect of receiving more or less adequate retiring allowances. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that no public employment is in its nature less attractive than the service of our public asylums, and that in no other service are the duties so frequently repelling or so dangerous to the health of both body and mind; while it is certain that the scale of wages and salaries at present being paid, or likely to be paid in the future, in the Scottish public asylums will not allow of their recipients saving out of them an adequate provision for old age or infirmity. The consequences of this prejudicial and imprudent treatment of Scottish asylum servants are easily discernible. Apart from the injustice from which many old and faithful servants have suffered and are suffering, it is found extremely and increasingly difficult to secure the services of persons fit to be entrusted with the responsible care and treatment of the insane, and the number of changes which take place in the staffs of the asylums every year is deplorable. The General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland have repeatedly referred to this matter in their reports, and they have pointed out how prejudicial these frequent changes are to the interests of the insane. It is evident that they must be so, and every one acquainted with asylum administration knows how disastrous the results have been.

It is respectfully submitted that the omission from the Scottish Lunacy Acts of a satisfactory scheme of retiring allowances for the officers and servants of district and parochial asylums is detrimental to the efficient administration of these institutions, is prejudicial to the best interests of the insane, is inconsistent with

sound financial policy and public sentiment, and entails a grievous injustice upon a highly responsible and important class of public servants.

Your memorialists are conscious of the difficulties which stand in the way of effecting any statutory change such as is here suggested, but they feel confident that if their views have your Lordship's sympathy and support these difficulties will not prove to be insuperable. The addition or alteration of a few words in the existing statute would secure all that is now craved.

Trusting that your Lordship may find it possible to give a kindly consideration to this statement as made on behalf of a body which is peculiarly entitled to speak from knowledge and experience, I am, etc.

ASYLUM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Report for 1902 shows that for the twelve months ending the 31st December, 1902, the membership comprised 119 Life Members, 119 Associates, and 4664 Ordinary Members, making a total of 4902, as compared with 4116 on the roll of 1901.

The Executive Committee point out that, on the strong recommendation of the sub-Committee on "Medals," they have been compelled to increase the minimum length of service for competitors for gold medals to thirty-five years instead of thirty as originally proposed, and for silver medals to thirty years instead of twenty-five.

This change has proved necessary in consequence of the unexpectedly large number of entries at the lower periods of service.

In accordance with a suggestion thrown out by Sir James Crichton Browne in his address at the annual meeting, a Reading Union has been established for the members, under the supervision of a sub-committee, who have drawn up a code of rules which it is hoped may be the means of placing the "Union" on a firm and permanent basis.

The "Homes of Rest" fund has aided seventeen applicants during the year, and the whole report shows that the Association is vigorous and flourishing.

LUNACY ADMINISTRATION IN VICTORIA.

Reference has frequently been made in these columns to the maladministration of the Lunacy Department in Victoria, chiefly owing to the division of authority and political interference. Thirty years ago a commission of inquiry recommended that the asylum staffs should be placed on a different footing from the other civil servants. Twenty years ago a similar recommendation was made by a Royal Commission, and every board of inquiry since has repeated the advice. Nothing has been done, however, and recently matters have culminated in a most complicated "asylum scandal," as the newspapers term it, and monstrous instances of political defiance of official experts. In April last one of the medical officers at Kew Asylum, whose name has been most mysteriously withheld, suddenly absented himself without leave and was found in a private hospital. His incapacity for his responsible position had been for some time apparent to his superior officers. He was granted three months' leave with the understanding that he would resign at the end of that time. When that time came, however, the Chief Secretary (the Minister at the political head of the Department) ordered him back to duty. The Inspector-General (Mr. J. V. McCreery) protested, and the Chief Secretary then suggested that the officer in question should be examined by a board of medical men. The inspector agreed to this, but the officer objected to the *personnel* of the suggested board, and the Chief Secretary finally asked Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Joske to report as to whether the officer was fit for duty. These two gentlemen are paid official visitors to asylums; it appears, however, that they were not asked to report in their official capacity, but to send in a