

Occasional Notes.

Tuberculosis in Asylums.

IT is well that the appeal of our President has not fallen on deaf ears. The Association have considered it advisable to form a small Committee to co-operate in the National Movement, which was inaugurated so nobly by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and to enforce by every legitimate means the advantages of the modern treatment of tuberculosis. We have much pleasure in congratulating our General Secretary on the results of his arrangements, which have placed the important question of phthisis in asylums in a position of prominence, with the prospect of authoritative solution.

Our readers will doubtless carefully consider the relevant and cogent facts which have been presented to them in this and the last number of the JOURNAL. Dr. Crookshank's prize essay is not only an honour to himself, but also an honour to the Association which elicited it. Dr. France, following up the work published by him in 1897, opened the discussion of the 9th November with a paper which met with sincere and hearty approbation. Although there may be some slight difference of opinion between them as to the value and interpretation of difficult statistical inquiries, the outstanding facts are beyond dispute. Phthisis has been shown to be largely one of the preventable diseases. The condition of affairs in the asylums of this country is not in accordance with the demands of recent scientific developments. Our common humanity insists that the requirements of modern sanitation should be met, however hardly these may bear on the ratepayers of the country. It is a part of the White Man's Burden; but, lightened by the assurance that it is a compassionate, a beneficent, a patriotic duty, it will be borne without a grudge. The tendency of public opinion is assuredly towards the alleviation of the evil fortune of the insane in their cloistered lives; and, when it is clearly shown how alleviation may be secured with scientific precision, we may count upon active co-operation in dealing with difficulties as they arise.

Sir James Crichton-Browne in his eloquent speech reminds us that he first attacked the problem of tuberculosis in asylums in 1883. In the intervening years much knowledge has accumulated, and the scientific position has been fortified till it is now impregnable. It is not sufficient for us, however, to hold that position. The country is astir with hopes of relief from the intolerable assaults of a wide-spread and deadly foe. Now is the time to range ourselves with those who have already entered on a vigorous campaign, with the augury of a successful issue.

Pensions.

We are informed that the Parliamentary Committee has followed up the ideas expressed at the Annual Meeting, in the discussion of the report it then brought up. A communication has been sent to the County Councils Association, and is receiving attention at the hands of that important body. We know that the Lord Chancellor is in favour of a pension scheme, and if a satisfactory one can be arranged with the County Councils Association, we may look forward to the time when asylum authorities can go into the employment market with offers of pecuniary conditions equal to those now made by other services. We cannot too urgently ask each superintendent to furnish any information required for the guidance and assistance of the Parliamentary Committee.

The Sale of Intoxicating Liquors.

The final Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the operation and administration of the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors is now published, and contains much that is of interest to the members of our specialty, who probably see more of the extreme evils of intemperance than any other class of the medical profession. We can, however, allude only to a few of the more important of the many far-reaching suggestions contained in the Report.

“Simple drunkenness,” apart from disorder, the Commission proposes “should be liable to arrest.” Their recommendation,