

study of psychic status and condition, it gives us a wider range of mental vision, and from a higher level; it promotes that systematic arrangement, and that application, of knowledge, which, respectively, constitute the very essence of philosophic, and of practical, science.

Visits to Danish Asylums for the Feeble-Minded, and other Institutions. By WILLIAM W. IRELAND, M.D., Mavisbush House, Polton, Midlothian.

The desire of visiting the institutions in Denmark for the education of the defective classes was aroused in me by the praises bestowed upon them by my friend Jakob Soethre and Dr. Frederick Starr.* I knew that they were both men well fitted to judge correctly, and not likely to be misled by appearances, which are often deceptive and sometimes are meant to be so. What indeed struck me was the statement that there was no attempt at show in the Danish Asylums. They must, therefore, I thought, depend upon their intrinsic merits. I crossed the North Sea from Hull to Amsterdam in the "Professor Buys," a route which I can recommend for those who prefer a short sea passage. I travelled through Northern Germany, stopping with some friends at Bremen, where I visited several institutions. In the beginning of July I reached Copenhagen, and soon got into communication with my friend, A. Friis, the Medical Superintendent of the Custodial Asylum for Imbeciles at Ebberödgaard. Besides his eminent qualities as a physician and a man of literary culture, Dr. Friis has the especial merit of speaking English fluently, and, through his kind attentions, I escaped the difficulties and perplexities to which I should have been otherwise exposed.

GAMLE BAKKEHUS,

the oldest training school for imbeciles in Denmark, opened in 1856, is situated in the western suburb of Copenhagen, amongst pleasure gardens and divers places of recreation, and not far from the fine park of Frederiksberg. The presence of a large city renders ground dear, and this was no doubt the reason why the playgrounds and gardens were somewhat small in proportion to the

* In "A Visit to the Keller Institutes in Denmark," by Frederick Starr, in the *Charitable Observer*, August, 1896. Lincoln, Illinois.

number of inmates. I regret that I missed seeing the Superintendent, Mr. E. V. Rolsted, who was from home. The holidays were commencing, and many of the pupils were also absent. Dr. Friis and I were shown through the place by a teacher, Mr. M. Damm, who spoke German. He said there were about 200 children in the training school, some of them not educable. For these there were four male and sixteen female teachers. Only one governess lived in the house. No doubt a city like Copenhagen affords facilities for skilful teachers amongst its residents, but I always considered that the presence of the governesses was of great advantage even beyond school hours. From the Report for 1896 it appears that the whole staff comprises thirty-one persons, including the visiting physician, Dr. J. F. Nielsen. Amongst these are a singing master, a director of work, a teacher of gymnastics, a gardener, a doorkeeper, and a stoker. Ten of these employés were males and twenty-one females. There were also two male servants and twenty-four female domestics, nurses, chamber-maids, sewing-maids, and cooks. Out of ninety-five pupils, twelve adults were learning to work, and eighty-one were attending school. The schoolhouse was a roomy building of three stories, with wide passages; the schoolrooms were small, but airy and light, and well furnished with objects of illustration. In my opinion small schoolrooms are much the best, as several classes held together in one room distract the attention, and with imbeciles the great difficulty is to fix the attention. The dormitories for the boys and girls were in separate blocks, and another building was used for the cooking and stores. From the Annual Report of 1896 it appears that the average number of inmates during the year was 196. Nineteen had been dismissed (12 males, 7 females) and 15 (7 males and 8 females) sent to Ebberødgaard, and 37 new pupils had been admitted—23 males and 14 females; 3 males and 1 female had died during the year.

Cooking for dinner was going on busily; the provisions were good, and the children seemed well nourished. Each child was supplied with fork and spoon, but, to judge from what I saw, only about 10 per cent. used knives at table. It was easy to see that education was the main object at this institution, and that it was prosecuted in a diligent and intelligent manner without any attempts to make the results showy or striking. The number of teachers allowed the separation into many appropriate classes for the divers

grades of intelligence. A young lady, who spoke good English, showed me her stores of sewing, knitting, and embroidery, all neat and in good taste. The manufactures done in the workshops consisted of common brushes of various kinds, mats made of rushes, and some simple articles in wood. There was shown a ship model constructed by some expert pupil, and miniature Danish flags which could be pulled up and down upon the staff. There was a separate house for the infirmary—a wan looking building. At the door, on a movable bed, lay a hydrocephalic boy, whose huge head contrasted with his attenuated frame. The circumference was 695 millimetres. He seemed intelligent, and could speak and read. There were several children in the infirmary going in consumption. In the rooms there was a want of light, and I saw few objects of amusement; but there was a kindly old nurse. Of the four deaths during the year three were from phthisis and one from epilepsy. As far as I could learn there were no sporadic cretins in the institution. I noticed several microcephales and a considerable proportion of Mongolian idiots.

The dormitories were plain in their furnishings, though clean and comfortable; there were iron beds of a dull colour, without the brass ornaments or gay painting which make iron beds look attractive in our country. I noticed this dull pattern in almost all the dormitories which I inspected; the prices mentioned seemed to me so high that I said they could get better beds from Britain at a much less cost. One Superintendent, however, assured me that this was not the case.

It is noteworthy that in the Reports the names of the pupils are printed in full. This shows a decided difference in national character between the Danes and the Scots, for such a list in Scotland would cause great offence. From the reserved and cautious nature of my countrymen they persistently avoid any information which might harm their interests in any way.

THE CUSTODIAL ASYLUM OF EBBERÖDGAARD.

After the institution at Bakkehus had gone on for thirty years a Commission was formed in 1886 to consider the results, and to take advantage of experience for further arrangements. This Commission, which consisted of six members, already acquainted with the subject, made a careful and elaborate enquiry. They considered the uses

and functions of a Training School for Idiots, of a fostering institution, and of a custodial asylum to which all might be sent who could not be returned to their parents, or who had no parents or guardians. It was determined to carry on the work of teaching in the Bakkehus, and to build an asylum in the country where adults could be received, where the work of those who could be taught to work could be utilised, and those who could not work should have proper care, medical treatment, and protection. For this purpose a piece of land was bought, a deserted farm at Ebberödgaard, about two miles from the station of Birkeröd, on the railway line between Copenhagen and Elsinore. This asylum was opened in June, 1892, with 131 cases (80 males and 51 females). The plan from the beginning was complete and comprehensive, information having been collected through enquiries carried on in various countries. Through the kindness and hospitality of Dr. Friis I was enabled to take a pretty complete survey of the buildings and inmates. Ebberödgaard is situated in a beautiful undulating country finely wooded. The asylum is made up of blocks of houses, generally of two or, in the middle, of three stories, symmetrically arranged with open spaces, lawns or playgrounds between. There are separate houses for the helpless, for the workshops, for the male and female dormitories, for the hospital, and a small chapel for burial services. One group of the asylum buildings is separated from the other group by a beautiful avenue of tall lime trees, planted by a Lutheran Bishop, the proprietor of the ground long ago. The grounds occupy 150 acres, consisting of garden, arable, and meadow land. The water supply of the establishment comes from two artesian wells in the neighbouring woods. After being filtered the water is pumped through iron pipes into the buildings. They have in the farm 50 cows of the good Danish breed, three dairy-maids look after the cows; milking is too nice an occupation for imbeciles. Most of the milk is consumed on the establishment; but a little butter is made. There were 10 horses and 120 pigs; the sewage is utilised for manuring. They make their own gas, and bake their own bread. The buildings are of brick, of plain architecture. The rooms, never very large, are well lighted, and there is proper provision for warming. Everything was new and bright; the furniture had nothing of the superfluous, and nothing wasted in display. Some of the inmates were very helpless, reminding one of those in the Metropolitan Asylum at Darent; others

were robust and looked capable of work. Beyond what is called habit-forming, the teaching at Ebberödgaard is wholly industrial. The inmates had the good-humoured, frank, and confiding character common with imbeciles who are well treated. There were all varieties of idiocy, and some curious cases of deformity and nervous disorders. They were stout, well nourished, decently clad, and evidently well cared for. The breakfast consisted mainly of oellebroed, rye bread, and beer boiled together. I tasted this brew and found it better than I expected. In the course of my travels I have fallen in with dishes which seemed to me strange, though pleasing to the Scandinavian palate. Custom from childhood has much to do with taste. A French lady who had travelled through Scotland, once said to me that she could not conceive how the people could swallow porridge, and she appeared to suspect my veracity when I replied that I could sup porridge when I had lost an appetite for everything else. In the same way the Americans relish hominy and other preparations of maize which are not generally tasteful to us, and the whole of Northern Germany uses rye bread, which to most of us Britons tastes bitter. The dinner consisted of beef and bread, potatoes, and vegetables, with a milk pudding flavoured with a species of rumex.

The staff consists of 17 officials besides the Superintendent (10 males and 7 females). This comprises a gardener, tailor, shoemaker, and baker, an engineer and assistant, besides matrons and head attendants; there are also 70 servants (18 males and 52 females) engaged in keeping the house clean, sewing and cooking.

In reply to what I said of the growing difficulty of getting good servants in Britain Dr. Friis said that it was the same in Denmark; some people in Copenhagen brought servants from Sweden, and one gentleman, who had a large household and a large number of domestics, imported Russians, but had to keep an interpreter for them.

I saw through the workshops; the manufactures consist of nail brushes, paint brushes, rush mats, simple chairs, stools, and tables. Some furniture was made for the house. Dr. Friis said that the ordinary charge for board was £30 for those who could not work, and £21 for those who could. He thought on an average that this £9 represented the value of their work. The establishment is supported by private contributions, payments from the different Communes and from

individuals. The Government gives a grant of one-half for each case.* The asylum is not under Government control, but is managed by a Committee of Direction. The accounts of all the institutions are under the audit of the Government. The chairman is Mr. A. Asmussen, Chief of the Educational Department of Denmark, who has a villa near Ebberödgaard. I had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman at Dr. Friis' house, and retain a pleasing remembrance of his courtesy and instructive conversation.

Owing to the greater age of the cases and the residual condition of many of the patients the mortality is greater at the custodial asylum than at Bakkehus, though the hospital arrangements are superior. The daily average at Ebberödgaard during the year 1895-6 seems about 400. In April, 1895, there were 384 inmates, and on 31st March, 423. The admissions during the year were 71; the dismissals 14, the deaths 18 (12 males and 6 females). Of these 9 were above 20 years of age, the oldest being 41 years; one half of the deaths were owing to tuberculosis, 3 to epilepsy, 3 to heart disease, 2 to empyema, 1 to meningitis, and 1 to chronic diarrhœa.

The mortality of Ebberödgaard has been from 1st June, 1892, to 31st March, 1893, 11 deaths amongst 243 patients, 4.52 per cent.

			Deaths.	Average No.	Per cent.	
From 1st April, 1893, to end of March, 1894	...	27	361	7.5		
„ 1894	„	1895	...	24	384	6.25
„ 1895	„	1896	...	18	423	4.25
„ 1896	„	1897	...	29	420	6.9

In the two first years they had several epidemics of scarlet fever and diphtheria.

Dr. Friis, unwearied in his kind attention, introduced me

* The following note shows from what sources the Gamle Bakkehus and Ebberödgaard derive their income. From 1st April, 1895, to 31st March, 1896, they received:—

From voluntary contributions, c. 1,330 croners...	...	...	= £402
„ interests of legacies, c. 950 croners	...	...	= £52
„ payment for boarders, c. 296,070 croners...	...	...	= £1,626
„ income from a lottery, c. 26,400 croners...	...	..	= £145

£2,225

Of the payment for the boarders the Government had contributed 132,000 cr. = £7,252 15s. Formerly several of the charitable institutions in Denmark each had permission to have a lottery; now there is a common lottery, in which they partake. The Keller institutions have never had a lottery of their own, but they began to get their part in the common one from the 1st April, 1897.

to Professor Chr. Keller, who is at the head of the administration of De Kellerske Aandsvage-Anstalter, the different institutions founded by his father, Dr. Johan Keller, the first of them in 1865. The situation and appearance of these establishments showed their history; they had obviously been set agoing one after another at different dates as funds came in, and eligible feus or buildings came to be sold. They were in different parts of the city; one of them, a large five-storied house, was in a thoroughfare called the Baggesens Gade. Here the training schools are held, and the education of the feeble-minded is perseveringly prosecuted through methods which the experience gained by patient, thoughtful effort and long use has shown to be the most serviceable.

In addition to the 164 boarders, 70 scholars from the city take advantage of this school.

Another building, at Balderogade, also in the town, contained the trial or preparatory department, where the new comers are received and their capacities fully tested by lengthened observation and teaching. Here there were 90 boarders. Another building was reserved for idiots who could learn nothing. One of the Keller's institutions had been lately destroyed by fire, but the Professor had succeeded in hiring two houses next door to one another. Here I saw two well pronounced cases of sporadic cretinism. When I asked whether they had yet been given the thyroid gland or extract, Professor Keller said that they were fearful of doing so, having, I suppose, read of harm and death resulting in cases of myxœdema. On this point I tried to reassure them, and was enabled to tell them what success had attended Dr. John Thomson's treatment of such cases in Edinburgh.

Next day Inspector Johan Keller and Dr. Riis, one of the visiting physicians to the Institutions, took me in a carriage to the Home for Epileptics at Villa Poppina. It is situated out of the town, near the arm of the sea called the Kallebostrand. There were some children, but most of them were big lads; I noticed several microcephales. One patient had a glazed helmet; he used to strike himself on the face, and then cry out as if hurt. The boys and girls are kept in separate buildings. The rooms seemed somewhat crowded, especially as they were not high in the roof. The beds were of the same dull iron pattern, with grey bedcovers; but everything was clean and neat. The food was good, the milk excellent; this I found to be the case everywhere in

Denmark. The buildings had a newer, brighter look than the Institutions in Copenhagen, and the country air, the garden around, and the fine summer weather contributed to give a more pleasing appearance to the establishment, in spite of the hopeless character of many of the cases.

We then drove to the Asylum for Incurable Adult Idiots at Karens Minde, which is about a mile and a quarter from the city. Here we were kindly and hospitably received by Inspector Graae. This asylum contained about 200 patients. In spite of the unhappy name of incurable (*Uhelbredelig*) the patients in general looked good-humoured, healthy, and well-fed. The rooms were clean and light; it seemed as if the dormitories were rather crowded. I thought that in addition to grown-up idiots and imbeciles there were some patients belonging to the class of "harmless lunatics," and recognised several general paralytics. I saw three caged beds which were carefully stuffed, big enough to turn and sit up in. In Great Britain such an arrangement would have entailed apologies; but the Inspector made none, and pointed them out as something serviceable in treating the particular cases for which they were used. He had two large airing courts with wooden railings, and booths with seats at one side where meals could be served in fine weather. The asylum buildings are in a pleasing style of architecture, with a considerable space of ground. For this building the Rev. Johan Keller obtained a grant from the Government.

GAMMEL MOSEHUS.

The asylum for imbecile women whose training is over, and who can do some work, is situated about five miles from Copenhagen, in the midst of fields of rye, wheat, barley, and sugar beet. It is a well-built house, with working rooms, cowhouses, and a pleasant garden around, affording accommodation for about forty imbeciles, besides five officials, matrons, housekeepers, and teachers, and four women servants. Most of the imbeciles are young, though one was said to be sixty years old; she had no grey hairs. They were seated at a long table at dinner, but rose respectfully when we entered. There was a piano in the dining-room. The women seemed in good health; some very stout. The matron, an intelligent little woman, showed me the working rooms. There were handlooms for weaving linen and worsted cloth, which is said to pay. I saw no sewing-

machines, but they sewed articles of clothing and knitted stockings. Some women worked in the laundry. There was scant time to make notes of special cases, but I measured the head of one microcephale: Antero-posterior, 24 c.; circumference, 39 c.; transverse, 24 c. She looked strong enough, but could not speak; another who had a larger head spoke fluently. Everything seemed to go on in a quiet, gentle, and orderly way.

At easy walking distance lies the workhouse for men,

LILLE MOSEGAARD,

a substantial three-storied building, with some pretensions to architectural good looks. The staff comprises a superintendent and assistant, shoemaker, tailor, basket-maker, gardener and under-gardener, with two overseers or grieves, and three male servants with a housekeeper, night watch, and six servant girls. Here I saw a number of big stout lads; five were working with the joiner, eight at basket-making, and seven at shoemaking. The baskets were made from osiers grown on the farm. These were of the common sort, somewhat loose in make. The joiner exhibited rude chests of drawers, chairs, and tables. I saw one young imbecile sawing, another polishing wood. There were also reed mats. Near the house there is a large garden in very good order, with a variety of fruits and vegetables. The strawberries were ripe, and were being sold in Copenhagen. Tomatoes were in flower. There were ten cows and eight horses. Amongst the outdoor work done by the inmates are ditching and digging peat; every source of income is carefully utilised. The island of Zaaland is quite flat and difficult to keep drained, with many lakes and ponds and morasses. Yet one comes across, here and there, scattered over the fields and meadows, pebbles and boulder stones, some of them of great size. As rock quarries are rare these boulders are broken down to be used for road metal. Some of the inmates who can only do the simplest are employed at this work. From a stone heap near I picked up specimens of granite basalt and quartz, which, no doubt, had been carried in the uncounted geological periods from the mountains of old Norway. The house and grounds were surrounded by wooden palings. None of the Institutions which I visited in Denmark were enclosed by walls. Their inmates were all of a harmless character.

The total number of inmates cared for in the different

Keller's Institutions amounts to about 600, who are thus distributed :—

In School Departments	...	...	...	230
In Work Departments	...	...	...	150
In Karens Minde and other Asylums	...	...	...	220

The inconvenience of keeping these Institutions at irregular distances from one another under one central administration must be considerable, and I was told that Professor Keller purposes shifting some of them to the neighbourhood of others so that they should be less scattered, for which it is to be hoped the needful funds will be forthcoming.

I purposed visiting the schools for the education of the deaf and the blind in Copenhagen, but ere I could find time to do so the vacation had begun and the teaching was stopped.

At Bremen they were busy collecting money for an Institution for the care and training of the idiots in the territory of the old Hanseatic Republic. They already had a training school for feeble-minded children (*Schwachgegebte Kinder*), which I visited. It was in a house in a narrow street in the middle of the town. There were 82 pupils, all children. The head teacher is Herr A. Wintermann. I found him engaged at the speaking lesson with about a dozen of the youngest children; some of them were of low grades of idiocy; others more intelligent. It is evident he reserves the most difficult task for himself, and his methods showed that he understood the business. Up stairs is the second class, which was taught by a young man. There were 22 boys and girls who could speak, and were learning to read. They sang a song to the accompaniment of the violin. In the next room 12 girls were being taught needlework and knitting by a young woman. In the workshop there were about the same number of boys, who were taught to make baskets and to plait straw. None of the children live in the place; they are sent every day to the school by their parents. They all looked neat and tolerably dressed. On the whole a school calculated to be useful in which the best methods of teaching were diligently employed.

We also paid a visit to the Deaf and Dumb Institution, a pleasant house in a good street, with a nice garden. The Director, Herr Marquardt, showed us three classes; in general there were four, but one of the teachers was

absent. The schoolrooms, which were all separate, were well supplied with engravings and materials for object lessons. The first-class was for new pupils, children from seven to ten, nine in number. They were seated at desks in a horse-shoe form, so as to be close to the teacher, who sat in the middle. They were being taught primary sounds to prepare them for learning to speak by the German method. In the next class they had begun to practise speaking. There were about a dozen pupils, boys and girls, from 10 to 14 years old. They related the story of Elijah being mocked by the children. This was illustrated by an engraving representing a crowd of young Israelites teasing the prophet while two bears were biting and tearing the rear rank of them. The children shouted out "Kahlkopf heraus" in a drawling manner. In the next class, conducted by Herr Marquardt himself, we witnessed the results of the long and patient course of instruction. It was astonishing to note the quickness of the young pupils, all quite deaf, in speaking, and especially in understanding speech. I marvelled that they understood everything which I and my daughter said to them, although my mouth was covered by a beard and moustache. Herr Marquardt told them that we came from America, when they asked by what steamer we crossed the sea. We then explained that we came from Scotland, by Amsterdam; they said that was in Holland. A girl asked me if I were a doctor, and where I lived. I told her the name of the street, "Dobben," and the name of the friend with whom I was living, Herr Meyer-Bömers. One pupil picked up and repeated the name, and said I could walk there in ten minutes. To keep up the conversation I asked if they could guess how I had lost my eye, when one girl promptly said "Mit einem Kugel." The teacher suggested that she made this successful hit from being the daughter of a military officer. Altogether we were much impressed by the patient diligence of the teachers and the success of their labours. At the same time I am not yet a complete convert to this teaching by the German method. Herr Marquardt admitted that it would be more difficult to teach our language in this way, as in English the vowels are not pronounced so broadly, and some of the consonants are glided over. My main objection, however, is that this method is so extremely laborious that it leaves too little time for other subjects, so, though it may do for some of the smartest pupils, the less intelligent are apt to leave the

schools with little knowledge save this solitary accomplishment. I have a lingering conviction that figurative signs are the most natural language of the deaf. I have been told that pupils taught by the German method are forbidden to converse by signs. Looking through the window at these German children playing in the garden I saw some of them conversing by signs. When they noticed me at the window they at once stopped. It is somewhat amusing at large classes for the deaf in our country to see the children busy talking on their fingers to one another whenever the teacher's back is turned, of which, of course, he is quite unaware.

Visitors to institutions maintained by charity are benevolently disposed to bestow praise in hackneyed adjectives and adverbs, and to avoid critical remarks lest they might injure the reputation and immediate prosperity of the concern. Nevertheless, it does not seem to me of any advantage in the long run that the merits of such establishments should be represented as greater than they really are, and enduring harm has resulted from the managers escaping censure from a fear of depreciating the work which they were supposed to direct. It seems proper to finish this paper by considering how far the high claims put forth for Danish institutions for the defective classes are justified by what is done in other countries, for in this matter everything is comparative. The population of Denmark is about 1,967,932; the number of idiots and imbeciles was ascertained by an unusually careful enquiry in 1888-9 to be 3,857; of these about 996 are accommodated in the institutions just described, and we are informed that there are in Copenhagen two private schools for about a hundred children.* It thus appears that about 29 per cent. of the idiots in Denmark are received into asylums especially adapted for their wants. Carlsen tells us that the others are mostly placed in workhouses, poorhouses, and similar places, and a considerable number live with their relations, who receive assistance from the parishes for their maintenance. He only mentions 18 in infirmaries or madhouses. In England about 6 per cent. are received into special institutions, though idiots in the London district are well provided for. In Scotland there is not up to 8 per cent. of the idiotic and

* *Statistiske Undersøgelser angaaende Aandsvage i, Danmark, 1888-1889, ved J. Carlsen Dr. Med.*

imbecile in any institution specially designed for them. Moreover, if we had correct returns of the number of idiots in the population this percentage would, I believe, be much less. When the children in the charitable institutions become older and their parents are dead, or too poor to support them, they generally drift into asylums for the insane.*

In Ireland there is specific provision only for 60 idiots and imbeciles, and in the United States, where such institutions are maintained by the States Governments, only 6 per cent. find their way into them. In France the number of idiots who received special care must be less than 4 per cent. of the whole. Things seem to be better in Germany, but it is somewhat humiliating to find that this unfortunate class is better provided for in Denmark and Norway than in countries so much wealthier.

As already noticed the staff of teachers and attendants in these Danish Asylums is large, and they seem to be diligent in their duties. There is much less attention paid to outward show, while everything necessary is provided. Nevertheless, display is of importance in institutions supported by charity where the visitors rarely go further than appearances. In our own country, in asylums and hospitals mainly supported by contributions, those concerned are sometimes called upon to sacrifice the useful for the ornamental. I doubt whether the asylums at Copenhagen are in all respects under the best hygienic conditions, but it may be fairly taken as a proof that good care is taken of them that the average death-rate is low. The mortality during the past year in the Gammlø Bakkehus was a fraction above 2 per cent., and as far as I can ascertain the mortality in 1896 in all the Keller's institutions was no higher than this 2 per cent. The death-rate at Ebberødgaard from the time of opening till the 31st March, 1897, was about 6·26 per cent. The reason of the higher mortality in the custodial asylum is that the patients are much older. Of the 19 deaths which Dr. Friis had last year 11 were patients above 21 years.

Dr. Shuttleworth estimates the average mortality of the Royal Albert Asylum during the time that he was Superintendent as 3·5 per cent.; Dr. Fletcher Beach returned the death-rate of the Darenth Schools in 1889 as 3·07 on the average number daily resident.

* See *Mentally Deficient Children*, by Dr. G. E. Shuttleworth, London, 1895 p. 9.

The following are the death-rates of the Asylums for Idiots in England for 1895-6 on the average number resident:—

Western Counties Asylum	1·8 per cent.
Eastern Counties Asylum	5·9 „
Royal Albert Asylum	2·8 „
Earlswood	3·5 „
Normansfield... ..	2·6 „
Midland Counties Asylum	1·9 „
Metropolitan Asylum, Darenth	3·77 „

In the Report of the Larbert Institution for the year ending 31st January, 1897, the deaths are stated to amount to 5·6 per cent. of the number of children under treatment during the year. “This,” the Report goes on, “is a very small number, if the physical condition of the children is taken into consideration, and it is rather below the average of previous years.” I have shown elsewhere* the average death-rate of the institution during the years I was the Resident Medical Superintendent (1871-1881) was but 15 in the thousand. For the next fourteen years the average mortality was 50 in the thousand.

In the Report of the Baldovan Asylum for 1895 the visiting physician observes that “11 per cent. of deaths is not excessive, considering the physical condition of many of the patients.” Of ten children who died eight at least succumbed to some form of tubercular disease. No doubt a bad physical condition brings with it a high mortality. What should be aimed at is to improve the physical condition of the children by all available means. When at Larbert pauper boarders used to be sent from the Glasgow parishes, but the Directors of the Larbert institutions kept the applications so long waiting for their consent that the Parochial Boards got tired, and sent them to Baldovan. Thus I know something of these cases. At any rate they cannot possibly be worse patients than at Darenth, where the mortality is about one-third of Baldovan. I should be pleased to record a diminution in the death-rate of the Scottish Asylum. It is stated as 6·12 per cent. in 1896, but this figure seems attained by dividing the number resident at any part of the year by the eight deaths, instead of taking the daily average of inmates.

Reference to the industrial training recalls an old griev-

* *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for October, 1896, p. 329.

ance. During the winter of 1881 Mr. John Müller presented himself at the Larbert Institution with a letter of introduction, stating that he was one of the assistants in the Pennsylvania School for Feeble-Minded Children, travelling with a view of collecting information. We invited Mr. Müller to stay with us, and he remained in our house in the Larbert Institution from the 15th to the 18th of January, 1881. During this time I showed him through the buildings, took him everywhere with me in my visits, and answered his numerous questions to the best of my ability. Some years after I received a copy of the *Proceedings of the Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons. Sessions:—Glenwood, Iowa, 1884*, in which there was a paper by the said Müller, entitled “Some Observations of the Scotch and Danish Institutions for the Feeble-Minded.” These observations contained a number of statements about the Larbert Institution, scarcely any of which were entirely correct. Amongst others:—“There is no industrial department at Larbert, and, like many others, this institution possesses no farm land. A small garden adjoins the main building, but otherwise there is no ground belonging to it.” And further on:—“The ability for handiwork, which proves so conspicuous among even low Danish idiots, is strange compared with the utter lack of it among the Scotch. I was assured in Larbert, when I enquired about the industrial department, that there was none, and, if one should be attempted, *there would not be more than two* in the whole house who would be able to use their hands for any kind of work.” “Whether,” went on Mr. Müller, “the difference may be referred back to national characteristics, I am unable to say; there is a possibility in this, however.” This means, I suppose, that the Danes are naturally very much more skilful with their hands than the Scottish. Fortunately, Mr. Müller’s observations were of a specific character, and free from that ambiguity in which such critics often take the precaution of wrapping their statements, for greater safety to themselves, so reply was to me easy, only, as I could not allow his assertions to pass without comment, I had to bear the expense of getting my reply printed. I reproduce a part.

“At this very time there was in the Larbert Institution a roomy workshop in which brushes of various kinds and mats of coir fibre were being made. In this workshop twenty-five boys were employed at different stages of work, though

some of the worst cases could do very little. From the Annual Report, which was dated 20th January, 1881, it appears that there were made 641 brushes and 34 mats, besides teasing and remaking mattresses. At the same time the joiner had in his workshop (a separate building) three pupils. He kept the house in repair, and made a great deal of furniture. The gardener had nine boys under his charge. The grounds comprised about nine acres, of which four acres were cultivated by the spade, and supplied the institution with vegetables during the whole year. The rest of the grounds not occupied by buildings was in park or playground; and the whole work of cultivating the ground, keeping up the roads and fences, and caring for the live stock, was done by the gardener and these boys, with a little assistance from the boiler-man during the summer when the pipes which heated the house were not in use. The girls were taught sewing and working in the house, by the governesses and matron. It ought to be considered that by the regulations of the Board of Lunacy I was not allowed to keep pupils above eighteen years of age, and therefore none of the boys could be said to have completed an apprenticeship. The number of boys in the institution was seventy-eight, but many of them were too small and feeble to do any work."

I scarcely thought at that time that I was writing history, for had Mr. Müller returned about six months after he would have found his remarks justified. The manufacture of brushes and mats was introduced by my predecessor, Mr. Addison, and we also taught shoemaking, carpentry, and gardening, but shortly after I left these industrial pursuits were abandoned, save the last, and, as far as I can learn, have never been resumed. I gather from the Annual Report that tailoring is now taught. This I never tried, for I considered it an occupation unfavourable to the physique, although, of course, sewing was taught to the girls. At Baldovan, I have been told, no trades are taught save gardening.

In all the best English training schools, such as Lancaster,* Earlswood, and Darent, great attention is paid to

* On a recent visit to the Royal Albert Asylum at Lancaster I found the workshops carried on with much spirit under the direction of Dr. Telford-Smith. The manufactures carried on were carpentry, basket making, mat making, plaiting, shoemaking, tailoring, gardening, and field work.

industrial training, and all these trades are taught. A variety of occupation is of great importance in drawing out their faculties. It is extremely difficult to fit imbecile lads for occupation against the competition of the outer world, but by keeping them in an asylum their labour could be so utilised that they could defray the whole, or a considerable portion, of their board. We had never any difficulty in selling the mats and brushes manufactured at Larbert, which were bought by the shopkeepers in the neighbourhood. They were somewhat better finished than those I saw in Denmark, but many of the articles made in that country were of a too simple structure for our markets. On the whole, I do not think that in manufactures the asylums in Denmark can claim any superiority over the best asylums in England, and they are much inferior in building and furniture. One point in which they excel is the subdivisions of patients and pupils into different establishments. Instead of being only designed for one class, young imbeciles as in Scotland, or including in large buildings every grade and variety of idiocy of both sexes as in some institutions in England, idiots in Denmark are arranged according to their ages, sexes, capacities, wants, and needs. It is easy to see that want of funds very much hampers the benevolent exertions of Danish philanthropists; without the assistance of the State they could never have been able to do so much, and it is to be hoped that the State will give them further aid and enable them to complete their work. As regards Great Britain, we have long been convinced that private charity will never overtake the task which it has in part attempted, of affording proper care and education to the idiot and imbecile who are in need of help. We see with sympathy the efforts of "The English National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded," who are trying to found custodial homes for grown-up imbeciles; nor do we undervalue the efforts of those who aim at the establishment of schools for children who, from mental dulness, are incapable of deriving benefit from the teaching in the Board Schools. The Birmingham Workhouse Committee are making enquiries about the training of imbeciles, and have issued a Report. There is no movement about such work in Scotland; but the Poor Board of the Barony Parish of Glasgow have begun to pay attention to the question of training feeble-minded children, and we hope that their

deliberations will end in establishing a training school and asylum for the feeble-minded amongst the poor of that great and wealthy city, which would be an example and a model for the rest of Scotland.

Lavage in Refusal of Food by the Insane. By H. HAROLD GREENWOOD, M.R.C.S., Assistant Medical Officer, Derby County Asylum.

The refusal of food by an insane patient is a troublesome and frequently a serious matter, partly because, from the absence of symptoms in most cases, it is difficult to arrive at a diagnosis of its cause. In many instances it may reasonably be supposed that subjective feelings of pain or discomfort in the stomach, leading to the refusal of food, arise from organic disease or functional disorder of that organ. That there is a centre in the brain, disorder of which causes a distaste for food, has been suggested, but is scarcely worthy of serious consideration. The cause is more likely to be some local affection, such as malignant disease, gastric ulcer, or simple gastritis, giving rise to pain on the ingestion of food; the refusal of food is then the translation of a protest from a stomach in an unfit state to receive any but the lightest food.

Malignant disease is a well recognised cause, but less attention appears to have been given to gastritis, a common disorder amongst the sane, and assuredly more so amongst patients whose secretions are so notably disordered and who are indifferent as to how and what they eat, bolting their food half-chewed or even swallowing paper and other rubbish. From the imperfect action of the skin, of the generative organs, of the intestines, in fact, of all the secreting organs, so frequent in the insane, we should infer that the mucous membrane of the stomach likewise performs its functions imperfectly in many cases, and is therefore very prone to become inflamed. In the following case gastritis appears to be the most probable cause of food being refused:—

W.C., aged 31, a case of melancholia, refused food entirely on March 19th, 1897. For a week previously he had missed occasional meals, and had appeared out of sorts. He grew taciturn, maintaining a gloomy silence, his face wearing a look of profound misery and depression. During this time,