

with reasonable despatch ; but, as we have already indicated, the limited time at disposal does not allow of that full discussion and exchange of ideas which is so desirable on occasions of such importance. The alterations in the regulations affecting the nursing examinations will no doubt meet with general approval, and we trust that there will be no difficulty in arranging the examinations due in November.

In closing this brief note on the annual meeting we heartily re-echo the President's words in thanking the officers of the Association who did so much to render it a success ; and we cannot but express the hope that the high level of success then reached will be maintained in the future.

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*Asylums in India.*

It is just two years since the attention of the Association was directed to the condition of Indian asylums and the defects in their management. Since that time the subject has not been lost sight of, and it is now most gratifying to find that the Government of India has taken it seriously in hand. It was a fortunate occurrence that before Lord Curzon left England to assume his duties as Viceroy the requirements of Indian asylums were brought under his notice. He promised to look into the matter immediately on his arrival in India. Through a mutual friend Dr. McDowall was able to bring his presidential address under the notice of Lord Curzon. Whether owing to that fact or not, we now see the beginning of the reforms so urgently required.

Surgeon-General Harvey, Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, has lately been on short leave in England, and he was good enough to communicate to Dr. McDowall by letter, and also by a brief statement at the recent meeting of the Psychological Section at Portsmouth, the intentions of the Indian Government as to their asylums. It is proposed to establish a Psychological Department composed of men who have had experience in the treatment of mental disease and in asylum management. Although they will enter the Indian Medical Service in the usual way by competition, and will remain members of the medical staff of the army, arrangements

will be made by which they will not be removed from their asylum work except when absolutely imperative. By having men with asylum experience it is hoped to give the insane of India the benefits of improved methods of treatment. It was originally proposed to have one central asylum for each province, but this has already been proved to be insufficient, and there will probably have to be two or three. As in other countries, considerable difficulties have been experienced in getting the authorities to see that hospitals are required, not jails, for the treatment of insane persons. Surgeon-General Harvey is doing his best to get the new central asylums constructed on modern lines. He has also recommended that the pay should be sufficiently good to attract suitable men early and to keep them in the speciality. They will begin at about 600 rupees a month, and rise to about 1400 rupees, with free house and the privilege of consulting practice, which is expected to be considerable in the neighbourhood of large cities. These are the main facts communicated by Surgeon-General Harvey. The scheme has not yet been approved by the Secretary of State for India, but it is understood that he is likely to sanction it.

So far so good, is all that can be said in the way of commendation, for it is quite evident that much more is needed than is indicated above. One of the most urgent requirements in regard to Indian asylums is their inspection by experienced men. At present the reports made by the inspecting officers present the clearest evidence that the authors are men of no asylum experience. The criticisms and recommendations are submitted to the Governor in Council, a body which does not possess that technical knowledge and practical skill which can enable it to deal intelligently with the important asylum questions which come up for consideration. These documents bear the stamp of having been produced in an office, the reports clearly show that the closest attention (of a kind) is devoted to asylum matters ; the results, however, are not adequate. Whilst, therefore, we welcome the promise of reforms, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that they do not go far enough. We feel convinced that no good will follow these reforms unless they are accompanied by others. It would be absurd to expect a complete and perfect lunacy administration to be produced at the first attempt, but there can be no doubt that one thing

is indispensable—a thoroughly competent Commission in Lunacy, composed of experienced and tried men. That must be created before real good can result from the establishment of a Psychological Department. Without it, all will be as in the past—the men excellent as a rule, the system bad, the results most unsatisfactory.

As men with sufficient asylum experience do not exist in India, it has been suggested that a small Commission should be sent from England to inspect the asylums, and to give necessary assistance in constructing an administration which will gradually raise asylum management to the standard prevailing at home. There is much to be said in favour of such a travelling Commission. The work could not fail to be highly interesting, and the practical results should be of the utmost value. Finally, we must heartily congratulate Dr. McDowall on the achieved results of his labours. It is not often that a reformer commands instant attention.

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*Juvenile Offenders.*

The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1899, effects several salutary changes in the law as to the treatment of juvenile offenders. By the first section of the Act the first schedule to the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879 (which sets forth the indictable offences which can be disposed of summarily under that Act), is extended by the inclusion of two additional offences: (1) obtaining money, &c., by false pretences (Larceny Act, 1861, sect. 16); (2) setting fire maliciously to any wood, heath, &c. (Malicious Damages Act, sect. 16). It will, therefore, now be competent for courts of summary jurisdiction to dispose, with the consent of the accused, of any charge against an adult of obtaining by false pretences, where the amount of the money obtained does not exceed 40s. Where the accused is an adult pleading guilty, or a young person who consents to be dealt with summarily, the court can deal with the case, whatever may be the amount of money, &c., obtained. In order to prevent any misunderstanding as to what is necessary to constitute "false pretences," the Act provides that where a court of summary jurisdiction proposes to deal summarily with a