

[Extract from the Supplement to the *British Medical Journal*, July 30, 1927, p. 74.]

Treatment of Early Stages of Mental Disease.

Mr. Soutar moved, as a recommendation of Council :

That specialist work in connection with the treatment of patients suffering from mental disease in its early stages, whether at hospitals or clinics, should not be carried out by whole-time medical officers of public health or local government authorities, but on a part-time basis by medical practitioners who have special knowledge of the subject but who need not necessarily be devoting their whole time to such special work.

This, he said, referred to specialist work which was now being taken up so largely in clinics and hospitals with regard to the treatment of early mental disease. It had led to a certain amount of misunderstanding, and a letter had been received from the President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association (Dr. J. R. Lord) expressing his feelings on the subject in the strongest terms. Dr. Lord wrote : " This is one of those vulgar errors which owe continued currency to the unthinking and the uninformed—lingers in the last century—and to the timorous practisers of pretence." Mr. Souttar said that there was no desire to exclude any group of medical men from their proper work ; but he held that, as far as possible, medical work should be carried out by private practitioners—that it should not be transferred to those holding whole-time appointments under public authorities. That was the policy of the Association, but, on the other hand, they did not wish it to be thought that they desired to exclude whole-time men from these appointments.

Mr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN said that a member in his own Division, who was a medical superintendent of a very large hospital for early mental cases, had explained to him how much offence the resolution as it stood had given, and he hoped that by inserting a few words it might be made more acceptable. He proposed that it should read : " That specialist work . . . should not necessarily be carried out by whole-time medical officers," and that the words " where such are available " should be added after " practitioners."

Dr. J. R. GILLESPIE (Belfast) said that in Belfast quite recently the board of a hospital, on the suggestion of the staff, invited the medical superintendent of the mental hospital, which was under the Belfast Corporation, to undertake to conduct a clinic for early mental cases in connection with the voluntary hospital, and he had consented to do so. His Division desired this whole question to be referred back to the Council.

Mr. Masterman's amendment was accepted by Mr. Soutar, and the amended resolution was carried.

The Work of Women Medical Officers in Mental Hospitals.

ON November 20, 1926, there was held at the Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water, by invitation of Dr. Elizabeth Casson, an informal gathering of nineteen medical women interested in psychological medicine, to discuss their special work. These medical women were all who were able to attend out of a large number who were working, or had been working, in mental hospitals, and who had been invited. Mrs. Hume-Pinsent and Miss Darwin, Commissioners of the Board of Control (England and Wales), and Miss Landon, one of its inspectors, were also present. Twenty women doctors sent messages of regret for non-attendance, together with much helpful information.

Some of the subjects discussed were : The need for the patient to have the doctor most suited to his or her requirements ; the

importance of staff conferences, at which junior as well as senior medical officers should be present; the place of the medical women in the teaching of nurses; the terms of appointment of medical women with regard to promotion. It was noted that there are already medical women in charge of mental hospitals. Housing accommodation for the senior medical women and the importance of telling junior medical women of the need for work in mental hospitals was also discussed.

The following resolution was then passed: "That this meeting, which included fifteen members of the Medical Women's Federation, form a group concerned especially with the mental aspects of medicine and with the interests of medical women practising in this branch."

A committee of nine was then elected, the Chairman being Dr. Elizabeth Casson. That committee has now been made a Standing Committee on Psychological Medicine of the Medical Women's Federation, and has been strengthened by the addition of Dr. Kate Fraser, of the Scottish Board of Control.

It was agreed to prepare a memorandum on the work of medical women in mental hospitals, to encourage the appointment of medical women in such hospitals. Information has been received from women doctors in Great Britain, Ireland, America, Germany and Sweden on work of this kind in their countries, and the sub-committee is awaiting the result of a questionnaire sent out to different nations by the International Medical Women's Federation.

The Hon. Sec. of the sub-committee is Dr. Isabel Wilson, 42, Harley Street, London, W. 1, who will be glad to hear from any fellow-members of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association who are interested in the subject.

Part II.—Reviews.

The Psychology of Murder: A Study in Criminal Psychology. By ANDREAS BJERRE, LL.D. Translated from the Swedish by E. CLASSEN, M.A., Ph.D., M.R.S.L. London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1927. Demy 8vo. Pp. xii + 164. Price 9s. net.

The study of the criminal, from any scientific point of view, is a comparatively new branch of science. Such study, in its inception, naturally adopted general and statistical methods. It is now recognized that no real advance can be made apart from the intensive investigation of individual offenders. Only of late have