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THE CENTENARY OF THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

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THE first number of the *Journal of Mental Science* appeared on 15 November, 1853. It will be noted that we are still in our 99th Volume—the discrepancy is accounted for by changes in the mode of issue during the first few years.

The "Association of Medical Officers of Hospitals for the Insane" had already been in existence for twelve years when the Journal commenced publication, and it might be thought that the new venture was a sign of growing strength. It seems clear, however, that this was not so; membership was still quite small, and only a handful were able to attend the annual meetings; the original practice of a three-day meeting to include a thorough inspection of a mental hospital had been given up, and in fact in 1853 no meeting was held at all. In 1852, however, a meeting had been held at Oxford, and it was here that it was resolved to venture on publication. In the circumstances it was a courageous decision, which was fully justified, for within a few years both the Association and the *Journal* were steadily prospering.

Dr. J. C. (later Sir John) Bucknill was appointed Editor at this meeting. A year elapsed during which "some doubts were felt respecting the amount of literary support which could reasonably be expected from men so preoccupied as the medical officers of asylums," and Dr. Bucknill fortified himself by obtaining promises of support, written and verbal, from as many members of the specialty as could be reached by circular.

Criticism had come especially from Dr. Forbes Winslow, who five years earlier had started an independent *Journal of Psychological Medicine*. This was a quarterly, and in format and size (about 150 pages per number) bore a close resemblance to the later appearance of our own *Journal*. The following extracts will show why Forbes Winslow felt slighted:

"An attempt is now being made to resuscitate a suggestion made last year, at the meeting held at Oxford, in relation to the establishment of a journal in connexion with the Association of Medical Officers of Asylums for the Insane. The editor of this journal is indebted to the courtesy of a friend for a copy of Dr. Bucknill's circular, having reference to this subject. We have a right to ask, why this

circular was distributed to other members of the Association, and carefully withheld from ourselves? Again, how was it that the whole plan of the new journal was conceived, and even its editor selected, before the meeting of the Association last year at Oxford?

"We understand that few members of any influence or status in that Association have responded favourably to Dr. Bucknill's circular. Many distinguished members have distinctly informed us that they have positively refused to write for it, on the ground that a second psychological journal is not needed. We must confess we do not feel ourselves complimented at the suggestion to establish a periodical of the kind. Our pages have always been open to the communications of the members of the Association, and we have done our utmost to promote its well-being, to advance medico-psychological literature and to support the interest of those connected with the public asylums of this country. Having embarked a capital of some thousand pounds in establishing this journal, and having, since 1848, stood nearly alone in fighting the battle for the British psychologist, it cannot be otherwise than mortifying that those who have never lifted their little finger to assist us, should, in 1853, attempt to injure the property of this journal by starting a rival publication."

Fortunately, as we shall see later, there was a speedy reconciliation, and within four years Forbes Winslow had been elected President of the Association.

The title of the Journal was at first *The Asylum Journal*, and it was published at six-weekly intervals until July, 1855. Each number had 16 pages; the format was "royal 8vo" and the journal was printed in two columns; the price was 6d. per copy. These 14 early numbers constitute the first volume. After July, 1855, the format was altered; the Journal became a quarterly; and the title was altered to *The Asylum Journal of Mental Science*, and later to *The Journal of Mental Science*.

We may now glance at the contents of the first number, which was as follows:

*The Asylum Journal*, No. I, 1853.

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The Journal, then, begins with a "Prospectus," by Dr. Bucknill, and its opening paragraphs should be quoted :

" From the time when Pinel obtained the permission of Couthon to try the humane experiment of releasing from fetters some of the insane citizens chained to the dungeon walls of the Bicêtre, to the date when Conolly announced that, in the vast Asylum over which he presided, mechanical restraint in the treatment of the insane had been entirely abandoned, and superseded by moral influence, a new school of special medicine has been gradually forming.

" That period which is marked in the annals of France as the Reign of Terror saw the star of hope arise over the living sepulchre of the lunatic. Pinel vindicated the rights of science against the usurpations of superstition and brutality ; and rescued the victims of cerebro-mental disease from the exorcist and the gaoler. But the victory was not gained in one battle ; the struggle was carried on with undulating success, until in this country the good work was definitely consummated by the labors of Conolly.

" The Physician is now the responsible guardian of the lunatic, and must ever remain so unless by some calamitous reverse the progress of the world in civilization should be arrested and turned back in the direction of practical barbarism. Since the public in all civilized countries have recognized the fact, that Insanity lies strictly within the domain of medical science, new responsibilities and new duties have devolved upon those who have devoted themselves to its investigation and treatment. Many circumstances have tended, not indeed to isolate cerebro-mental disease from the mainland of general pathology ; but to render prominent its characteristics and to stamp it as a specialty.

" Since in the so-called psychical mode of cure, one personality has to act upon another, and since in this case the vehicle, as it were, in which the medicine is exhibited is the person of the administering physician himself, this is the first point to be considered. His circumstances (i.e., those of the psychiatric physician) must be such as to allow him to devote himself more or less exclusively to this branch of medicine ; that is, to give it the greater portion of his time, which is more necessary in this than in other branches, because the treatment in most instances demands a *second education*. He must be able by his personal demeanour to obtain influence over the minds of other men, which though in fact an essential part of a physician's mode of cure, is a gift that nature often refuses to the most distinguished men, and yet without which mental diseases, however thoroughly understood, cannot be successfully treated.

" The necessity of such exclusive devotion to the study of Insanity, of such a second education, would by itself of necessity constitute diseases of the mind into a strict specialty : and it would be difficult to instance any physician, who has ever become celebrated in the treatment of mental disease, or has written any work of standard authority thereon, who has not previously separated himself from the wide field of general medicine."

Bucknill goes on to explain the steps that were taken towards the foundation of the *Journal*, and sets out its aims and objects :

" The aims and objects of the *Asylum Journal* will be, to afford a medium of intercommunication between men engaged in the construction and management of asylums, in the treatment of the insane, and in all subsidiary occupations ; it will therefore embrace topics, not only interesting to medical men, but to visiting justices, asylum architects, and chaplains ; nothing will be excluded which is not foreign to the modern system of the care and treatment of the insane. It will be a record of improvements and experiments in psychotherapeutics ; whether in medicine, hygiene, diet, employment and recreation ; or in the construction, fittings, organization and management of asylums. It will notice new opinions in the physiology of the nervous system, and the neurological observations and discoveries of every kind.

" It is hoped that it will afford a means of conveying to Visiting Justices and others, in whose hands is vested the ultimate authority in the government of asylums, much valuable information respecting their own duties, which has not hitherto reached them through any other channel.

“ That the governing bodies of lunatic asylums and hospitals are much in need of some instruction respecting the principles on which their duties should be discharged is sufficiently evident, from the imperfect arrangements both of accommodation and management still to be found in many asylums ; from the excessive expenditure which has often been permitted in the architectural department, and the contrasting, but not counteracting, parsimony in matters more immediately affecting the welfare of the patients ; from their not unfrequently converting that which should be a hospital, even for patients incapable of perfect cure, into a great Almshouse ; from their forgetting that insanity is a disease, and their consequent want of the due appreciation of medical science in its treatment.”

The second number contains a summary of the new “ Lunatic Asylums Act, 1853,” and a note by John Conolly in reply to a German criticism of the “ Non-Restraint ” system. With this the *Journal* was fairly launched. Subsequent numbers contained much lively controversy between the total abolitionists (of whom the Editor was one) and the defenders of “ occasional restraint.” There are lengthy reviews of asylum reports and correspondence on a variety of subjects ; lawsuits are reported and local scandals exposed ; and there is an impressive body of clinical and pathological contributions, which may still be read with profit. To take one example at random, almost the first is one on “ The Prevention of Dysenteric Diarrhoea in Asylums,” but it is clear that the author is describing a chronic deficiency condition, and his observations and reasoning lead him to prescribe a diet of fresh vegetables and fruit.

The following are extracts from the minutes of the Association’s Annual Meeting on 22 June, 1854 :

“ DR. BUCKNILL, then being called upon to make any statement respecting the *Journal*, said . . . that members must judge for themselves of the literary success which had attended the undertaking. . . . From numerous letters . . . he felt that it had given satisfaction. . . .

“ . . . If he were tempted to make the slightest complaint that he had not been well supported, the number of original papers from different members of this Association, which the *Journal* already contained, would at once refute him. He trusted that Members would continue to supply him with similar communications in increasing numbers, and that they would bear in mind Dr. Conolly’s remarks when, at the Oxford Meeting, they determined to establish the *Journal*, that the case-books of asylums contained an unworked mine of golden wealth, which it was their duty to make productive for the public good.

“ . . . He felt sure that Dr. Forbes Winslow would acknowledge that their *Journal* was conducted in no spirit of rivalry to his own excellent publication ; but on the contrary, he hoped that the two might even extend the usefulness of each other.

“ The associations of public officers of asylums for the insane had long supported journals devoted to their specialty both in France and America—[DR. SUTHERLAND : and Germany]—he had forgotten Germany ; and he trusted that they experienced some satisfaction in no longer lagging behind the other civilized nations in this respect.

“ DR. FORBES WINSLOW spoke of the *Asylum Journal* in the most handsome manner. He did not consider it a rival to the *Psychological*, and he begged to move that “ The best thanks of this Association be given to Dr. Bucknill, for the manner in which he has conducted the *Asylum Journal*.”

Here we may leave the early history of the *Journal*, for this is not the place to chronicle its subsequent career, and a full history of the *Journal* and the Association remains to be written. The list of its nineteenth-century Editors is impressive enough—Maudsley, Lockhart Robertson, Clouston,

Hack Tuke, Savage, Rayner are among them ; as Dr. Drury told us in his Presidential Address, they were " great men, fierce and outspoken, with flails and scorpions in their hands." A last word may be said of Bucknill, who brought the *Journal* into being and was solely responsible for it for ten years—and during this time wrote about sixty personal contributions, brought out several books, collaborated in producing the best-known text-book of psychiatry of the period, superintended the Devon County Asylum and organized the Devon Volunteers. His statue may be seen in the grounds of Exeter Castle, but perhaps the ninety-nine volumes of the *Journal* he founded are his true monument.

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