

associated asylums in regard to research work upon the pathology of insanity; to make one visit annually to the associated asylums at the expense of the laboratory funds, and to make additional visits as required. This is a very generous scheme, and it is to be hoped that it will not unduly tax the energies of Dr. Ford Robertson and his assistant, Dr. David Orr.

It will be gathered from the foregoing that the aim of the Board has been to retain the services of a consulting specialist in pathology in the widest interests of psychiatry, and thereby to assist and develop similar work in the associated asylums. In short, the object of the scheme is to further our knowledge of the pathological processes of mental disease by instruction, advice, and encouragement. There is, unfortunately, an inevitable *aloofness* in asylum life. Medical observation and research is frequently pursued in uncongenial and remote surroundings; enthusiasm, too, often wanes in presence of dull routine and mechanical duties. Our Association has done much to bring its members together for the discussion of difficulties and the promulgation of ideas; and in a similar, helpful manner the Pathological Laboratory will keep alive that glow of intellectual vitality which medical education inspires, and will constitute a centre to irradiate the remoter hospitals for the insane in Scotland. It augurs well for the future of this scheme that fourteen institutions have already joined to set it upon a sound financial basis, and it is confidently expected that others yet undeclared will aid in developing the laboratory so that its operations may proceed with every encouragement. Under these favourable auspices, with the cordial support of the college, which was well represented upon the opening day, we may expect great results in the course of time. We venture to predict that the Scottish Laboratory will prove worthy of imitation by the other Divisions of the Association, and heartily wish success to the South-Western Division in their similar undertaking.

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*Irish Pauper Lunatics.*

The absence of a law of settlement in Ireland is beginning to be acutely felt in connection with the chargeability of lunatics. The insane who are sent to public asylums in Ireland are not paupers in the same sense as in England, for they do not necessarily come first within the purview of the

Poor Law. A considerable number of broken-down people of Irish birth, however, who become insane in England and Scotland are deported by the Poor Law Authorities in the latter countries to Ireland, and are then transferred to District Asylums.

This is regarded as a grievance, inasmuch as the richer island has had these poor people's services perhaps for many years and sends them home to die when their work is done.

Within the island itself the law which ordains that a lunatic shall be sent to the asylum for the district in which he may chance to be arrested, weighs unfairly upon the districts which happen to have a large floating population. Thus the Metropolitan area, which contains numerous hospitals and prisons and several very large workhouses, and which naturally attracts a steady stream of vagabonds as well as of the unemployed from all parts of the country, pays a heavy tax for its "advantages" in the shape of a very undue proportion of rate-supported lunatics. The same state of things appears to exist, though in a less degree, in Belfast and Cork.

We learn from the Dublin newspapers that the Guardians of the Dublin Workhouses are co-operating with the Governors of the Richmond Asylum in an endeavour to bring the matter under the notice of Government with a view to its being dealt with in the forthcoming Irish Local Government Bill.

We hope this is not the only branch of Irish Lunacy Administration which Government will then take up. We observe that a member of the Board of the Metropolitan Asylum is anxious to press forward the question of the boarding-out of lunatics, and proposes to call upon Government to take it up. Why this has never been done before we cannot imagine. The same desperation which, according to Sam Weller, prompts a man when he has no money for anything else to plunge in oysters must surely actuate the Irish neglect of a cheap method of dealing with a certain section of the insane. If boarding-out is ever tolerable anywhere it surely ought to be worth attempting in Ireland, where it is so hard to get money for asylum purposes and where there is no other alternative than the asylum or the workhouses. The revelations of the last few years with regard to the condition of the sane sick, and of the insane in Irish Workhouses have sufficed, we hope, to put an end to any of the projects, once freely canvassed, for the cheaper

treatment of lunatics by transferring them to such institutions from asylums. Even the Poor Law Guardians themselves, not generally very humane or very advanced in their views about such matters, are beginning to feel that workhouses are hardly suitable places for the insane on the lines of management which have hitherto characterised those unhappy establishments. In discussing this subject more than a year ago our contemporary, the *British Medical Journal*, pointed out that "to feed an Irish convict for one week costs 3s. 11d.; to feed a healthy Irish lunatic costs 3s. 5d.; to feed a healthy Irish pauper for the same period costs 1s. 5d.; and an aged and infirm pauper 1s. 4d." To which of the two last enviable classes the workhouse lunatic is supposed officially to belong we are not informed.

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*The Temporary Treatment of Incipient Insanity.*

The sudden collapse of the Lunacy Bill last year brought to a standstill the work of the conjoint Committee of the British Medical Association and our own on this subject.

This Committee, it is to be hoped, will still continue its labours, and be prepared, before the next Session of Parliament, with a workable adaptation to the English law of the Scottish clause dealing with the same stage of mental disease.

The Lord Chancellor will almost certainly introduce a "Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill" in the coming Session, and it would be a reflection on the business capacity of the profession if this found us unprepared with a practical proposition, on a point regarding which there had been such an emphatic expression of professional opinion.

The profession at large is too apt to undervalue the power it possesses of influencing legislation, but in the passing of the recent Lunacy Acts we had many opportunities of proving how great this power really is, a fact which should be remembered as an encouragement to future efforts in the same direction.

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*Provision for the Poor Private Insane.*

The last Report of the General Board of Lunacy for Scotland contains a most important and urgent appeal for legislative measures in relief of the poorer classes of the insane