

is really a school where special arrangements can be, and as a matter of fact are, adequately made for their education.

The company had lunch, and the President thanked Mrs. Langdon-Down for her gracious hospitality. Some members then returned to town, but the greater number proceeded on board the steam launch up the river, where a most enjoyable afternoon was spent.

#### IRISH MEETING.

A meeting of the Irish Division was held on Tuesday, July 25th, at Antrim Asylum, Dr. Hetherington, Londonderry, presiding. There were also present: Drs. Rambaut (Dublin), Dawson (Dublin), Nolan (Downpatrick), Wm. Graham (Belfast), S. Graham (Antrim), Amelia Grogan (Mullingar), Dorah Allman (Armagh), and Finegan (Mullingar), Hon. Sec.

The following were elected Ordinary Members of the Association:—Fitzgerald, James J., M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.R.U.I., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Carlow (proposed by Dr. Thomas P. O'Meara, Dr. W. S. Gordon, and Dr. Grogan); Ellison, Fras. C., M.B., B.Ch., T.C.D., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Castlebar (proposed by Dr. E. M. Courtenay, Dr. W. S. Gordon, and Dr. Arthur Finegan); M'Kelvey, Alexander Niel, L. and M.R.C.P. and S.I., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Omagh (proposed by Drs. C. Hetherington, W. S. Gordon, and Arthur Finegan); Smyth, Walter, M.B., B.Ch., R.U.I., Assistant Medical Officer, County Asylum, Antrim (proposed by Drs. William Graham, W. S. Gordon, and Arthur Finegan); Patrick, John, M.B., B.Ch., R.U.I., Assistant Medical Officer, Belfast Asylum (proposed by Drs. W. Graham, W. S. Gordon, and Arthur Finegan); Graham, R. A. L., B.A., M.B., B.Ch., R.U.I., Assistant Medical Officer, Belfast Asylum (proposed by Drs. W. Graham, W. S. Gordon, and Arthur Finegan); Keegan, Lawrence Edward, M.D. (Univ. Dub.), L.R.C.P. & S.I., Medical Superintendent, Newfoundland Asylum (proposed by Drs. Conolly Norman, Henry Cullinan, and William Dawson); Kennedy, F. J., L.R.C.P. and S.I., L.M., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Enniscorthy (proposed by Drs. Thomas Drapes, W. S. Gordon, and Arthur Finegan); Allman, Dorah Elizabeth, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.R.U.I., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Armagh (proposed by Drs. George Lawless, Amelia Grogan, and Arthur Finegan); Allen, John Gower, L.R.C.P. and S.I., Part Proprietor, The Retreat, Armagh (proposed by Drs. Lawless, Gordon, and Finegan); Strangman, Lucia F., L.R.C.P. and S.I., L.M. Rot., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Cork (proposed by Drs. O. Woods, William Scanlan, and Arthur Finegan); Kirwan, J. St. L., M.B., B.Ch., T.C.D., Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Ballinasloe (proposed by Drs. Fletcher, Mills, and Arthur Finegan).

The Secretary read several letters from members, regretting their inability to attend. The PRESIDENT of the Association wrote that he had been most anxious to attend, but at the last moment he found it was impossible for him to do so.

A letter was read from Dr. A. R. TURNBULL, Secretary of the Scottish Division, drawing attention to the recommendation in regard to the payment of expenses of the Secretaries which the Scottish Division had formulated, for the consideration of the Council. Dr. Turnbull stated that the Scottish Division was unanimous in recommending the payment of the expenses of Secretaries, and that he had forwarded this recommendation to the various divisions in the hope of co-operation.

Dr. FINEGAN said that in this important matter he was sure the Council would be very much guided by the action that would be taken at the Irish Meeting. He thought they should try to strengthen the hands of the Scottish members, with whom alone the question had originated.

Dr. NOLAN inquired as to whether financial resources of the Association would warrant this, and as to the amount of means to credit.

Dr. DAWSON asked what the expenses of the Secretary would be?

After further discussion, the Secretary having made some explanatory remarks, Dr. NOLAN said he thought they should defray the expenses of the Secretaries, and moved:—"That the expenses of the Divisional Secretaries of the Medico-

Psychological Association be paid out of the Association's funds, and that the said expenses be limited to a sum to be fixed by the General Council."

Dr. DAWSON seconded, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

#### PROPOSED REGISTRY FOR ASYLUM NURSES.

Dr. FINEGAN then submitted the following resolution, the adoption of which he moved: "That in view of the expressed determination of the Irish Local Government Board to assist in the provision of properly qualified nurses for the insane in union workhouses, it is desirable that the department afford facilities for registration of asylum-trained and certificated mental nurses on similar lines to that already established for hospital-trained nurses who may wish to serve under the Irish Local Government Board." Proceeding, the Secretary said he had better read the resolution passed by the Association at its last meeting in Dublin:—"Inasmuch as the Irish Local Government Board has declined to recognise the holders of the nursing certificates of the Medico-Psychological Association as being trained nurses within the meaning of 58 Vict., c. 2 (a ii) of the Local Government Act, and deems them ineligible to officiate as nurses for the sick poor in union workhouses, it is, in the opinion of this division of the Association, desirable that as long as the insane are retained in union workhouses attendants on the insane in such workhouses should be qualified by the acquisition of a certificate of proficiency in mental nursing equal in efficiency to that considered necessary for the nursing of the sick. Copies to be forwarded to the Irish Local Government Board and the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums." What originated this resolution was the case of a highly qualified nurse, holding the certificate of the Association, who had applied for the position of nurse in a union workhouse. She was unanimously appointed by the guardians. She was an intelligent woman, and highly superior in every way. She remained there for three months, and at the end of that time the Local Government Board wrote to the guardians that they would have to dismiss this woman, as she was not a qualified or trained nurse. The guardians retorted that she was a trained nurse, and had been trained in a certain asylum in the district. The Local Government Board at once wrote to the guardians asking them to send copies of her qualifications. The certificate of the Association was forwarded, and the authorities acknowledged the receipt, but said they did not consider that was a certificate of a trained nurse. The result was that they immediately ordered her dismissal, although the medical officer of the workhouse gave her a certificate to the effect that she was the best trained nurse he had ever had in the institution. Then the resolution he had referred to was passed, and was sent to the Board along with a copy of the 'Handbook' of the Association, showing the nature of the examination which nurses must pass before they could get the certificate. The Local Government Board replied in the following terms:

" Local Government Board,  
" Dublin; *May 11th*, 1899.

" Sir,—I am directed by the Local Government Board for Ireland to inform you that your letter of the 26th ult. has received their most careful attention, and that they are anxious as far as possible to assist in the object that the members of the Medico-Psychological Association appear to have had in view when they adopted the resolution of which you transmitted a copy for the consideration of the Local Government Board.

" I am, sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" THOS. E. MOONEY, *Secretary*."

The inspectors, Mr. Finegan proceeded, also replied in similar terms. In view of this promise of the Local Government Board, they saw in all the local and medical papers advertisements relating to trained nurses. Unfortunately, at a certain Union, where they advertised for a nurse to look after the sick poor, and also for a person to look after the insane and imbecile in the workhouse, they offered for the trained nurse £30 a year, with full rations, while for the person who had to look after the insane they offered £6 per year. (Laughter.) Now the Local Government Board had put the following advertisement in all the papers:

## "LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD FOR IRELAND.

*"Notice to Trained Medical and Surgical Nurses."*

"The Local Government Board for Ireland are about to open and keep a register for trained nurses, and a certificate as to the fact of a nurse's name being entered therein will be regarded by them as sufficient evidence of her professional qualifications for the post of trained nurse in any poor law union, infirmary, or district hospital.

"Until further notice the Local Government Board will, if it be so desired by any trained nurse on their register, notify to her the particulars of each appointment for a trained nurse that falls vacant in any Poor Law union or district hospital that falls vacant in Ireland.

"A form of application will be sent to any trained nurse who possesses a certificate of full training, and who may wish to have her name entered on the Board's register.

"By order,

"Local Government Board,

"THOS. E. MOONEY, *Secretary*.

"Custom House, Dublin; *May 1st, 1899.*"

Dr. Finegan, continuing, said he thought it was desirable, when the Local Government Board advertise for hospital-trained nurses and ignore the Medico-Psychological Association, and also in view of the determination of the Local Government Board to assist in the provision of properly qualified nurses in union workhouses, that the Department should also allow facilities for the registration of asylum-trained nurses on similar lines to that established for hospital-trained nurses who might wish to serve the Board. If that resolution were adopted by the Association it would be sent to the Local Government Board with the idea that the Medico-Psychological Association felt disposed to push the matter, and that they felt that the asylum nurses had been rather slighted and left out in the cold, leaving boards of guardians to do just as they pleased and employ intelligent persons at £6 a year instead of giving a proper remuneration. He thought this would elevate their nursing certificate and induce nurses to go in for it. He knew some nurses who said, 'What was the use of it?' They got nothing by it, and if they got a post they were taken out of it. Outside asylums there was no benefit to be derived from it. He sincerely trusted the meeting would adopt the resolution. It had already been adopted elsewhere, and had borne fruit.

Dr. NOLAN.—Am I right in taking it that a registry should be opened for asylum nurses, and is to be limited to nurses without training in a general hospital?

Dr. FINEGAN.—Precisely.

Dr. NOLAN.—I would be quite at one with the Local Government Board in refusing to recognise our certificate as equivalent to a certificate of training in a general hospital.

Dr. FINEGAN.—Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN.—If the register is limited to mental nursing it is all right. The resolution is very clear on that point.

Dr. GRAHAM thought that instead of supporting the resolution they should move a direct negative, and ask the Board to remove the insane from workhouses entirely.

Dr. NOLAN.—That might be a supplementary resolution.

A lengthened discussion arose in connection with the expressed desire of the Local Government Board to restrict the training of nurses to certain asylums provided with large infirmaries, &c. [The Irish Local Government Board appears to assume the attitude of affecting not to understand that there is such a thing as mental nursing, or else of affecting to believe that mental nursing is taught in general hospitals. It therefore will recognise no nursing in asylums, except in institutions large enough to contain infirmaries of considerable size, with special provisions for general nursing.—Ed.]

Finally, Dr. GRAHAM moved the previous question. The motion was not seconded. The original resolution was then put, and carried by one vote.

A paper on "Remissions in General Paralysis," by Dr. Conolly Norman, was, in his absence, read for him by Dr. DANIEL F. RAMBAUT.

Dr. NOLAN said he had been hoping that Dr. Norman would have made some observations upon the medico-legal aspect of the cases. The speaker had known some instances where actual remission took place of some months'—one instance

of some years'—duration. In that case he believed the man had returned to live with his relatives again. In the first case mentioned in the paper remission would not be so important, because the patient was always emotional. Remission was merely clinical; but in the other case he is said to have gone to normal.

Dr. SMYTH.—Why should this first case be called a case of general paralysis at all. Was it not a case of tabes?

Dr. FINEGAN said they all knew general paralysis assumed many forms, but there was one general form which must come up, and that was a persistent form of exalted ideas that they had not in other forms of mental diseases.

Dr. GRAHAM.—That is only one form. You may have melancholic ideas. The delusions in Dr. Norman's first case were not persistent.

Dr. FINEGAN observed that he never saw in his life a case of general paralysis which was altogether melancholic. He had never seen a case of general paralysis without having some exalted ideas. That was his own experience, and he had had a great deal to do with general paralysis.

The CHAIRMAN and Dr. DAWSON also spoke.

Dr. RAMBAUT, in replying, observed that the definition of general paralysis was very vague. The first of Dr. Norman's cases had, of course, begun with tabes,—not an unusual thing in general paralysis—but nobody could claim the mental symptoms nor the disturbances of speech in that case as being merely phenomena of tabes. The case, of course, was one of tabetic general paralysis. Dr. Rambaut then read a paper on "Insanity with Bulbar Paralysis."

Dr. WILLIAM GRAHAM (Belfast) read a communication on "Elementary Physiological Education: A Preventive of the Growth of Insanity." In the course of his remarks he said—Perhaps among the many problems which modern science has formulated, none are of such practical and pressing moment, from a social point of view, as those which gather around the term hereditary. The theories of heredity are manifold, as to the fact itself, that we are largely the creation of the past, that our mental and moral furniture comes to us from our ancestry, that in the very nerves and tissues of our physical frame are the grooves along which a curse or a benediction wings its way—of all this no thoughtful man entertains the smallest doubt. There are some who talk as if there were a force resident in the nature of things making, whether we will or no, for the betterment of society, as if there were powers of evolution, invincibly leading us to a higher stage of social good. But we are beings, with the power of thwarting the beneficent energies of life, and if we do rationally co-operate with them we must expect decay and degeneration. Every truly educated man knows that marriage into a family in which the seeds of insanity lurk is an act at once culpable and foolish; but the vast majority are not educated. How are these to be restrained from propagating the awful curse of insanity, and handing down an entail of woe to succeeding generations? Ought they to be so restrained? Has society the right to suppress the harmful desires of the individual in the interests of the mass? If so, how can society best exercise this right? By coercion or educational means or by both? Any legislation that trenches on the liberty of the subject will not now be tolerated. As one has said: "I would rather see a nation drunk than sober by Act of Parliament." Within limits, this sentence expresses a fundamental truth of all sociological progress. Coercion, therefore, except in well-defined cases, may be set aside as impracticable. But surely no field for legislative enactment is so full of promise for good as that of education and discipline of the young. "Give me a clean canvas," said Plato, "and I will make a new world." He meant that if only he could get a generation free from inherited taint, social regeneration were an accomplished fact. But no such miracle is possible. Nevertheless, within the limits set by nature a great deal can be done. We teach our children the Ten Commandments; let us teach them that Nature also has her laws, and that she writes them in the thunders and lightning of her dread penalties. It is one of the scandals of our educational system that the children of our middle and lower classes grow up in absolute ignorance of the simplest laws of physiology. A future age will look back with wonder at the nineteenth century, in which children were crammed with geography and Latin derivations but left in darkness as to the constitution of their own bodies. Let us, then, insist that in our schools and colleges an elementary course in physiology, especially in its practical side, be compulsory for every pupil; and in this country where education is compulsory, it

will be well to add a compulsory dinner; for many children forced to cultivate the three R's, not on porridge, by means of which, it is said, the Scotchman acquires his metaphysics, but more frequently on weak tea and little bread with less butter. How many succumb to general paralysis caused largely by syphilis and drink? If they had been warned in their earlier years of the consequences of certain courses of conduct, it is only just to infer that large numbers would never have entered on the path that leads to lingering death. These unhappy persons are, to a great extent, the victims of a false educational method. Medical men are often consulted by educated persons as to the risk involved in marriage into an insane family, but in the humbler ranks of society such precautions are never even thought of, or, if thought of, desire overrides prudence. Were the youth of our primary schools taught the physiological facts underlying the phenomena of insanity and warned of the dreadful consequences of a violation of physiological law, the very suspicion of insanity would suffice to debar from marriage, and a gross social stigma would attach to anyone breaking down the barriers erected by a sound scientific sense and social feeling. Such a public sentiment is "a consummation devoutly to be wished for." A grave responsibility rests on legislators, schoolmasters, parents, clergymen, writers, and others in their dealings with the youth of both sexes. If these would join in the inculcation of rational principles of conduct in accordance with the dictates of nature—ere a generation had passed away a step forward in the well-being of the race would be taken.

Dr. FINEGAN thought that Dr. Graham had made a mark in producing a paper which was within the calibre of most of them. Dr. Rambaut's learned paper seemed to be beyond them. This was a practical subject, and one in which they were all much interested. He thought, however, that Dr. Graham had gone a little too far, and if his principles were adopted it would probably rob medical men of their bread and butter. It was said that a little knowledge was a dangerous thing, and he imagined that unless a sufficient knowledge of physiology was imparted to guide a man in the principles of life, it would be better for them to do nothing. The teaching of the sanitary laws, and the introductions into the elementary schools of some of the principles of sanitation, would benefit the general public more than a study of physiology. Physiology was a subject that, unless properly taught, was better left untouched. To get a clear knowledge of physiology was practically what a medical man required to know. Less than that would be of very little use to him.

Dr. GRAHAM said that by the principles of physiology he was speaking of it in its broader and wider view, and meant it to include hygiene and all forms of progress.

Dr. RAMBAUT stated that Dr. Graham had referred to the ignorance of the lower and middle classes. Which were the educated classes?

Dr. DAWSON ventured to think that the evils Dr. Finegan had painted in such dark colours were precisely the ones which would not arise if a knowledge of physiology was more widespread. What they complained about was that people had not a scientific spirit, and that they did not regard scientific subjects and the matters concerning them at all. He thought that with the spread of a little more knowledge that people, when they knew the dangers following upon a certain course of conduct, would only be the more likely to go to medical men.

Dr. GRAHAM said that as regarded the lower and middle classes, he meant the class that filled the district and county asylums. Some time ago he was asked to give a reason for the increase of insanity, and he went into the matter. He then found that the patients who filled his asylum in Armagh were those who came from the southern and western portions of the country—the uneducated people who could not read or write. It was people of this sort who increased the insanity by intermarrying. They felt no shame in marrying one who had been in the asylum, and they were in entire ignorance of the ordinary laws of nature. Dr. Graham added that the time would come when people would regard marrying into families tainted with insanity as a disgrace.

The CHAIRMAN, in closing the discussion, said that unfortunately they found a good many people marrying with their eyes open. Anything that would bring the subject of Dr. Graham's paper before the public would be a matter of benefit. He thought that masters of schools in many cases were specially behind in matters of this kind.