

The Epileptic Colony.

It has hitherto been the rule in this country that epileptics should qualify as lunatics before they could find a home. The usual charitable institutions were for the most part closed against them, and, save a few special hospitals, no other place of rest could be found for them. Those "subject to epileptic fits" are, by the rules of many homes, excluded from them. Want of employment and the consequent worries of poverty aggravate their malady, and the utter helplessness of their condition leads to despondency and hastens their descent towards dementia. According to Edith Sellers, in a paper in "The Medical Magazine" for February, who quotes the recently published statistics of the Charity Organization Society, there are nearly 78,000 epileptics in Great Britain, and 39,000 of these are still in the full possession of their reason. Now it is a fact that the condition of life most calculated to ward off epileptic attacks is that of healthy occupation, and, under ordinary circumstances, this is the most difficult to obtain. Thus the scheme so ably advocated at the Mansion House, at a meeting* presided over by the Lord Mayor, for the purpose of founding a home for those necessitous epileptics who are able and willing to work, meets an urgent and ever-growing want. The importance of such a scheme it would be difficult to over-estimate; it is a reasonable one, and it is based, to a great extent, upon the successful colony established at Bielefeld, in Westphalia. It is proposed to secure an estate of 100 acres within fifty miles of London, easy of access, where additional land may be procured when required, and to erect upon it appropriate buildings. Through the munificence of Mr. Passmore Edwards, the necessary funds for the purchase of the land and erection of the buildings are promised, and an encouraging amount of support from other quarters has been given.

In the early days of the colony simplicity will be the rule, and the occupation provided will take the form of farm and garden work, which is at once easy and healthy. Gradually, as the scheme develops, other and more varied occupations will be provided suitable to the more delicate members of the community, thus monotony will be averted, and in suitable workshops and in all weathers there will be work going on. It is not intended to confine the benefits of the colony to the

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necessitous poor. Wealthy cases will be provided for and freely admitted, for the terms they will pay will be high, and will procure for them comfortable and even luxurious quarters, so that the profits arising from their payments will go towards defraying the cost of the poorer inmates. To a great extent it is expected the colony will become self-supporting.

We heartily wish the scheme all the success it most rightly deserves.

Saint Amable.

During a holiday visit to the Auvergne last autumn we visited the quaint little town of Riom, which has, as we shall see, a certain interest for the alienist. It has always been a rival to the more flourishing city of Clermont Ferrand, and although it has had to give place to Clermont as capital of the district, it still retains the Courts of Appeal for the whole neighbourhood. By this means the town continues to hold its own and keeps some of its past importance, although at the present time it can only boast of a population of some ten thousand persons.

The first object which attracts one's attention on entering Riom from the Railway Station is the long façade of the Courts of Justice, built on the spot where in the 14th century once stood the Palace of John of France, Duke of Berry and Auvergne. Nothing, however, remains of the original building but the beautiful little Sainte Chapelle, with its 15th century windows.

Passing into the main street we noticed several houses of the 15th and 16th centuries, with fine sculptured fronts, also a belfry tower of the time of Francis I. Continuing our route we reach on our right the Church of Saint Amable, first consecrated in 1120, and retaining three apsidal chapels of the 12th or 13th century, and a triple 12th century nave, which was, however, reconstructed during the last century. The choir, transepts, and spire were rebuilt in 1859. It is not so much, however, with the church we have to do, as with the Saint to whom the church is dedicated. He is represented to have had the power of healing sick people, but more especially those who were insane. We cannot do better than quote from a book by Monsieur Bernet-Rollande a few further particulars of his life and work:—

“According to tradition a chapel, or perhaps a church, existed in Riom at the beginning of the 5th century, dedicated to Saint Gervais and Saint Protas—twin brothers—who received the palm of martyrdom at Milan in the days of the persecution of Nero. It is in this church that we like to picture to ourselves a young man on his knees—Saint Amable, the future priest of Riom.