

*Diploma in Psychiatry.*

Dr. Clouston's paper on the success that has crowned the efforts of the Association with the University of Edinburgh leads to the hope that similar successes may be recorded at an early date in connection with other universities.

The advantage that such a development will confer on the specialty is beyond all question, and is to be hailed with all the enthusiasm so admirably expressed by Dr. Clouston. There is, however, a converse side in a feeling of anxiety that these special examinations might become too special. Already, in the earlier phases of medical examination, a student is examined, in physiology, for example, as if he were about to specialise in physiology rather than in medicine, and so on of other subjects.

The result is, that instead of a medical qualification being obtained in five years the average period is six and a half; and if the student has obtained a degree in arts prior to this, the result is that even before his specialisation he has reached an age which is late for taking up the actual business of life.

Examiners, acting according to their wont, might easily render it impossible for a student to acquire the requisite knowledge for a pass in the complex subjects of a medico-psychological degree in double the nine months estimated as necessary by Dr. Clouston.

The establishment of a degree in psychiatry is the fulfilment of one of the ends at which the Association has long aimed, but this has only been rendered possible by the action of those of our members alluded to by Dr. Clouston, to whom the sincerest thanks of the Association are most justly due.

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*Superannuation Act.*

The legal difficulties in the working of this Act are by no means settled, we regret. The attention of the Home Secretary has been called in no uncertain way for some time past to the obvious injustice of the position caused by the advice given him by the Law Officers of the Crown, to the effect that the right to appeal to him only arises in any case when a pension is payable. If this is right, then officers of an asylum are at

the mercy of their committees, who may refuse to establish or may wrongly classify them, in spite of the precise terms of the Act, and there is no one to set them straight, except, perhaps, the High Court. An action for enforcement of rights would be out of the power of any individual on the score of expense, nor would it be convenient to commence an action against employers while the plaintiff is still in their service. Nor is it wise probably to stand by and wait till pension-time comes, unless a contribution has meanwhile been paid at the proper rate, for it would probably be said that no right to a pension could accrue without proportionate contribution. Any action would have to be taken at once, and on the refusal of a committee to receive the contribution which the plaintiff calculates to be the proper one relating to his class and wages. We are glad to hear that Lord Monk Bretton has recently pressed the Government again in the House of Lords on the point. The answer given to him was the stereotyped one—"The advice of the Law Officers is being taken." Lord Monk Bretton specially mentioned, as examples of hardship, the cases of the gardener at the Worcestershire asylums and the chaplains in the West Riding.

We note, too, that Lord Wolmer has given notice of a Bill to alter the terms of service in asylums. This proposes to deal with the long hours now given by each employee. He names sixty hours per week. If we remember right this idea was started and debated in the early days of county councils, but did not get far on account of the enormous dislocation of asylum machinery that would result. It had, however, the effect of inducing many committees to accord more liberal leave, daily and weekly. He further proposes that pensions shall be given on twenty-five years of service, irrespective of age. We are not prepared to admit that this would be a benefit all round. Much information and calculation will be required before the full effect of this provision can be ascertained. He also provides that all service in all asylums shall be aggregated, whether the minimum of two years' service in any particular asylum has been given or not. We rather think that this minimum was proposed by the two Associations themselves, to meet the restless spirit that has come over many attendants and nurses, the latter especially. That view, in any case, should be considered. There is a provision for insuring that no employee shall be

discharged by the superintendent without a certainty of appeal to the visiting committee. We believe that we are right in thinking that there is no need for this. The only "power to remove" an officer or servant rests with the committee (Lunacy Act, 1890, Sect. 276). It may be that there is a power of suspension given to the superintendent by the special rules of his institution—this must inevitably be so, for the sake of discipline. But we believe that the actual discharge is always made by the committee itself. However this has been in the past, it is very unlikely that in future, with the pecuniary liabilities created by the Pensions Act, any committee would neglect to see that every discharge is reviewed, if not actually initiated by itself.

We have reason to believe that this Bill is in answer to an election pledge given. We must confess that it does not entirely commend itself to us.

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*Lunacy in Glasgow.*

Glasgow claims to be enthusiastic in the cause of social reform. In certain directions good results are chronicled. The methods of the Parish Council have been in operation for a period long enough to merit approval in the sphere of lunacy administration. Mr. Motion has had a long and wide experience as inspector, and Dr. Carswell has accumulated a knowledge of the insane poor which we regard as quite unique. The estimated population of the parish is 660,713, out of which number 1,004 were reported for medical investigation, and actually disposed of in the course of last year. Dr. Carswell's report on certification is most interesting reading, and he expounded it in a paper lately read before the Scottish Division, which we hope to publish in due course. The main points are that 972 new applications were disposed of last year, of whom 539 were certified, and 433 were not certified, more having been removed from home than from the observation wards to the asylums. The observation wards sent out recovered 218 and improved 101 persons, while 44 died. These figures are familiar enough, but when Dr. Carswell proceeds to consider the occurring insanity, he records 25 fewer persons certified