

obstruction in the House of Commons would prevent so important a measure being passed. He returned, however, to his former attack upon private asylums. "He regretted that the Government had not taken steps to put an end to the scandals which were alleged to exist in connection with licensed houses. As long as what Lord Shaftesbury called 'the evil system of profit' continued to exist, as long as the incarceration of a fellow creature should result in profit to anyone, so long might they expect a continuance of the scandals to which he alluded. He noticed, therefore, with regret, that existing licensed houses were not to be interfered with. The only way to prevent scandals would be by a thorough system of visitation, but the present system could not be thus described, the Lunacy Commissioners being too few in number to inquire closely into the cases of 80,000 lunatics. He favoured a scheme under which county authorities should establish houses for paying patients. The authorities, he felt sure, would be the gainers. There was a large number of persons in asylums who were supported at the public expense, and who were able to support themselves; and if provision were made for receiving paying patients at moderate rates the expenditure of the counties might be considerably reduced."

---

#### *Weak-minded Children.*

In the last number we advocated certain intermediate schools for the weak-minded (Jan., 1888, p. 552). We are glad to receive the support of so experienced and intelligent an authority as Dr. Shuttleworth, the medical superintendent of the Royal Albert Asylum, Lancaster, who communicates the following observations upon *The Education of Children of abnormally weak mental capacity*:—

The reference in the last number of "The Journal of Mental Science" to the "auxiliary" schools established in Germany for exceptionally backward children\* may serve to draw attention to an important hiatus in our English educational system. Whilst exceptionally quick children are in every rank of life well provided for, and amongst the poor facilities for higher education are given (at any rate, in large towns) in connection with the Board Schools, no systematic effort has so far been made in this country for the special train-

\* Occasional Notes of the Quarter, p. 552.

ing of those children whose abnormally weak mental capacity renders it impossible for them to keep pace with the requirements of "the code." It is true that the institutions for imbeciles and idiots are intended for the education and training of the class designated in America as "feeble-minded," as well as, or perhaps more than, of cases of graver mental defect; but considering the paucity of such institutions, and the undesirability of stigmatizing as *idiotic*, or even as *imbecile*, children who are not irretrievably deficient, the plan of auxiliary classes and schools deserves serious consideration by our educators. It may be of service in this connection to quote from an excellent paper by Herr Kielhorn, of Brunswick, which appeared in the "Zeitschrift für die Behandlung Schwachsinniger und Epileptischer" for March, 1887. "The auxiliary school," he says, "is designed for such children as after a trial of at least two years in a town school (*i.e.*, public elementary school) have not been able to be promoted, so that an equal progress with their school-companions is impossible. On the other hand, those children are excluded from attendance at the auxiliary school who, in consequence of too low mental capacity, or of too great bodily infirmity, or of insufficient domestic care, are better assigned to a special institution. . . . The school consists of three progressive classes; a division of the sexes only comes in as regards certain departments of instruction. The subjects of instruction are:—Religion (Scripture history, catechism, hymns), the German language (reading, orthography, scripthand), calculation, writing, cultivation of the perceptions, domestic knowledge, singing, gymnastics, manual work.

"In the auxiliary school it is essential to develop in every way the combined mental and bodily powers of the children to the utmost extent possible, to train them to useful activity, to mannerly living, to elevated enjoyments—in fine, to an existence worthy of human beings. As the teacher must specially adapt himself to the peculiarities of each child, and, having regard to the small mental capacity of his pupils, make sure by constant repetition of what has been learned, the scope of instruction must necessarily be restricted."

There follows a detailed account of the course of instruction pursued, which in its main features resembles that in vogue in our imbecile institutions, stress being laid upon the cultivation of the senses and the perceptive faculties, exer-

cises in distinct articulation, objective illustrations of all lessons, especially in connection with calculation, and finally the training of the hand for simple industry. In the discussion which followed the reading of Herr Kielhorn's paper at the Frankfort Conference, testimony was borne to the utility of the auxiliary classes in connection with the public elementary schools at Gera by Dr. Bartels, who insisted on the high qualifications requisite for the successful teacher of such classes. He refers also to the dictum of the Minister of Education (von Gössler) that auxiliary classes should be instituted in every town of 20,000 inhabitants and upwards. Another speaker (Horny, of Nassau) related how in his city it had been necessary to change the name of the classes, which had originally been designated for "idiots," first to classes for "weak-minded" (Schwachsinnige), and then (to prevent misunderstanding) to classes for "children of feeble faculties" (Schwachbefähigte). This would seem to have been a nominal concession to the sensitiveness of parents.

Similar classes have for some time past been established in Norway, and I am indebted to my friend, Herr J. A. Lippestad, Director of the Thorshang Institute, who founded such classes in 1874, for some interesting particulars with reference to those in operation in Christiania. He tells me that in this city the "abnormal" children in public elementary schools bear a ratio to the ordinary school children of 4 per cent. (60 : 15,000), and that there are, besides, thirty children belonging to the city in special institutions for the feeble-minded. The classes are held each afternoon in two of the public schools, distant not more than a mile and a half from the homes of the pupils. These are selected from the ordinary scholars upon the report of the teachers made to the head-master, who thereupon confers with the Director of the Auxiliary Classes as to the necessity for special instruction in each case. The requisite funds are provided through the School Board, and the annual cost is about £6 15s each pupil. The children attending these classes may be divided into four categories, viz. :—

I. Those who after two or three years' special teaching can be brought back into the ordinary school.

II. Those who, continuing in these classes, can be brought to confirmation.

III. Those for whom these classes are found insufficient. Such, after being tried for a time, are sent to special imbecile institutions.

IV. The utterly ineducable, who, after full trial, are dismissed to their homes.

Special teachers are employed for these classes who have been trained for the purpose at institutions for feeble-minded children.

Similar auxiliary classes are conducted in connection with the public schools of Bergen by Herr Soethre, also director of an institution for imbeciles.

With such practical Teutonic and Scandinavian precedents, there would seem ample encouragement for the movement in favour of schools for "intermediate cases of mental feebleness" in London and other large towns. I ventured in 1884, at the Conference on School Hygiene held at the Health Exhibition in London, to suggest that\* a "school should be established in every large centre for the backward children who were not able to bear the strain of the ordinary curriculum. After a certain time spent in such a special school a selection might be made, and some would be fit to enter an ordinary school, whilst others ought to be sent to a special training school for feeble-minded children." Again, at the Conference on "Education under Healthy Conditions," held at Manchester in 1885, under the presidency of Lord Aberdare, I took occasion to suggest† that in that city the experiment of either a central school, or special school departments, for exceptional children might advantageously be tried. It appears to me that such a school would have a distinct sphere of usefulness, apart alike from the common school and the imbecile institution. In not a few cases, as has been proved in Christiania, the pupils would be so far improved by special instruction as to enable them again to take their places in the ordinary school, whilst in others the natural reluctance of parents to send their children to imbecile institutions would be overcome when it had been demonstrated that even special instruction in auxiliary classes was not in their case sufficient. For my part I think, considering how much depends upon training out of school hours, as well as in school, in effecting the lasting amelioration of weak-minded children, that for many (if not the majority) of the cases, the institution would be more beneficial than the auxiliary school, especially where the home-surroundings are unfavourable. The physical aspects of the

\* "Health Exhibition Literature," Vol. xi., p. 560.

† "Proceedings of the Conference on Education under Healthy Conditions, 1885," p. 219. (Manchester, John Heywood.)

subject, moreover, must not be overlooked, and there can be no doubt that many of the ill-results attributed to "over-pressure" are, in fact, due to "under-feeding." Still, auxiliary classes might be supplemented by other benevolent agencies for improving the home and supplying extra nutrition (as, indeed, is already done in the form of free breakfasts, halfpenny dinners, &c.). The cost of such classes would no doubt be considerable, for the instruction, to be effectual, must be more or less individualized, and well-trained teachers must be well paid. But surely what a poor country like Norway can do wealthy England can afford. In the long run the result, taking into account the remunerative industry of restored pupils, would probably be on the side of economy. But apart from mere economic considerations, is it not the duty of a professedly Christian nation, even in relation to our educational systems, to "gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost?"

Dr. W. W. Ireland has favoured us with the following *Notes from Soethre's Institution for Imbecile Children, near Bergen*, which form a fitting addendum to the foregoing.

No country shows greater readiness to do its best for the primary education of its children than Norway. In 1881 the education of abnormal children, the blind, deaf, and imbecile, was made compulsory. Since then they have been busy in collecting information and erecting buildings suitable for the accommodation of these unfortunate classes. In the neighbourhood of Christiania there are now two institutions for the training of imbeciles, one at Lindern for boys, the other at Thorshang for girls. Both these were commenced in 1878.

These are only known to me by favourable report; but last summer I had the opportunity of gaining an intimate acquaintance with the Institution for Imbeciles at Ekelund, near Bergen. It was commenced with one pupil in September, 1882. Until the present year it was carried on in hired premises—three separate houses in the suburbs of Bergen; but last summer the new house was completed.

It is situated about a mile from the Hop Station, and five miles from Bergen. The stranger could never guess to what use was put the comely building of white stone situated on a hill in a picturesque highland country, with a lovely lake in the immediate neighbourhood. The body or front of the building has four storeys, with two wings running at right angles, so as to make three sides of a square. The basement is occupied by the kitchen and workshops. The next storey contains the schools and offices. The third has in front the superintendent's house, the rest of the wings and other storey being occupied by dormitories. The amount already expended in building

is 135,000 kroners, and before it is finished it will probably cost 160,000 kroners—a kroner is equal to 1s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. This includes the cost of cutting roads, making bridges, levelling the ground about, and erecting out-houses, such as stables, hay-lofts, and cow-sheds. The roofs of the ordinary rooms are of wood, with wooden panels on the walls up to the height of five feet. The house is built for 100 pupils. At present there are 42 boys and 24 girls. There are three male and three female teachers, one carpenter, one shoemaker, one basket-maker, one teacher of sewing. There are besides two out-door workers, but owing to the place being newly established there is a good deal of extra out-door work. The domestic establishment is conducted by six nurses and one cook. The money for building has been given by Government as a loan. The interest represents a rent of 6,000 kroners. The board at present charged is about 600 kroners, or £32 6s. 8d., for pupils above fourteen years of age, and 552 kroners (£30 13s. 6d.) for those below fourteen years. Of this sum 360 kroners, or 312 kroners for the lower board, are defrayed from the poor rates and county rates, while the expenses of teaching, amounting to 240 kroners, are defrayed by the Government.

At present there are only three private boarders. Naturally the cost of board will fall as the number of inmates increases. The manufactures are basket-making, shoemaking, and carpentry. Good baskets are made in some variety of shape. The osiers are imported from Germany. The principal wooden articles seemed to be knife-boards, book-cases, stools, chairs, wooden shoes, and salt boxes. Stout shoes and boots like those habitually worn in Norway are made in the shoemaker's shop with no assistance from machinery. It may be mentioned that in Norway the peasants do for themselves a good deal of the work which in our country is now almost always done by special artificers. The Norwegian bonder saws his planks and builds his wooden house; he puts together a good deal of his furniture, and makes and mends his boots. Many of the pupils were clad in rough, homespun cloth, such as is made in the Hebrides.

Mr. Soethre explained to me that he was more anxious to draw out the intelligence and fit the pupils for doing something to earn their bread than to aim at immediate money profit.

On the school accommodation great care was evidently lavished. There were six schoolrooms, three with desks and seats in a horseshoe form. There was a great wealth of apparatus for teaching-illustrations and object-lessons. Four hours were expended in teaching, that is from half-past eight to half-past one; after which there was an interval for dinner and play until three o'clock, and then three hours at the workshops.

Surveying rooms and looking at apparatus are easy. It is more difficult to ascertain what use is made of them. In this I had good opportunities through the hospitality of the superintendent. The pupils were of different ages, from eight or nine to above twenty years. They

belonged generally to the class called imbecile or feeble-minded : that is, there were few whom one would place in the lower grades of idiocy. There was only one child who could not speak. Four spoke a few words, and six could only use short sentences. In the highest arithmetic class nine boys and three girls could do a little division. As imbeciles are generally very deficient in counting, few pupils in a training school in Great Britain ever reach this stage. Most of the children were capable of being taught to read. The subjects of instruction were the Lutheran Catechism, Bible history, reading, writing, drawing, counting, and geography. Epileptics were not received, and there were few paralytics or very feeble children. Indeed, the general tone of health was robust. The children were mostly fair, with the good-humoured, placid look characteristic of the Norwegian. It was easy to see that they were happy, well cared for, and well employed. There were three or four Mongolian idiots ; microcephales do not seem to be common in Norway. I give the measurements (in centimetres) of the three smallest heads in the Institution :—

Olina, a short girl, fourteen years old.	C.
1 Antero-posterior ... ..	34
2 Transverse ... ..	32
3 Circumference ... ..	47
	<hr/>
	113
4 From tragus to glabella ... ..	13
5 From tragus to occipital protuberance ...	13
Anna, a taller, fair girl, seventeen years old.	
1 Antero-posterior ... ..	35
2 Transverse ... ..	33
3 Circumference ... ..	50
	<hr/>
	118
4 From tragus to glabella ... ..	14
5 From tragus to occipital protuberance ...	11
Teeth ... ..	28
Henrik, a lad of eighteen.	
1 Antero-posterior ... ..	31
2 Transverse ... ..	36
3 Circumference ... ..	50
	<hr/>
	117
4 From tragus to glabella ... ..	13
5 From tragus to occipital protuberance ...	12
Teeth ... ..	29

The children get a good plain diet in sufficient quantity. Milk and



fish, the two great articles of food in Norway, are much used. Green vegetables are not very abundant, but potatoes are commonly used. There have been five deaths since the Institution was commenced. As will be noticed, by the exclusion of epileptics and cases of the lowest forms of idiocy the difficulty of having no resident medical officer is minimized. This could scarcely be felt while the Institution was at Bergen. Jakob Soethre himself is well qualified for his post, both through natural gifts and acquired skill and knowledge. He was for three years a teacher in the Institution for Imbecile Boys at Christiania. He studied anatomy and hygiene in that city, and afterwards by travelling in different countries made himself acquainted with the most approved methods of instruction for abnormal children. Mr. Soethre is also the director of a day-school for feeble-minded children at Bergen, whither he goes three times a week.

The Institutions for Idiots in Britain contain a larger proportion of children afflicted with nervous diseases and constitutional morbid tendencies than the pupils at Ekelund; hence the wisdom of the laws requiring a resident medical officer where there are more than one hundred inmates seems to me evident. In our country the institutions which have no resident medical officers have the highest mortality. At Larbert I had but fifteen deaths in ten years, an average mortality of 1·5 per cent., or 15 in the thousand. I left the place in April, 1881, in good hygienic conditions, with a newly-increased water-supply—a serious want in my time. For that year no increased mortality appeared; but the death-rate of the subsequent years has, as is seen, justified what was pointed out at the time in some medical journals. The deaths were, as stated in the lunacy reports, in 1881, one death to an average number of residents of 124; in 1882, six deaths to average number of 133; in 1883, three deaths to average of 159; in 1884, eight deaths to average of 182; in 1885, ten deaths to 184·5; and in 1886, seventeen deaths to 180 resident. Thus the death-rates from 1881 to 1886 were successively 8 per thousand, then 45, then 18, then 43, then 54, then 94.

At Baldovan since 1881 the deaths have been successively 4, 3, 10, 6, 3, and 4, to an average number of residents of 64, 63·5, 56·5, 51, 49·5, and 49, giving a death-rate of 62, 47, 177, 117, 64, and 81 in the thousand. It was in the course of writing this paper that my inquiries led me to these figures, which no one up to this time seems to have thought of any gravity.

Those who have visited the different institutions for idiots in our island to gain knowledge to be used in Norway have remarked the gaudiness of the furnishings, which they, in some cases, were inclined to contrast with the scantiness and low quality of the teaching staff. But perhaps the outside visitor in his short survey of the establishment might miss something superfluous, rather than notice there was everything necessary in the modest and useful furniture of the Norwegian Institution. Even those especially versed in the subject



might, in Soethre's Institution, learn a good deal about the means and art of teaching in which its great strength lies.

The most striking feature to me was the drill, which was, of course, conducted on Ling's system. I could not have believed from mere report that imbecile boys or girls could have been taught to go through such a long series of different exercises. The great advantage of Ling's system is that all the muscles are called into play in one way or other. For exercising the body and invigorating the health it is thus superior to exercises based upon military drill, which is naturally designed to lead up to fighting purposes. Another advantage is that very few apparatus are required. There is a good manual of gymnastics, with engravings, which is used in the ordinary schools in Sweden and Norway.\* As far as I know, Dr. Mathias Roth can claim to be the first, or one of the first, to render into English the rational gymnastic system of Ling. It is scarcely necessary to direct readers to the very instructive report on Swedish Gymnastics, by Miss Ellen White, in the October number of this Journal.

---

## PART II.—REVIEWS.

---

*The Nervous System and the Mind ; a Treatise on the Dynamics of the Human Organism.* By C. MERCIER, M.B. 8vo. London: Macmillan, 1888.

Had Dr. Mercier done no more in this book than recall us to the consideration of the principles that, consciously or unconsciously, underlie all our dealings with the insane, he would have established a claim on our gratitude. It is a peculiar refreshment for us, who are usually occupied with harassing practical details, to turn to speculation of an elevated kind, and dwell for awhile in the calm atmosphere of philosophy. It is, however, unnecessary for us to tell our readers that he has given us much more, and that his book will be studied with at least as much advantage as pleasure.

The introduction gives the key to the whole work; its object being to urge the importance of the study of psychology to alienists. He has laid his finger on the true reason why practical men have undervalued it; it has too often been studied from a standpoint so purely introspective as to offer them no obvious advantage. He goes on to point out with great force that "the first, most important, and most imperative, duty of the student of psychology is to recog-

\* Gymnastiska Dagöfningar af C. H. Liedbeck. Stockholm.