

disease. The person applying will be regarded as an out-patient of the asylum, and the only charge will be the cost price of any medicine the medical staff may think desirable to supply. This has been done on the initiative of the Duke of Grafton, who is on the Committee of Visitors. While expert advice should be freely tendered to the poorer classes by the medical staffs of our asylums, it seems to us a doubtful policy to supply medicines at cost price. Nourishing food and other medical comforts are just as often required as medicines; and it is important to enlist the co-operation of the general practitioners, who are more constantly in touch with such patients than the asylum physicians can be. For obvious reasons, we should have preferred to have learned that the place of consultation had been fixed at the local hospital, as has proved so successful in other places. The arrangements now made may, however, develop in that direction; and we heartily support the principle of assistance to incipient cases at the hands of physicians exceptionally well qualified to give the aid so much required.

Down District Asylum.—A new wing has been opened at this asylum. It has been designed as a male infirmary, equivalent to the similar wing for women which has been for some time in occupation. The male infirmary can now accommodate fifty-six patients instead of fifteen as before—that is equal to 20 per cent. of the whole male division. Very considerable additions and improvements have also been made in the administrative parts of the building. At the last meeting of the Board of Governors, now replaced under the new *régime*, Dr. Nolan and Dr. Clark had the honour of being specially thanked in a complimentary minute.

Utica State Hospital.—This historic institution has lost the distinguished services of Dr. Alder Blumer. His many friends on this side will learn with interest that he has accepted the appointment of Physician-Superintendent to the Butler Hospital for the Insane, at Providence, R.I. On taking his farewell, Dr. Blumer said that, on being offered the appointment to a hospital held in such high esteem and famous since the days of Isaac Ray, he had to carefully consider the sacrifice he made in leaving Utica. He felt bound to go in his own interests and those of his family. Dr. Blumer concluded with an eloquent survey of the period of his service in New York State, and expressed his thanks to the managers for their rich sympathy and strong support. The managers accepted Dr. Blumer's resignation with great reluctance, and recorded their feeling that he had proved an ideal superintendent. We congratulate the Butler Hospital on having secured the services of one who is so highly esteemed at home and abroad, and hope that Dr. Blumer will see many and happy years of service in his new appointment.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF EPILEPTICS.

The Duke and Duchess of York visited Chalfont St. Peter, on the 23rd June last, to open four new homes at the Colony of the Society for the Employment of Epileptics, of which his Royal Highness is president. These new homes increase the existing accommodation by nearly 100 beds. The Duke of York having declared them open, reviewed the history of the Society, and recounted what had been done elsewhere. The donors were thanked on the motion of Sir William Broadbent, and Mr. J. Passmore-Edwards replied.

THE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

This important development of philanthropy is making headway in a very remarkable manner. The Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-minded met in Manchester in May, when Miss Dendy, who has given great impetus to this particular association, addressed those present in a long, interesting speech, which was fully reported in the *Manchester Guardian*. Miss

Dendy intimated contributions to the sum of £1750, with further conditional promises. It was further stated, at the meeting of the Homes of Industry for Feeble-minded Girls, that the earnings of the inmates of the two homes already in operation, amounted to £312 out of an aggregate income of £994.

The Annual Meeting of the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded was held on July 8th. An address on the state of matters in Italy from this point of view concluded with an appeal for alliance between the two countries in prosecuting this new crusade. After the meeting the cottage homes were inspected, and the methods of training and teaching were shown. This association is rapidly extending its operations, and proportionately requiring financial support.

The Bill to be introduced into Parliament will probably be drafted on the lines recommended by the Departmental Committee of last year.

That committee recommended that legislation in the case of these children should very much follow the precedent set in 1893, when an Act of Parliament was passed for the education of blind and deaf children, the duty being cast upon school boards or other school authorities "to make such arrangements as the Education Department may approve for deciding (a) what children resident in their district, not being imbecile, are, by reason of mental or physical defect, incapable of receiving proper benefit from instruction in ordinary schools; (b) what children are unfit, by reason of severe epilepsy, to attend the ordinary schools." Such provision to be made in the case of defective children—" (a) by means of day classes certified for the time being by the Education Department as special classes; or (b) by boarding out, subject to the regulations of the Education Department, in a home conveniently near to a special class; or (c) by a home for defective children certified by the Education Department; and (in the case of epileptic children) (d) by a home for epileptic children certified by the Education Department." The school authorities are to have full powers to provide for the maintenance of such classes and homes; the children to be dealt with shall be over seven years of age, and the compulsory education will extend to the age of sixteen. Several school boards have already special centres for the instruction of feeble-minded children of an entirely voluntary character. The proposed legislation will make the provision incumbent on the Boards wherever required. The Government will no doubt give special assistance by grants of money towards the cost of the education, as recommended by the London School Board in a recent memorial. It is calculated by the Departmental Committee that about 1 per cent. of the children of the elementary school class appear to be feeble-minded. The special legislation in the case of blind and deaf children has been thoroughly carried into effect throughout the country; and, with the powers now sought to be conferred on the school boards and other authorities, there is every reason to believe that a like happy result will quickly ensue in the case of children who are mentally deficient or who suffer from epilepsy.

THE INEBRIATES ACT, 1898.

The Inebriates Act of 1898 has been placed on the Statute Book, but the results are as yet disappointing. The fact is that the machinery is still incomplete; and, as drunkenness continues rampant, obvious failures must occur in administration. It has been enacted that drunkards, convicted four times within one year of certain specified offences, may be sent to an inebriate reformatory and detained there for three years. The Home Secretary has explained that it is not intended that these institutions should be erected by the Government, at any rate in the first instance; although contributions in aid of maintenance will be granted. Rules have been made for these reformatory institutions, and have come into effect in the United Kingdom and Ireland; but we are not aware that any such certified reformatory exists in Scotland or in Ireland, while those which have been certified in England are manifestly insufficient to meet the immediate demands on their accommodation. We note that the Royal Victoria Homes at Bristol have been certified for 60 women; Lady Henry Somerset's Homes at Duxhurst for 12 women; at St. Joseph's Homes at Ashford for 56 female Roman Catholics. There is immediate need of a