

Dr. NORMAN thought that the interest, other than metaphysical, of the new faith consisted in the vogue it had attained. Cases like that quoted by Dr. Nolan sometimes improved greatly without aid at all, as shown in that of a tabetic general paralytic of fifteen years' standing, who was quite helpless and suffered from bed-sores, but began to get better and recovered power of walking. Evidence of the dependence of well-marked physical disease on mental causes was accumulating—*e.g.*, some cases of Bright's disease.

Dr. GRAHAM, in replying, said he had heard a Christian Scientist claim that a tumour had been cured.

Dr. NOLAN brought forward a study of a case of melancholic *Folie raisonnante*.

Dr. RAINSFORD substituted for the paper on the agenda one entitled "Clinical Records of Four Cases of General Paralysis of the Insane."

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians for the use of the college hall.

In the evening the members dined together at the Shelbourne Hotel.

THE MILAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

REPORTED BY W. W. IRELAND, M.D.

THE second International Congress for the Assistance of the Insane was held at Milan from September 26th to the 30th. The different chambers of the University Bocconi had been arranged for the use and comfort of the visitors. The meetings were held in the great hall, a circular chamber well lighted and adapted for acoustic purposes. In the upper story there were some interesting models and plans of asylums. Dr. Augusto Tamburini, of Reggio-Emilia, discharged the duties of President with his usual address and ability, and much of the success of the Congress was owing to the unwearied energy and courteous attention of the secretaries, Dr. G. C. Ferrari, of Bologna, and Dr. P. Gonzales, of Milan. There were about three hundred adherents on the list of the Congress, but the attendance was seldom greater than fifty or sixty. Although the larger number was composed of Italians, there were physicians from every country in Europe and America. There were official delegates from France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, Greece, Roumania, Sweden, and Luxembourg, who were entertained at a banquet by the Committee. After the opening address of the President, Dr. Frank, of Zurich, read a paper advocating the formation of an International Committee to collect information about the causes of insanity with a view to prophylaxis. He expressed the hope that this would lead to the formation of an International Institution to ascertain and combat the causes of insanity. Professor Zuccharelli, of Naples, stated that he had already made a similar proposal to the International Congress for Criminal Anthropology at Amsterdam. Dr. Easterbrook had communicated to the Milan Congress a scheme for International statistics of the insane. Professor Lombroso considered that little would be gained from such an assembly, but Dr. Frank's proposal, supported by Professor Bianchi, Dr. Percy Smith, Dr. Cassaves, and Dr. van Deventer, was eventually carried. Dr. Lombard offered the use of his chateau on Lake Lugano for the meetings of the Committee. The subjects discussed at the Congress included the general care of the insane and idiotic epileptics, criminals, and drunkards. There were eight sittings; besides Italian the French, English, and German languages were allowed.

As the number of papers read or communicated was considerable, we can only indicate some which strike us as more interesting. Much attention was given to the family treatment of the insane, which, it was hoped, would afford a relief to the expense of building new asylums for the ever-increasing number of lunatics. Dr. Agostoni, Superintendent of the asylum at Perugia, stated that the out-of-door treatment of harmless lunatics in Umbria had been given up. The subsidies were ill-spent, and the use of spoiled maize in the dietary was a cause of danger and degeneration.

In a communication by Drs. Tamburini and Guicciardi it was stated that, in spite of the obligatory instruction of attendants and guardians, the family care of the insane had not been attended with the desirable success save about the asylums

of Reggio-Emilia and Lucca. In the Canton de Vaud the Grand Council had authorised two years ago the placing of harmless chronic lunatics in the country under certain conditions, which Dr. Ladame states has already given good results.

Dr. C. Hubert Bond, Superintendent of the Colony for Epileptics at Ewell, explained the arrangements for the admission, case-taking, and treatment of different classes of lunatics according to their symptoms and degrees of excitement in the most modern English asylums.

Dr. van Deventer gave the results of his arrangements for the treatment of lunatics at Amsterdam. He found that in some cases the *infirmières* had a wholesome influence upon the male patients, though precautions were needful.

Communications were also made by Dr. Menzies (Chedleton) and Dr. MacDonald (Hawkhead), who read his paper in Italian, and Dr. Percy Smith communicated a description of the new asylum at Hellingly by Drs. Hayes Newington and Percival Taylor. There also came from Dr. Easterbrook a description of the new infirmary of the Ayr Asylum.

One of the most interesting communications was the report of Dr. Ladame, of Geneva, upon the Swiss Society for the Help of the Insane. The first of these was founded forty years ago at St. Gall. An appeal was made by the medical men of that canton to their fellow-citizens to form themselves into a society to afford succour to those discharged from the asylum, so that they should not fall into unfavourable conditions from poverty or lack of suitable employment. At the outset the Society counted 344 members; now it has nearly ten times as many, with an accumulated capital of 105,000 fr. The Society spends 5000 francs a year in aid of patients and their families. There are now societies of this kind in twelve cantons, counting above 33,000 members; a small sum qualifies for admission. The object of all these societies is to afford assistance to lunatics and their families before, during, and after their treatment, and to diffuse correct ideas about the causes, prevention, and nature of insanity.

Madame Marie, the wife of Dr. Marie, the Superintendent of the Asylum of Villejuif, gave an account of similar efforts in France for the assistance of convalescents, and Dr. Jules Morel, of Belgium, read a paper on "The Character of the Societies for the Assistance of the Insane, what they are and what they ought to be." Dr. Percy Smith presented a complete account given by Dr. Fletcher Beach of what was being done in England for abnormal or for epileptic children, and Dr. Gourjon gave a similar report from France. He considered that the return from the Minister of the Interior of 31,791 such abnormal children had need to be multiplied by four; in round numbers there are 120,000 of them. There are known to be 4453 under age in the asylums; 1448 of these are under thirteen. In the course of his report he paid a well-deserved compliment to Dr. Bourneville, who, in a labour of thirty years, has modernised and completed the methods of Seguin; Bourneville has organised his department at the Bicêtre by the provision of new buildings and the training of teachers and attendants, the necessary funds having been obtained from the Government. Having passed the age limit, Bourneville has had to leave his post at the Bicêtre, though he still retains the direction of the Fondation Vallée.

On the 28th the whole Congress went upon an excursion to the asylum of Mombello, eleven miles in the railway from Milan. The asylum buildings are placed upon an eminence which rises above the waveless plain of Lombardy. It was opened for the reception of the insane forty years ago. In 1879 the number resident was 1481, the admissions 403. In 1905 the number resident was 2600, the number of admissions 857. The recoveries during the last five years were 2216—males 1295, females 4139 *per cent.*

Upon a total population of males 4456, females 3763, the death-rate has remained about the same, between ten and eleven *per cent.*

It was new to us visitors from the North to see cases of pellagrous insanity. From 1879 there were admitted 2858, 1509 males and 1349 females, suffering from this malady. Sometimes collapse supervenes so rapidly that the patient dies before he can be borne to the asylum. From 1901 to 1905 there died in Mombello fourteen patients from "tifo pellagroso."

About this time there were no less than eight congresses which the Milanese, sagaciously taking advantage of the International Exhibition, had got to assemble on questions of jurisprudence, sociology, and medicine. Amongst these was a

"Congresso pellagologico" to devise further measures for the prevention of this disease, the scourge of Lombardy, which is known to be caused by the use of spoiled maize. In Italy about ten *per cent.* of the cases of pellagra become insane. This Congress, after hearing a report from Dr. Probizer, of Rovereto, went to visit the Pellagrosario of Insago, a charitable institution, at which they were received by the President, Senator Facheria. The admissions for pellagrous insanity at Mombello were in 1879, 89; in 1905 they were 62, from which we may infer that the disease has become less frequent.

Unhappily, the admissions from insanity following alcoholic intoxication, which bears some resemblance to pellagrous insanity, are increasing in Lombardy, though the Italians are on the whole a sober people.

Restraint is not used at Mombello; 37 *per cent.* of the inmates were at work on the grounds or in the workshops and laundries. The asylum is made up of twenty-six separate buildings; the bigger blocks enclose a square court in the centre with a pillared verandah, as is customary in large houses, in Italy. To one accustomed to the asylums in Great Britain, where so much stress is laid upon decorations and furnishings, the large rooms looked bare and dismal; in fact, there was no furniture to be seen save the beds, which were sufficiently comfortable. There seemed to be no heating apparatus for the four cold months.

It is proposed that Mombello should be set apart for chronic lunatics to the number of 1500, and that a new asylum should be built near Milan for the treatment of curable cases. Although a thoughtful and vigorous administration may overcome many inconveniences, Dr. Verga has clearly shown in his able report that the quiet, order, and hygiene of the establishment suffer from the too great contiguity and overcrowding of the patients in some of the large storied blocks.

After a sumptuous luncheon, with flowing wines and fluent speeches, the Congress returned to Milan in time for an evening sitting.

Fresh impulse has been given to the care of the insane by the promulgation in 1903 of a new law regulating the organisation of the asylums throughout Italy, which clearly defined the power of the medical superintendents and added to the number of assistants. Italy is anxious to learn from the experience of other countries, while possessing in herself a fund of original vigour.

The Congress closed with a most pleasurable excursion to the Swiss Asylum of Mendrisio, on Lake Lugano. This beautiful asylum was opened eight years ago. It is made up of a number of handsome blocks spread over wide grounds amongst plantations of pine and cypress. It occupies an eminence in a picturesque valley surrounded by high peaks of the Alps; the number of patients is 219—males 128, females 91. The number of inmates has doubled since 1899. The medical laboratory and apparatus for research were finely equipped, as was the case in all the Italian asylums I have visited. After a plenteous breakfast in the open air, the company walked down to Lake Lugano, where a steam-boat was waiting to convey them to the town of Lugano. In the evening they were entertained at a splendid banquet in the Hôtel Bristol, given by the Cantonal Government of Ticino. They returned to Milan about eleven o'clock at night. Next day the members of the Congress separated, each being supplied with a permit to travel on all the railway lines of Italy at a reduction of 60 *per cent.* They were also furnished with a large map indicating the situation of all the asylums which they were invited to visit.

THE BETHEL HOSPITAL, NORWICH.

The Governors of this hospital have just issued a history of this institution, which was commenced by the late Sir Frederick Baleman, for many years the consulting physician, and has been completed since his death by the eminent Norfolk antiquarian Mr. Walter Rye.

The book is a quarto volume, containing the portrait of the founder, Mrs. Mary Chapman, and of seven other worthies associated with the history of the hospital, all admirably executed. A full plan of the present hospital is given, together with a number of illustrations of its various parts.

The historical part of the work is very thoroughly done and of great interest, showing the handiwork of the skilled antiquarian. The volume will be added to the library of the Association.