

Annotations.

THE TREATMENT OF EPILEPSY.

An exceedingly interesting institution, well worthy of a visit, is that established at Chalfont St. Peter, four and a-half miles from Rickmansworth, for the treatment and care of persons suffering from epilepsy. The "colony," as they prefer to call it, consists of eight homes, resembling a little village of red-brick villas, separated a considerable distance from each other, and surrounded by fields. The homes contain at present about 138 colonists, the greater number of whom are males. Mr. Passmore Edwards has been a liberal supporter of the Society, and one of the homes is called the Passmore Edwards House and another Eleanor House, named after Mrs. Edwards. The last-named is really a beautiful building, and its interior is arranged with excellent taste. Other homes are named the Pearman, the Milton, the Greene, and the Dearmer, the latter, intended for cases requiring special care and treatment, being the gift of Mrs. Dearmer. A convalescent home has recently been completed, but has not yet been occupied, and the building of a new home has been commenced, this being the gift of a Hampshire gentleman, and intended exclusively for "colonists" belonging to that county. The plan of the Society is to give the afflicted persons in their care plenty of occupation, especially in the open air, and causing them to feel that they are no longer useless encumbrances, but are able to perform useful work. Many of the men and boys are employed in carpentry, others in smith's work, basket-making, and other departments of industry, and a number are selected in turn to perform the household work. The majority of the women find work in the laundry and others do sewing and make their own dresses. A large farm is one of the chief features of the establishment, and affords healthy occupation for the men.

THE COST OF ALCOHOL IN THE LONDON HOSPITALS.

That "doctors differ" is an old proverb, and a practical illustration of the saying has recently been given by the *Medical Temperance Review*, which has called attention to the very wide differences which exist in the cost of alcohol at the various general hospitals in London. It is a well-known fact that medical opinion as to the necessity for pre-

scribing alcohol varies greatly, but one is hardly prepared to find this variability so great as statistics show. The "drink" bills per patient at nine general hospitals for the year 1900 were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
University College Hospital...	0	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
London Hospital	0	1	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Charing Cross Hospital	0	2	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
St. George's Hospital	0	3	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
King's College Hospital	0	13	6 $\frac{3}{4}$
Guy's Hospital	0	13	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Westminster Hospital	0	13	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
St. Bartholomew's Hospital ...	1	2	0
Middlesex Hospital	1	3	6 $\frac{3}{4}$

When this table is analysed it will be seen that the hospitals which occupy the two extremities of the list are close to one another and draw their patients from similar districts, so that difference in type of patients can hardly be cited as an explanation; yet the Middlesex spends more than thirty times as much on alcohol as University College does.

It is a matter of common knowledge that alcohol is not as lavishly prescribed as formerly; indeed, the reduction during the last thirty years or so is quite remarkable. At Guy's, in 1852, the expenditure per patient on alcohol was £3 14s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and in 1900 only 13s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., whilst the Westminster spent £3 19s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in 1862 against 13s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in 1900. There can be no doubt that this is a great improvement and matter for congratulation. But the table of relative expenditure just given calls for serious consideration, and makes it evident that the prescription of alcohol—a substance which is recognised to be of less value as drug or food than was formerly believed—by the staffs of the different hospitals, requires their notice, and, it cannot be doubted, also a very considerable revision.

DOCTORS AS WITNESSES.

Considerable discussion seems to have been going on in the leading medical journals with regard to the propriety of medical men refusing to give evidence in civil cases until their fees as witnesses have been paid. Everyone is quite aware that cases are often taken up on speculation. But that is entirely a matter for the solicitor, and to expect that all the witnesses whom he may choose to subpoena must likewise give their services on the chance of being paid seems to us to be carrying the matter a little too far.

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