

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



A ROYAL COMMISSION.—The King, on the recommendation of the Home Secretary, has appointed a Royal Commission to consider the existing method of dealing with idiots and epileptics and with imbeciles, feeble-minded, or defective persons not certified under the Lunacy Laws; and, in view of the hardship or danger resulting to such persons and the community from insufficient provision for their care, training, and control, to report as to the amendments in the law, or other measures which should be adopted in the matter, due regard being had to the expense involved in any such proposals, and to the best means of securing economy therein. The Commission is constituted as follows:—The Marquis of Bath (chairman), Mr. William Patrick Byrne, C.B., Mr. Charles Hobhouse, M.P., Mr. Frederick Needham, M.D., Mr. Henry David Greene, K.C., M.P., Mr. Charles E. H. Chadwyck Healey, K.C., the Rev. Harold Nelson Burden, Mr. Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, Mr. Charles Stewart Loch, and Mrs. Pinsent.

THE EXTENSION OF DARLINGTON HOSPITAL.—Mr. Andrew Carnegie has promised to give the last thousand of more than £12,000 required for the extension of Darlington Hospital.

AUCKLAND HOSPITAL EXTENSION.—An extension of the Lady Eden Cottage Hospital, Bishop Auckland, is urgently needed, and land for that purpose has been secured. The colliers and workmen of the district have contributed splendidly in the past to the hospital, and it is believed they will do so to the proposed extension.

A NEW ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—The isolation hospital erected by the Pontypridd Urban District Council has been formally opened by Sir Alfred Thomas, M.P. The hospital is built in terraces in four separate blocks, consisting of administrative block, with accommodation for the Matron and nurses, two separate pavilions for the accommodation of patients, bathrooms and the necessary offices, and the laundry block, disinfecting rooms, mortuary, and accommodation for ambulance vans. The buildings are of a plain but substantial character, and are built of local stone with red brick and Forest stone dressings. Special care has been given to the internal arrangements and fittings, which are of the most modern character. The total cost of the buildings is £6,700, exclusive of furniture and equipment.

ALCOHOLISM AND INSANITY.—Dr. William Graham, resident medical superintendent of the Belfast District Lunatic Asylum, says in the Seventy-fourth Annual Report, in regard to alcoholism in connection with mental disease:—"From my own observation, I am of opinion that alcoholism is more frequently the symptom of an already existing degeneracy of the brain and nervous system. Before any dogmatic assertions can be accepted, cases attributed to the influence of alcoholism must be strictly inquired into and all available means taken to discern any possible hereditary taint. We must discount the popular rhetoric in this matter. In several of the cases classified under in-

temperance I have found other influences at work, which, apart from drink, would have been probable factors in producing mental derangement. The dietary and habits of the people also prove a contributory source of mischief, porridge, milk and potatoes being now replaced by stimulants, such as tea, stout, and other artificial drinks. Ignorance of cooking which prevails also makes the people easy victims to all kinds of canned or concentrated meats. To make matters worse, the tea that is consumed so abundantly is not China, but Indian, or, as it is popularly called, 'Assam.' This is often boiled, kept on the stove or near the fire, and resorted to frequently." Dealing with the alarming increase of general paralysis of the insane, Dr. Graham says:—"In every school in the land there should be a teacher of physiology in its ethical, social, and practical aspects; nay, more, in the greater school of the world, physician and preacher, journalist and moralist, should never tire of expounding the doctrine of heredity, the evils of intemperance and immorality, the education of children born with defects of blood, and the infinite danger of marriage with neurotic persons. When the leaders of public opinion are aroused to some such propaganda, we may expect an abatement in the incidence of this most incurable and terrible of disorders—but not till then."

IS IT EXCESSIVE?—A deputation from the North-West Ward Ratepayers' Protective Association recently waited on the Committee of the Cork Board of Guardians to protest against any increase in the salaries of any of the Union officers, alleging that the officials were "over-paid and over-fed." A ward master, Mr. William Murphy, writes to the Press to protest against this assertion, and says:—"I am a ward master, having charge of from 300 to 400 male paupers, very feeble old men requiring special care. My duties with regard to those 300 or 400 men are to look after feeding, clothing, bedding, and their bodily cleanliness. I have to keep an account of all the men going into my ward from hospital and leaving my ward for the hospital; also the number of men discharged, besides keeping order, which is very important. I am on duty, I might say, night and day, as I am liable to be called any time of the night to get a doctor for any of those men who might require him. On that account, I have often to get up two or three times the same night, especially in winter time. For the discharge of all this work I am paid the sum of nine shillings and sevenpence a week in cash. My rations cost the Guardians five shillings and sixpence per week, and the quality of those rations, being contract stuff, is very inferior indeed. I was for a long time a large ratepayer myself—one of the largest in Cork Union—and I unhesitatingly assert that at the present time any ordinary agricultural labourer would not use some of the food supplied to the officials in the Cork Union."

LIVING ON GRASS AND WATER.—The vegetarians will, no doubt, rejoice to hear the story of Lusebio Santos, a Spaniard, who arrived in New York six months ago a physical wreck, with his nerves and digestion ruined. As an experiment he commenced living on nothing but grass and water. He is now, says the *Telegraph* correspondent, apparently in perfect health. Doctors are examining his case. Santos says that he soon began to like grass, which he gathers free in the public parks. When winter comes he will proceed to the south for a fresh grazing country.

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