

an asylum when a serious fault in the care of the patients has been discovered.

The government must appoint inspectors for the superintendence of all asylums, and all insane persons who are nursed in their own homes.

The physicians, who are directors of asylums, must have specially studied psychiatry, neurology, and psychology before assuming their duties.

Only those who have given proofs of a good education, intelligence, capacity for nursing, and love of the work ought to be admitted as nurses. Every nurse before being admitted to the asylum should have been in a training school for nurses.

The nurses must be well cared for. Insurance premiums for life and against illness should be paid for them.

Dr. MacDonald read Dr. Mabon's (America) paper on the treatment of the insane in large open wards. He had obtained good results by this system of placing the patients in surroundings so different from those in times past, when the asylums looked more like prisons than like hospitals. He said that good moral influence and cheerful surroundings afford the best conditions for recovery. The open air treatment in the Manhattan Hospital, U.S.A., has a most beneficent influence on all patients, but especially on tuberculosis patients and acute insane patients, who are often suffering from anæmia, delirium, and sleeplessness. Some lovely photographs of the wards and tents of Manhattan hospital were circulated.

#### THE BOARDING OUT OF THE INSANE.

On Thursday, September 5th, "The Boarding of the Insane in Private Dwellings, and Labour in Open-Air Fields" was the topic for the morning. Dr. Marie (France) opened the series of speeches. He spoke in favour of the system of boarding convalescent patients in private families. Labour in the fields far away from the busy cities ought to be a preparation for the return to general society. The speaker objects to colonies for the insane, where all kind of patients are brought together, as happens in Gheel (Belgium), neither must an existing village be made use of. New ones must be formed, as was done in Uchtspringe, in Saxony. An existing village can never quite answer the purpose, because the position of the houses and their sanitary conditions are not always as they should be.

Professor Alt (Germany) the director of the colony at Uchtspringe gave a description of that place. He recalled how few years are passed since the insane had been given more liberty. Even now there are in Germany several large prisonlike buildings where physically strongly developed persons are kept in absolute idleness. And the result of that treatment is that they give vent to their unemployed bodily forces by shrieking and violent acts, doing thereby much harm to themselves and to others. The great benefit of working in the field is not only that the patients are continually in the fresh air, but that, while working, they forget their troubles. Uchtspringe has grown

slowly. It is now an extensive village, where 500 patients live, three together in a small cottage, under the care of a nurse. It is a real pleasure to see how contentedly those patients work.

A long discussion followed as to whether the colonies should be independent of the asylums, or annexed to them.

#### THE EDUCATION OF BACKWARD CHILDREN.

On Friday, September 6th, Professor Ferrari (Italy) the director of the medico-pedagogic institute at Bologna opened the Conference with a speech on "The Education of Backward Children." In his institute backward, feeble-minded, idiotic, and epileptic children are nursed. He described his method of treatment, as a proof that the results were very satisfactory, and said that the death-rate had been reduced from 20 per cent. in 1901 to 4.74 in 1906. These results had partly been obtained by keeping apart the children suffering from enteritis. He had observed, as to those children who are suffering from chronic constipation, that it is often sufficient to give them an appropriate diet, and to take care that the contents of the intestines are thoroughly evacuated, to obtain an improvement, not only in general health, but also of the mental faculties.

Dr. Décroly (Belgium) said that the question of the education of backward children was a very important one. It should not be considered as part of the question of the treatment of the insane, but quite as an independent one. It must not be forgotten that the mentally inferior man was a mentally inferior child, and for this reason the child must be the special object of study. He then said that all physicians only notice abnormal children, and forget that every child has abnormalities. It was not backward children alone who must not be burdened with too much instruction, it must not be done with normal children either. The purpose of education must be to find out for what profession a child has the most aptitude, and to give him an individual education. Professor Alt (Germany) told of his experiences in the treatment of backward children. He had observed that children after certain illnesses, such as measles, scarlatina, etc., often showed an absolute standstill of the mental faculties. They were once more like babies of a few months old, and had to be treated accordingly, which most parents did not understand.

On Friday evening there was a very interesting session. Dr. Meeus, from Gheel, Belgium, Dr. Alt, from Uchtspringe, Germany, and Dr. Marie, from Dunsur Auron, France, gave a description of these different family colonies, and showed us with the magic-lantern beautiful views of those places.

Of the usual festivities I can't tell you much, because I was only present at the representation at the theatre, where lovely tableaux-vivants of well-known Dutch paintings were given, quaint old Dutch songs were sung, and a Dutch peasant wedding, with much singing and dancing was also presented. A most splendid representation.

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