

showed that over 62 per cent. of the inmates of the homes for chronic inebriates, 10 per cent. of prisoners, 30 per cent. of the inmates of rescue homes, are feeble-minded, and that the class constitutes a considerable section of the unemployed.

The Commissioners say, "Of the gravity of the present state of things there is no doubt. There are large numbers of mentally defective persons whose training is neglected over whom no control is exercised, and whose wayward irresponsible lives are productive of crime and misery, of much injury to themselves and others, and of much continuous expenditure wasteful to the community and to individual families." He (Sir William Chance) was of opinion that the feeble-minded should come under the Authority which has the control of the lower grades of mental defectives, and be removed entirely from the Poor Law authorities. "I am sure," he said, "that this Conference will not expect me to lend any hand in breaking up our present Poor Law system. Rather do I want to see it more consolidated and fortified. But I can see no good argument for leaving one class of mental defectives—and a very dangerous class—under a different authority to that which deals with other cases of mental defectives. The Colonies for that purpose had no compulsory powers and therefore nothing could be done, even where a feeble minded boy had been several times in prison, or a feeble minded girl had had one or more illegitimate children they had no power to force their parents to part with them."

Miss Baker (Holborn Union) said it was dreadful to draft little children of five years old into asylums. The Metropolitan Asylums' Board had done a great work. The feeble minded should be placed in colonies apart from imbeciles.

Mrs. Nott Bower (Richmond) was strongly opposed to bringing more classes who were not paupers under the Poor Law. The work was sufficiently great without undertaking more. Her advice was that they should deal with destitutes and leave other questions to other boards. She considered that the Poor Law was hopelessly inadequate to deal with this question, as it has no means of classification. She instanced a girl of good education suffering from epilepsy being put into the general ward of a workhouse.

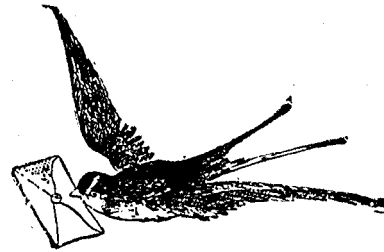
After further discussion on this subject the Conference concluded with a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor and Corporation for granting the use of the Council Chamber.

#### THE EVA LAVY MEMORIAL.

We are asked to draw attention to the Memorial which it is proposed to raise to the late Miss Eva Lavy, a nurse trained at Guy's Hospital, and afterwards a worker at the C.M.S. Hospital, Baghdad. Miss Lavy was returning to her work after her first furlough by the s.s. *Kurdistan* full of enthusiasm, when the steamer foundered off the Scilly Isles, and her valuable life was thus suddenly cut short. It is suggested that the Memorial to her memory should be connected with the work to which she was devoted, and it is hoped to raise the sum of £200 to endow a ward which will bear her name in the new hospital to be built at Baghdad. Donations may be sent to the Organising Secretary, Medical Mission Auxiliary, Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.

## Our Foreign Letter.

FROM SCUOLA CONVITTO REGINA ELENA,  
POLICLINICO, ROMA.



A detailed account of our taking over of the medical wards, and our Christmas festivities was sent early in January, but

has remained somewhere en route, as it never reached Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. Having failed to discover its whereabouts I must try to pick up the threads it contained to some extent, for the benefit of those kind readers of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* who follow the progress of the Italian reform of nursing with sympathy and interest.

It was decided to take over a Medical Pavilion early in December, as hitherto we had only had the nursing of men and women's surgical wards. We had the honour of being desired by three different Professors, the greatest proof that improved nursing is becoming an accepted idea. The IX. Pavillon, with Professor Giuseppe Bastianelli as chief, was decided on, and through November extensive preparations for the advent of the "sisters e signorine" were made. The whole block was repainted and varnished, a quickly-drying medium being used so that patients' beds were moved to one half of the ward whilst the other was in the hands of the painters. But we went through much anguish of uncertainty as to whether the work really would be completed in time, and only on the 2nd December was it absolutely decided that the women's ward could be taken over on the 4th. A photo of this ward has already been published in the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*, with Sister Weeden-Cooke standing by her flower table. The scheme of colour on the hospital walls is palest green and a sort of strawberry—so pale that any note can be struck in screens or bed-jackets. Miss Snell has kept to red and green so far, except in the sick-room, where a lovely old rose prevails. I still cannot realise the wonder of our having any colour at all permitted us, for black and white in beds, furniture, and patients' and nurses' clothing have been absolutely *de rigueur* ever since I have worked in Italy. But our wards have turkey-red screens, or lovely real green ones, and "nightingales" of pink also break the monotony which Italians, of all people, most loathe. Plants and flowers grace the ward tables, receiving enthusiastic admiration from patients and their friends.

The taking over of the women's medical ward was effected quite quietly. Miss Snell accompanied the day staff at mid-day, and the old infermiere then left the ward. Two days later the men's medical was taken over in the same way. The patients were somewhat astonished at the amount of washing and cleaning which went on, and one old lady vehemently declined to be enclosed by screens,

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