THE Sixth General Meeting of the Midland Mental Pathological Society was held in the Anatomy Theatre of the Birmingham University on Thursday, March 18, Sir Gilbert Barling, Bart., *C.B.*, *C.B.E.*, F.R.C.S., President, in the Chair.

Prof. Sir ARTHUR J. HALL, M.D., Hon. D.Sc., F.R.C.P., gave a lecture on "**Some Features of Chronic Epidemic Encephalitis (Lethargica)**". This was illustrated by many lantern-slides and a cinematograph demonstration of the characteristic poise, the gait, the kinesia paradoxia, and the lid movements associated with efforts to overcome ocular gyric crises.

Dr. STANLEY BARNES, in proposing a vote of thanks, remarked on his association with Sir Arthur and his special study of the disease.

Dr. B. H. SHAW seconded the vote, which was carried with enthusiasm.

Dr. J. H. MALLOY contributed to the discussion, and Sir ARTHUR HALL replied in respect to the relationship of the disease to dementia præcox, suicide and influenza.

RESEARCH AND CLINICAL COMMITTEE.

STATISTICAL SERVICE.

At the last meeting of the Research and Clinical Committee the Hon. Secretary reported that he and Dr. Rees Thomas had had correspondence with Dr. A. Bradford Hill, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, in the matter of obtaining the services of a statistician for members of the Association; that Dr. Hill had replied that he (or another member of his staff) would be willing to advise in the matter of statistics of all papers submitted, and agreeing to the suggestion that it be left to him (Dr. Hill) in each case to state his fee, as the amount of work involved on each paper would vary.

This service is now available to members.

OBITUARY.

DAVID MACKAY CASSIDY.

BY the death of Dr. D. M. Cassidy our branch of medicine has lost its senior member and our profession a distinguished colleague.

A dignified and outstanding personality he had long been the Nestor of the Lancashire Mental Hospitals Board.

Educated abroad and at Edinburgh University he began his medical career as Assistant Medical Officer at the Inverness Asylum. At a very early age he was promoted to be Deputy Medical Superintendent at Broadmoor, and about the age of thirty was appointed Medical Superintendent of the County Asylum, Lancaster—a post which he held for fifty years. He retired at the age of eighty and died in his ninetieth year. This longevity was to some extent hereditary, for his father attained the same great age.

Dr. Cassidy belonged to the age of asylum autocrats. He was an autocrat, but with a keen sense of justice, and he was tolerant and kind. He certainly imposed his authority, but it was not vexatious and never resented by reasonable men.

Lancaster is the oldest county asylum in Lancashire, and as old as any in the country. Before its erection the insane had been housed with the prisoners in the Castle; and in 1816, when they were transferred to their new place of refuge, they were accompanied by their straps and chains and trappings of restraint. But the revolving chair and ducking pond were left behind.

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The numbers of insane in the county seemed almost always to be in advance of the accommodation provided, so that the hospital's long history has been one of constant extension, adaptation and re-organization. When Dr. Cassidy began his administration the population was one of hundreds; when he retired it had grown to 2,700, 500 of whom were private patients. From the date of his appointment for a period of fifty years he devoted his energies and talents to the development of the hospital, and in the application of the latest and best resources of science to the treatment of his patients. Perhaps conditions were less easy then than they are to-day. The social conscience had not been so fully aroused. While practical philanthropists were ready and anxious to house in comfort their unfortunate charges, yet in the absence of proof of a resulting fall in the incidence of insanity and its cost to the ratepayer it was very difficult to get money for any special forms of treatment and research. Too high a premium was attached to what seemed economical administration, and a superintendent's abilities were too apt to be valued inversely as the maintenance rate. It is fairly easy to do everything for one's patients when money is no object. Is is not difficult to be economical when the patients' standard of living and treatment is too low.

Yet those who knew Lancaster would invariably admit that according to the standard of opinion at the time, the happy balance of economy with efficiency was attained.

He was an early advocate of the hospitalization of asylums. The systematic education and training of nurses and attendants on hospital lines had its important place in the life of the institution. At the beginning of the century he had introduced female nursing into male wards, and before the war as many as 700 male patients were nursed by women. Open-air treatment, begun tentatively for tubercular cases, was gradually extended to selected types of mental illness until it became general in its application.

Impressed by the lack of accommodation in the country for patients between the county class and those who could afford the cost of private institutions, he had always reserved some accommodation to supply this want. So soon as expedient a villa for private male patients was provided, and when additional land had been acquired, this was followed by the erection of a private female villa on a commanding site overlooking the Lune Valley and the Lake hills. The comfort of the housing, the excellence of the treatment and the lowness of the cost in these new dwellings compared favourably with anything of the sort in England.

One of his last achievements was the adaptation of a section of the hospital to the purposes of a medical treatment centre, and its equipment with the most modern surgical and medical appliances. He was specially interested in the various forms of light treatment, and applied them himself to selected cases.

His administration was never lopsided. He was essentially an all-round man, to whom every aspect of asylum life appealed.

Alive to the necessity for movement and colour to relieve the monotony of routine, occupation, theatricals, games and entertainments were greatly encouraged. His keen interest in music was reflected in the large orchestra, while the regular dances and concerts in the recreation halls were augmented by frequent ward parties in which the sexes intermingled.

The cinema and wireless equipment were introduced so soon as they became practical propositions. The ex-service patients were treated in special wards, dressed in khaki, and had daily route marches, while a motor-coach took patients in rotation for drives into the surrounding country.

Though never much in evidence at the meetings of medical societies, he was for many years on the Parliamentary Committee of this Association. He exerted his influence and energy to get assured pensions for asylum workers. Before the passing of the Asylum Officers' Superannuation Act these pensions had been permissive and were very unequally awarded.

A charming host, he was always at his happiest and best when presiding in his own house, receiving guests and dispensing hospitality to a large circle of friends.

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He was a devoted husband and father, and was rewarded by his family's devotion to him. He shared their friends and tastes, while they in turn inherited the interests of their parents. His daughters are most accomplished musicians, and both his sons adopted his own profession.

A cultivated man of the world who happened to be a doctor, and incidentally a medical superintendent, he would probably have been equally distinguished at the head of any organization demanding initiative and his balance of gifts. His C.B.E. was no doubt a gesture of appreciation for his work and influence on behalf of men serving in the war; while his academic distinctions attest the width of his professional interests and attainments.

At Edinburgh he obtained the F.R.C.S.E. and D.Sc. (in public health). Before this he had taken the M.D. of Toronto and was an LL.D. of the same university.

His outlook was philosophic; he carried his years lightly, and always retained that prestige which so subtly attends a high intelligence and distinguished presence.

A great asylum administrator, self-contained, self-reliant, " justum et tenacem propositi virum ".

D. BLAIR.

BOARD OF CONTROL.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SCIENTIFIC AND ANCILLARY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

THE Board of Control, with the approval of the Minister of Health, have appointed the following to be a Committee to advise upon questions arising in connection with scientific and ancillary mental health services:

The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Radnor (Chairman), Sir Laurence Brock, Sir Hubert Bond, Alderman J. W. Black, Alderman W. E. Lovsey, Dr. A. A. W. Petrie, Dr. Adeline Roberts, Alderman J. C. Grime, Dr. C. J. Thomas, Dr. George Somerville, with Mr. H. J. Clarke as Secretary.

A Committee was appointed in 1931, but owing to the financial crisis which occurred in that year, its work remained in abeyance.

The Mental Treatment Act, 1930, empowered local authorities to provide for out-patient treatment and for the after-care of mental patients, and, subject to the approval of the Board of Control, to undertake, or contribute towards the expenses of research in relation to mental illness.

The primary function of the Advisory Committee will be to advise the Board of Control regarding organization and encouragement of research, and other ancillary services will be within its purview. On technical questions relating to research, the Committee will have the expert assistance of members of the Committee on Mental Disorders of the Medical Research Council.

BUREAU OF HUMAN HEREDITY.

WE have received the following communication regarding the work of this institution:

The object of this Bureau is collection on as wide a scale as possible of material dealing with human genetics. Later, the tasks of analysis of material and distribution of the information available will be added.

The Bureau is directed by a Council representing medical and scientific bodies in Great Britain. It is affiliated to the International Human Heredity Committee, which ensures co-operation in all areas where research is proceeding.

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