OCCASIONAL NOTES OF THE QUARTER.

The Annual Meeting and Dinner.

The assembling of the International Medical Congress during the week of the Annual Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association contributed, in some respects, to its success. The presence of distinguished foreign alienists was warmly welcomed by the Association, and, although the two meetings were entirely distinct, the general character of the Medico-Psychological received a special tone and impress from the international gathering.

The building in which the members met—University College—was kindly placed at their disposal by the Council, the Association being unable, owing to the occupation by a Foreign Army of the College of Physicians, to assemble in their accustomed rooms. Another circumstance which made the meeting a success was the presence of the Earl of Shaftesbury at the afternoon meeting, the only occasion on which he has honoured the Association by taking part in its proceedings. His Lordship's presence at dinner at Willis's Rooms last year is fresh in our remembrance, and this additional mark of interest in the Association, the members of which stand in so close a relation to the Board of which he is the head, will be long and gratefully remembered.

The Annual Dinner has become an increasingly important institution. It was always a pleasant one, but of late years it has brought the Association into contact with outside opinion and feeling, through the guests invited, and has afforded an opportunity of discussing questions of current public interest. This time the company of one of Her Majesty's Judges invited a reference to the plea of insanity in criminal cases and the test of responsibility, the opinion of the late Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in favour of loss of control as a test being cited as an indication of the growth of opinion among legal men in the direction so long urged by the Association. Mr. Justice Fry, while declining to be drawn into a discussion on this point, was not disposed to dissent from the enlightened opinion of Sir Alexander Cockburn, but felt that there must always be great practical difficulty in distinguishing between crime on the one hand and sin on the other.

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Although the views of the Chief Justice have not been adopted in any Criminal Law Amendment Act, and have, indeed, been ignored by the Judges appointed to report on the general question, there is no mental physician that does not hold the Bench in the highest esteem, and the Association did not fail to regard it as an honour to have the company of a Judge whose culture and learning, apart from professional knowledge, are well known. To the Bench can be applied, without fear of contradiction, the lines in which Dryden described a prominent character of his day, an ancestor of Lord Shaftesbury—

> Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,
> Swift of despatch, and easy of access.

One personal observation the writer may be permitted to indulge in. Dr. Bucknill, in proposing the President's health, which he did in the kindest terms, gracefully alluded to the work done many years ago by his ancestors in initiating the reform of the treatment of the insane in England. He would say here what the lateness of the hour prevented him saying at the time that, deeming it a privilege to be descended from those who, without reward other than that of an approving conscience, successfully struggled to ameliorate the then deplorable condition of the insane in asylums and workhouses, he is content to apply to himself the well known words of the Mantuan bard—

> Sequiturque patrem non passibus æquis.

But if he follows his forefathers with unequal steps, none the less does he desire to see the improved condition of the insane maintained, and, where possible, still further improved.

There are two kinds of public opinion, the one morbid and irrational, the other sound and intelligent. The latter is based, indeed, upon the efforts made by scientific men themselves to create enlightened public opinion on this subject, to promote the comfort of the insane, and to devise the best means of providing for their care. Of such it behoves us to speak in terms not only of respect, but to welcome their efforts as beneficial and laudable; while of the former—irrational public opinion—our estimate may well be made on "Griffith's valuation." Certainly, from a very different source, arose the indignant protest which, in 1792, aroused a healthy sentiment in favour of the claims of those who were unable to speak for themselves, leading eventually to Parliamentary Committees, and, at last, to the legislation

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which has embodied in law what humane men were striving to accomplish in their own practice and endeavouring to induce others to pursue.

An exceptional toast welcomed to the dinner the visitors from Europe, and America, and Canada. Professor Lasègue replied in appropriate terms. The members of the Association would have been glad to hear all their guests from other countries, but this was, unfortunately, found to be impossible for want of time, and therefore, at the risk of seeming invidious, only one was called upon to respond as the spokesman for the rest. On such an occasion it was felt that the term Foreigner was itself foreign to the feelings in every one's mind, and the quotation from one of Charcot's works made at the time in proposing this toast, may be repeated here: "Nobody ought to forget that Science belongs to no nation, and is the property of no race."

The "Prosperity of the Association" was duly honoured, and there certainly appears every reason for prophesying a fulfilment of the hopes expressed at the dinner for its future progress. Its watchword may be said to be "Forward" in three principal directions—in combined clinical and pathological observation; in the moral and pharmaceutic treatment of insanity; in specializing the provision suited for individual cases and particular classes of the community, *i.e.* securing the discriminative care and control of the insane, mentally and socially. These, once more to avail ourselves of the well-worn phraseology of Irish legislation, may constitute the three "F's" of the Medico-Psychological Association.

The International Medical Congress.

Had the denizen of another world regarded the Metropolis during the first week of August, he might have been puzzled to divine the cause of the extraordinary influx of strangers, the running to and fro, the babel of tongues in Pall Mall, and the throng in St. James's Hall. Had he been formerly a dweller on our globe, and an inhabitant of our island, he would certainly have concluded that our shores had been only too successfully invaded by a foreign foe, and that the English capital was at their mercy. As he might not have learnt that Peace hath her victories as well as War, the last thing he would have surmised to account for the scene on which he gazed, would have been an International Medical Congress.

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