He thought that they had scarcely sufficient data in these cases to enable them to say that any one of them was a case of syphilitic insanity.

Dr. TUKE said that there was just this possible element, that not one of these cases might be syphilitic cases at all.

The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Newington referred to some asylum reports, and seemed to think that where a physician did not refer in his report to syphilis cases he had none in his asylum.

THE NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that Glasgow should be the next place of meeting.

On the motion of Dr. TUKE, a vote of thanks was given to the Chairman, and to the College of Physicians for the use of their room, and the proceedings then terminated.

THE ARGYLE DISTRICT ASYLUM.

Among the Reports that were published too late for notice in the last number of the Journal, that of the Argyle and Bute Asylum deserves notice for the views expressed by Dr. Rutherford in regard to farm work and its effect on the patients. The Asylum is well situated for the success of the experiment of having a very large farm attached to it, and of letting the patients work or wander about over it. There were 196 patients in the end of 1872, and the farm extends to about 400 acres, the greater part of which is rented by the Institution, and which is, therefore, in the position of an ordinary tenant farmer. Dr. Rutherford says:—

"The practice in treatment, adverted to in former Reports, has been still further developed during the year. No form of mechanical restraint, seclusion, or confinement in airing courts has been resorted to. The administration of drugs has been restricted to cases in which a recognised bodily disease or disorder was actually discovered. No sedative or stimulant medicines have been given to subdue excitement or depression. Comfortable apartments and clothing, a liberal dietary, and abundance of out-door exercise in the form of employment or recreation have been the means used to subdue the manifestations of mental disease. The use of opiates has been restricted to an occasional draught at bed time, generally in cases of illness, where it would have been required independently of the mental condition of the patient. Alcoholic stimulants have—doubtless owing to the healthy stimulus imparted by useful out-door exercise—also been little required during the year. The actually sick, and the weakly old people, have been the principal recipients of this kind of medicine. The use of single rooms for patients inclined to be noisy and restless, continues to be restricted as much as possible.

"An aversion to regular well-directed industry is a characteristic of chronic insanity; and in this Institution, to combat the tendency of idleness or to do only such things as are in accordance with the disordered fancy, is a leading principle of treatment. To see chronic lunatics, strong and in the prime of life, strolling about all day in pleasure grounds, each indulging in his own morbid thoughts, is, as may be imagined, a painful and depressing spectacle. Mere walking exercise, be it ever so regularly taken, has very little influence in counteracting these morbid manifestations. Indeed, walking exercise, daily and regularly taken within an Asylum grounds, possesses, in my opinion, very little value as a means of treatment of chronic able-bodied lunatics. In recent and acute cases, it may be of value as a means of restoring the bodily health, on which the mental condition so often depends. Useful employment in the open air is, of all kinds of exercise, the best. It requires no argument to prove that what is necessary to maintain the bodily and mental health of the sane, is the best means of improving that of the insane, and of bringing them more nearly into the condition of healthy persons. In this way can even incurable lunatics be brought into that state in which Asylum treatment is no longer necessary, and boarding out is found so beneficial both for the patient and the ratepayer. The facilities for this mode of treatment have, during the past year, been increased by the taking of the farm of Fernoch. Full advantage has been taken of this and other facilities granted by

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the District Board, and the result is now beginning to be apparent in the state and habits especially of the male patients. Three years ago, only about 40 per cent. of the men were employed, the remainder were treated as idle and incapable, and were walked about the grounds and the fields—the use of airing courts having been for some time previously abandoned. About two years ago it was seen that this aimless walking, although an improvement on confinement in airing courts, had not the improving effect on the idle patients that the farm and garden work had on the workers. Walking parties were therefore discontinued, and the practice of sending all to the fields was tried with the most beneficial results. With each working party two attendants were sent —one to direct the work, the other to look after the non-workers. It was now found practicable to send only one attendant with each party, which generally consists of from 6 to 15 men; the number of idle patients being so few that it may be said that every able-bodied patient engages in the work. This has been brought about by the influence of example and habit, than which nothing has greater influence on the insane and weak-minded. No difficulty is experienced with new cases coming into the Asylum. They fall at once into the system already in force. More difficulty is experienced with those transferred from Asylums where they have already acquired other habits, and with those of the present population who have been for many years the idle inmates of Asylums, and are disposed to look upon exertion as a hardship, and work as a thing to be avoided. There are at present 6, and occasionally 7, parties of men, and 2 of women, constantly employed on the farm and grounds. The proportion of men engaged in real work is 85 per cent."

The results of the system thus described is reported on in an extraordinarily favourable manner by the Scotch Commissioners in Lunacy, who evidently consider this as the *beau ideal* of an Asylum.

PROFESSOR GAIRDNER ON THE "LEGAL AND MEDICAL ASPECTS OF INSANITY CONTRASTED."

In his concluding "Lecture on Insanity," Dr. Gairdner took occasion to point out certain diversities between the medical and the legal views of unsound mind. Medicine looks upon insanity as a condition to be, if possible, cured. Law looks on it as a condition regulating the legality of certain procedures, the validity of certain documents, and the responsibility for certain acts. No legal or medical classification can be satisfactory which divides the population into two categories—the one sane and wholly responsible; the other insane and wholly too irresponsible. Nature does not draw the line after this fashion, and if language or law does so, it must be at the sacrifice of truth, and, in the end, of justice. Even among the confessedly insane there are some who are at one time irresponsible, and at another responsible in whole or in part, and the law admits this principle. Again, in ordinary criminal responsibility, the law admits a question of degrees of guilt, and, therefore, of punishment. The practical issue out of the requirements of the law, as it stands at present, has been that in such cases some juries, contrary to the ruling of the judge, have acquitted persons who were obviously criminals; while other juries have followed the ruling of the judge, and have returned a verdict against the prisoner in like circumstances, leaving it to the public to influence the Home Secretary, so as to secure an alteration of the sentence. Public opinion vibrates, in an almost incoherent manner, from one extreme to the other; but few authorities have maintained that it is *just*, no less than expedient, to consider even unsound minds as amenable to the law up to the degree of their actual or ascertainable moral responsibility. A full recognition of this is necessary to preserve the moral sense of the community from being shocked by the spectacle, on the one hand, of the execution of a lunatic by mistake, or, on the other hand, of a criminal escaping punishment by some shadowy plea of insanity. Let evidence be led in every case as to the real nature of the criminal act, and let the jury form their opinion. If they are satisfied that the crime was the act of a maniac, let them, as at present, acquit on the ground of insanity, giving in a verdict of "Not Guilty by reason of insanity." But let them have power also to return a verdict of "Guilty,

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