the Insane? Thursday afternoon was specially set apart for this. The President opened the subject in a speech of great power, illustrating his views by plans of admission and infirmary wards for lunatic asylums. A very large number of members took part in the debate, and papers on the same subject were contributed by Dr. Strahan and Dr. Thomson. Special attention was directed to (1) the separate treatment of recent and curable cases, (2) the training of asylum-attendants, (3) the necessity for an increase in the number of asylum medical officers, with an improvement in the position of the second in command; and (4) the classification of patients in asylums. The Secretary of the Section (Dr. Cobbold) pointed out that the medical spirit in asylums is increasing in strength year by year; that the above subjects are all receiving much attention. Curable cases are treated in special wards; attendants are trained by lectures, demonstrations, handbooks, and examinations (with prizes). Assistant medical officers in some few asylums are enabled to marry, and are encouraged to do good medical work; and the patients in most asylums are suitably classified. There was a general agreement amongst the members that, in large asylums, an efficient assistant medical officer should be styled "resident physician," and should have responsible charge of the purely medical work, his pay and position being such as to encourage him to make a career of this special work, remaining free from the cares of administration. The patients would thus have the advantage of constant medical treatment by a physician of experience in mental disease; this being hardly possible at present, owing to the large amount of administrative work which necessarily falls to the lot of medical superintendents. As the strictly medical treatment of insanity depends largely upon the patient's everyday surroundings, occupations, amusement, companionship, diet, &c., it is absolutely necessary that the chief administrative officer in a lunatic asylum should be a qualified medical man. No layman ever supervises the domestic arrangements in the true interests of the patients; he may possess the best intentions, but he has not the necessary knowledge.

The medical superintendents of the great idiot asylums took a prominent part in the proceedings, each of them reading a paper of interest. Dr. Cobbold also directed attention to the provisions of the Idiots Act, 1886, which has recently become law.

It is not possible within the limits of this notice even to mention the titles of all the interesting papers which were read and fully discussed, but they certainly afforded conclusive evidence that the true medical spirit is largely abroad among our asylum medical officers. Great interest was evinced in some most beautiful microscopic preparations of brain-tissue which were exhibited and described by Dr. Palmer, of Lincoln, and Dr. Beevor, of London; indeed, the members of the Section were to be seen studying these long after the regulation hour for the cessation of business, so much so as to call forth the remark from a well-known member of the profession, that the "Lunatic Section" was the most industrious of any. The proceedings were brought to a close on Friday by hearty votes of thanks to the President and the Secretaries for their highly successful conduct of the business of the Section.

---

## EASTERN COUNTIES' ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS.

In the article upon Admission to Idiot Asylums which appeared in our July Number, reference was made to the difficulty of obtaining admission into the Eastern Counties' Asylum. We are asked to state that this difficulty has been greatly diminished since the enlargement of the asylum, as instead of only eight or nine cases being elected as before, twenty cases were chosen at each election last year, and the number has this year been increased to twenty-five. The

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.32.139.460 Published online by Cambridge University Press

election-list always contains a number of inmates whose friends apply for their re-election for an additional term of five years, so that the cases in the asylum are not increased in the same ratio as the number of successful candidates. Admission by election into this asylum is now rendered easy of accomplishment.

---

DR. IRELAND'S BOOK, "The Blot upon the Brain," is to be translated into German. The French translation of this work, which is being prepared by Dr. Edgar Bérillon, of Paris, is nearly finished, and will be published in November. The "Blot" has been prohibited by the ever-vigilant Russian censorship. This is no doubt owing to the chapter on the hereditary insanity of the Romanoffs, and the historical illustrations about the miseries which insane monarchs have caused to their subjects. We hope Dr. Ireland's article in the present Number on the late King of Bavaria will not share a like fate in that country.

---

## *Obituary.*

### JAMES ALEXANDER EAMES, M.D.

We believe that the decease of Dr. Eames, at the age of 53, is the first instance of a President of the Medico-Psychological Association dying during his term of office. Those who attended the forty-fourth annual meeting held at Cork last year under his presidency had no reason to foresee that at the next anniversary his seat would be empty. Last autumn he visited Belgium, and was present at the Antwerp Congress of Mental Medicine; he joined the excursion to Gheel, in which he took a lively interest, and returned home in usual health and full of spirits. Nothing, so far as we are aware, occurred to injure his health until June last, when he was attacked with a carbuncle on the neck, which did not for some time excite alarm, but was followed in the course of a few weeks by great prostration, and finally by death on Saturday, the 17th of July. His medical attendants, Drs. Hobart, Townsend, and Deputy-Inspector-General Eames, appear to have taken an encouraging view of the case till nearly the last. In his death a genial warm-hearted physician and a sincere friend passed away. His *bonhomie* and ready speech, his laugh and good-natured expression, will be sorely missed in the family circle and the institution over which he ruled, loved by his colleagues and trusted by his committee. It was after holding the post of assistant-surgeon in the Crimean War, in which position he obtained several marks of distinction, that he studied mental disorders, and was appointed Medical Superintendent of the Lettarkenny Lunatic Asylum. Thirteen years ago the then superintendent of the Cork Asylum (Dr. Power) died, and Dr. Eames, after having been eight years at the above-mentioned institution, was appointed his successor. It is said that this appointment was due in good measure to the influence of the Duke of Cambridge, who, when wounded in the Crimea, received surgical attention from Dr. Eames. That his management of the Cork Asylum was successful, and indicated the fertile resources of the superintendent, will be allowed by those members of our Association who were present at the meeting and had an opportunity of going over the institution.

Dr. Eames contributed several papers to the medical journals of general interest. He was always ready to introduce new remedies and appliances into the asylum, and never despised them, however homely and simple they might be.

We regret to find that Dr. Eames has not accumulated wealth, and that his wife and family are left unprovided for. Under these circumstances an

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.32.139.460 Published online by Cambridge University Press