MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE IN IRELAND.

It will be seen that an effort is being made to improve the position of medical superintendents of Irish District Asylums. These gentlemen have pre-eminent claims on the consideration and sympathy of Parliament and the public. Their office is one of difficulty, often accompanied with danger. From day to day, they are in constant contact with a most embarrassing disease. Their life is one whole tissue of worry and excitement. It is equally burdened with care and responsibility —care and responsibility unshared and unassisted by others. Unlike other practitioners, they are compelled to bear the weight of a great establishment, and, for all its errors and inequalities, they are required to give an account. As Lord Shaftesbury very fairly stated before a Parliamentary Committee, "the wear and tear upon their nervous system is such that it may be considered a miracle that so many of them can bear it." Yet no class in the community has been so hesitant in preferring the recognition of its claims. The utmost modesty has been shown by the medical superintendents of our hospitals for the insane. In England, they have been treated with much more indulgence and generosity. After fifteen years' service they are entitled to a superannuation allowance of three fourths of their salary and allowances, and, on remaining in office after that time, an additional sum is given. What is the position of the Irish superintendents? Will it really be believed that, in this country, they are compelled to serve for forty years before they can ask the Government for the same retirement? The partiality of the law in this, as in other circumstances, is positively provoking. If Ireland form an integral part of the British Empire—and we are constantly being reminded of this fact—why are we not governed by the same measure of justice? It does seem that British statesmen are indifferent to our wants—that penal enactments are not yet altogether repealed. Such irregularities may appear very insignificant and unoppressive; but, when we gather together the many unequal provisions of British law, and examine them in the aggregate, it is really no wonder that our people are oftentimes discontented. Our medical superintendents have a just right to be treated in the same way as their English brethren. The same rule should prevail here as across the water. The contrast in the period of service required in each case to qualify for superannuation must really appear startling; and we trust that Lord O'Hagan, in advancing his Lunacy Regulation Bill, will correct an anomaly which cries for amendment. The medical superintendents in Ireland are appointed by the Government, though their salaries are paid from the county rates. It is surely the duty of the nominator to protect the interests of his nominee.—*Down Recorder.*

CLINICAL INSTRUCTION IN INSANITY.

We lately noticed a paper by Dr. Sibbald upon "Clinical Instruction in Insanity," and the importance of the subject induces us to consider it somewhat more fully. There can be no question that the absence of all means of clinically studying mental disease is one of the gravest drawbacks of a London medical education. Only within the last few years has instruction concerning it been afforded to the students of our metropolitan schools by systematic lectures, and even these are absent in some. But those who lecture know how vain a thing it is to describe insanity and insane patients to men who never see a single case. True, we have in the metropolis two large lunatic Hospitals, which would seem to exist specially for clinical instruction, and for the immediate reception of such urgent and acute cases as would serve admirably for the purposes of a *clinique*. But clinical teaching in them there is none, and there are so many difficulties and delays in the way of receiving patients, that one of them, at any rate, is half empty. Dr. Sibbald, however, draws our attention to the fact that at

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Berlin insane wards exist *in a general Hospital.* In the Royal Charité, insane patients are received and treated like the other sick :—

"Within the grounds there is a detached block of building, the first and second floors of which are occupied by recent cases of insanity. There is little in the construction of the building distinguishing it from the other portions of the hospital. With the exception that comparatively few of the patients are confined to bed, that a larger number of attendants and nurses is provided, and that more care is taken to obtain occupation for such as can be industrially employed, there is little to indicate any special peculiarity in its organisation. The use of mechanical restraint has been abolished, solitary seclusion is very little resorted to, and during many visits that I paid to the wards I always obtained evidence of humane and orderly management. The dress of the patients was that adopted in all sections of the Hospital. The Physicians stood in precisely the same relation to the insane patients as they did to the phthisical or fever patients. Clinical lectures were given during the summer session by Professor Griesinger three times a week, in one of the rooms of the lunatic section, the first portion of the lecture being given without the presence of any patients. The patients were then brought in singly, and their condition demonstrated while the Professor held a conversation with them. On every occasion in which I was present, such feeling as was exhibited by the patients seemed chiefly to be one of satisfaction with the attention paid to them."

Dr. Sibbald, as an Asylum Physician and now a Deputy Commissioner in Lunacy for Scotland, would naturally criticise with a jealous eye the management of such wards, and his testimony in their favour is most valuable. When special Hospitals have been condemned, we have always heard lunatic Hospitals placed in a category of their own, and lunatics spoken of as patients who could not by any possibility be treated upon the premises of a general Hospital. Yet it has been and can be done, and we trust may be one day done in London as well as in Berlin. Asylums for the chronic insane there must be. The number to be treated in a general Hospital must necessarily be small, but a small number would suffice for clinical instruction. It is not to be expected that every one of our Hospitals should open such wards, but if schools were amalgamated, as we trust they some day will be, a sufficient number might certainly be instituted. Then, and not till then, will mental disease take its proper rank in our pathology. Insanity will no longer be a mysterious something upon which a lawyer is to be considered as good an authority as a doctor. Our students will be able to compare the unsoundness of mind depending on diseases now treated in general Hospitals with that which is called insanity, and at present relegated, as something quite different, to a lunatic asylum. Doubtless the governors of our Hospitals would at first shrink in horror from the prospect of opening a lunatic asylum, and encountering Commissioners, Acts of Parliament, and other such bugbears ; but we are told that the thing exists, and we hope that some day it will exist here. The importance is so great that we would beg for it the serious consideration of the Profession, and through the Profession of the public, who are vitally concerned in the lack of instruction under which the Profession now labours.—*Medical Times and Gazette.*

SYPHILITIC DISEASE OF THE BRAIN, INVOLVING THE CAROTID ARTERIES.

Dr. Moxon has contributed the following account of the severe ravages of syphilis in one case to the "Medical Times and Gazette" of June 24th :—

"The effect of syphilis on the arteries is now an important and interesting question. Some authorities believe that the aorta is frequently directly attacked

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