OMISSION.

In the report of the general meeting on the 18th May, in our July issue, omission was made of the reading of Dr. Outterson Wood's paper on the Association nurses at the commencement of the proceedings, by the special permission of the President.

CORRECTION.

The Lunacy Board of Ireland.

We regret that in the notice in the July number of the reconstituted Board of Commissioners for the general control of asylums for the lunatic poor in Ireland the name of Dr. Edward Maziere Courtenay was omitted. A similar error occurred in the list published by our contemporary, *The Lancet*.

THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS.

The subjects for discussion in relation to our specialty in the Section of Nervous and Mental Diseases were—Obsessions and Fixed Ideas, the Pathogenesis and Diagnosis of General Paralysis, the Pathology of the Nerve Cell, Hypnotism and Suggestion in relation to Legal Medicine and Mental Diseases, and the Operative Treatment of Diseases of the Brain.

The papers promised on these subjects were very numerous, and the list of authors included many of those best known to alienists. There were in addition many unclassified contributions.

Amongst the English-speaking contributors we notice the names of Drs. Althaus, Macewen, Alexander Robertson, B. Sachs, Shuttleworth, and J. F. Sutherland.

A VISIT TO A RUSSIAN LUNATIC ASYLUM.

By Dr. Shuttleworth.

During the meeting of the International Congress of Medicine at Moscow a visit was paid by several English superintendents of asylums to the Préobragenskoie Hospital for the Insane in the suburbs of Moscow. This asylum, the most ancient in Russia, had its origin in a decree, in 1762, of the Emperor Peter III., ordaining distinct accommodation for insane patients, apart from their care in convents and monasteries, which had previously been in vogue. After several makeshift arrangements, the present site was secured in 1804, and thereon were erected buildings for eighty patients—forty of each sex. According to the fashion of those days, a cell was provided for each patient; isolation, camisoles, fetters, "iron bracelets," etc., being thought essential to "calm" these unfortunates in their maniacal outbreaks! At the period of the French invasion of Moscow, in 1812, the staff of the hospital fled, and the poor patients were left to their own resources, some taking refuge with their relatives and others never being heard of again. Subsequently, owing to increasing pressure, it was found necessary to enlarge the hospital, and large extensions were made in 1840, 1878, and 1889. In the last-named year the non-restraint system was adopted; and in one portion of the building "open doors" (on the Scotch plan) may be found, giving the patients free access from the wards to enclosed airing-grounds.

It will be seen, therefore, that the building, which stands in an airy, elevated situation to the north-east of Moscow, presents the characteristics.

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of various epochs in the treatment of the insane. The older portion, which was first visited, consists of a number of galleries with single rooms of fair size. In the prison-like arrangements of this portion there was, of course, a degree of gloom which was not lessened by the absence of any attempt at decoration by means of pictures, plants, or pet animals. In the second portion of the building there were large rooms used concurrently for dormitory and day-room purposes, though whether this double use was only a temporary arrangement owing to repairs in progress or otherwise, was not quite clear. At the time of the visit there was certainly evidence of overcrowding, even the room used as recreation hall, with stage, etc., being half full of beds. Nominally there is accommodation for 410, but at present the number of inmates does not exceed 360, and the medical superintendent, Dr. Constantinowsky, evidently considers this number in excess of the proper accommodation, though unable to obtain better provision at the hands of the authorities. The medical staff consists of a chief physician and four resident assistants, besides four external (clinical) assistants and a pathologist. The staff of attendants and servants numbers 100 (62 men and 38 women); and it would seem that, both as regards medical and general attendance, the provision is liberal. The hours of the attendants are, as a rule, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., and their leave of absence is infrequent. The patients are evidently treated with consideration and kindness—there is an entire absence of mechanical restraint—and they appear to be well fed. An excited patient who threatened to be troublesome during our visit was promptly pounced upon by no less than five nurses, who led her off to an isolation room—a room not padded in any way. To English eyes the dress of the patients (especially the men) left much to be desired, many of them wandering about barefooted and with a paucity of garments. Small workshops were provided for tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, and bookbinders; and we saw creditable specimens of the work produced both by these and by the women. There seemed to be, however comparatively few patients employed. In a detached building near the entrance were billiard tables and other means of recreation for convalescents.

There is no doubt that much has been done by Dr. Constantinowsky to improve the mode of treatment and general conditions in the asylum. Much, however, remains to be done to bring it into line with the best asylums in Western European countries, especially in the matters of cleanliness, sanitary arrangements, and cheerful decoration of the walls. In this last respect the women's wards were decidedly superior to the men's, but a certain bareness was painfully evident throughout. Baths there were of copper, but insufficient in number, and we were told that the patients were bathed only twice a month. In Russia, however, it is possible that more frequent ablutions would be considered superfluous.

A word or two as to the attendants and nurses. The former it was difficult to distinguish from the patients, there being no uniform; but several appeared to be very youthful. The nurses were attired in picturesque uniform, consisting of black dresses, white caps, tippets, and aprons, and looked alert and intelligent. We were informed that the staff had some special training, but to what extent we could not learn. The proportion of medical officers to patients (1 to less than 50) would seem to ensure that due attention should be paid to the medical and other means of cure. A well-equipped laboratory is devoted to scientific and pathological research, with a special pathologist in charge. We were told that in every case of death the *post-mortem* examination reveals evidence of tubercular disease—a fact pointing to the imperfection of sanitary surroundings, which we have no doubt will be ameliorated as means permit.

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