and to secure the support of their respective Boards. In a matter which does not directly increase local burdens, we should imagine that the various Boards would be found willing to assist their officers. It is not improbable that further legislation may be in contemplation with regard to the Irish Asylum Service, and we venture to think that the suggestion thrown out by the Chief Secretary will, if generally adopted, strengthen his hands in carrying out the wishes of our Irish confrères.

EFFECTS OF COLOURS ON THE INSANE.

The "Gazette des Hôpitaux" contains a curious article on this subject. Dr. Ponza, director of the lunatic asylum at Alessandria, Piedmont, having conceived the idea that the solar rays might have some curative power in diseases of the brain, communicated his views to Father Secchi, of Rome, who replied in the following terms:—"The idea of studying the disturbed state of lunatics in connection with magnetic perturbations, and with the coloured, especially violet, light of the sun, is of remarkable importance, and I consider it well worth being cultivated." Such light is easily obtained by filtering the solar rays through a glass of that colour. "Violet," adds Father Secchi, "has something melancholy and depressive about it, which, physiologically, causes low spirits; hence, no doubt, poets have draped melancholy in violet garments. Perhaps violet light may calm the nervous excitement of unfortunate maniacs." He then, in his letter, advises Dr. Ponza to perform his experiments in rooms the walls of which are painted of the same colour as the glass panes of the windows, which should be as numerous as possible, in order to favour the action of solar light, so that it may be admissible at any hour of the day. The patients should pass the night in rooms oriented to the east and south, and painted and glazed as above. Dr. Ponza, following the instructions of the learned Jesuit, prepared several rooms in the manner described, and kept several patients there under observation. One of them, affected with morbid taciturnity, became gay and affable after three hours' stay in a red chamber; another, a maniac who refused all food, asked for some breakfast after having stayed twenty-four hours in the same red chamber. In a blue one, a highly excited madman with a straight waistcoat on was kept all day; an hour after he appeared much calmer. The action of blue light is very intense on the optic nerve, and seems to cause a sort of oppression. A patient was made to pass the night in a violet chamber; on the following day he begged Dr. Ponza to send him home, because he felt himself cured, and indeed he has been well ever since. Dr. Ponza's conclusions from his experiments are these:—"The violet rays are, of all others, those that possess the most intense electro-chemical power; the red light is also very rich in calorific rays; blue light, on the contrary, is quite devoid of them, as well as of chemical and electric ones. Its beneficent influence is hard to explain; as it is the absolute negation of all excitement, it succeeds admirably in calming the furious excitement of maniacs,"—*English Mechanic*, March 3rd, 1876.

"The curious oriental reds, yellows, blues, and greens in glasse-painting, especially when the sun shines, doe much refresh the spirits. After this manner did Dr. R. revive the spirits of a poor distracted gentleman, for whereas his former physician shutt up his windows, and kept him in utter darkness, he did open his window lids and let in the light, and filled his windows with glasses of curious tinctures, which the distempered person would always be looking on, and it did conduce to the quieting of his disturbed spirits."—*Aubrey, in Anecdotes and Traditions; Camden Society Edition, p.* 96.

Dr. Symes Saunders of the Devon County Asylum has made ingenious use of this quotation from Aubrey; having placed it at the head of a subscription list for stained glass windows to be placed in the new Chapel.

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