PROGRAMMES AND MEETINGS COMMITTEE

Last year the membership of the College was invited to submit papers on miscellaneous topics for presentation at the Annual Meeting in Cardiff. The response to this appeal was very encouraging both in the high quality of the material and in the comparatively large number of papers offered. As a consequence it is hoped that we may be able to provide more time for miscellaneous papers this coming summer. As Secretary of the Programmes and Meetings Committee, therefore, I am again asking members if they will kindly let me know (c/o The Royal College of Psychiatrists), if they have a paper they would like to present at the July, 1974, meeting. The closing date for summaries is 1 February 1974.

C. M. B. PARE.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS OF OUR JOURNAL

Some Passages from our First Issue, 15 November 1853

Collected by ALEXANDER WALK

On the Acreage of Land attached to County Asylums, by John Thurnam (spelt 'Thurnham'), Medical Superintendent of the Wilts County Asylum*

We are not in a position to insist on any fixed or determinate standard. This should vary with the varying circumstances of districts and communities; and a diversity of provision must itself be deemed useful, as promotive of experiment and enquiry as to the development of agricultural as well as other modes of employment. In this, as in all other respects, may the public asylums be long spared the infliction of the *dicta* of an assumed optimism, which must be destructive of all individual efforts at advance, and must tend to reduce all to the common level of a self-satisfied mediocrity.

The Commissioners recommend that the proportion of land should, as far as possible, be in the ratio of one acre at least to ten patients. The inadequacy of the original provision in the case of many of the older asylums is much to be regretted and prevents the proper development of the industrial system.

Though outdoor pursuits must be admitted as being more salutary . . . yet in manufacturing districts it is desirable to provide occupation by the erection of looms and workshops.

[The Table attached to this article shows acreages varying from 10 at Chester to 118 at Colney Hatch.]

* John Thurnam, previously of The Retreat, one of the founders of the Association, author of 'Statistics of Insanity' and later known as an archaeologist and co-author of 'Crania Britannica'.

On Monomania, by Dr. Delasiauve, of Bicêtre. Abridged from the *Annales Médico-Psychologiques* by J. T. Arlidge, Medical Officer to St. Lukes*

On the Prevention of Dysenteric Diarrhoea in Asylums, by F. D. Walsh, Medical Superintendent of the Lincoln Hospital for the Insane†

The diarrhoea which occasionally prevails in asylums is of two kinds—simple diarrhoea and one of a dysenteric character which requires quite a different treatment. We were once infested with this diarrhoea . . . I had been much at sea and had observed this disease in connection with scurvy; in port they both ceased at the same time. I concluded that dysenteric diarrhoea appeared in consequence of the diet being deficient in fresh vegetables and fruit and in vegetable aroma—in scurvy pure citric acid has no effect but the aroma of the lime appears to be important. . . . It appears probable that aromatics are not merely intended for the gratification of our appetities, but serve also for the preservation of our health . . . There are aromatics in daily use, as tea,

* J. T. Arlidge was the author, in 1859, of *On the State of Lunacy*, an excellent review and criticism of the services existing at that time. Subsequently he became even better known as a pioneer of industrial medicine in the Staffordshire Potteries, where there is now an Institute named after him.

† F. D. Walsh was the most successful of the 'House Surgeons' who followed Gardiner Hill at the Lincoln Hospital (The Lawn). Appointed in 1847, he did not, in fact, receive the title of Medical Superintendent until 1867, and he continued in that office until 1877.

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