November, December, and January they did not allow the patients to sit outside; but as much as possible during the year they allowed them to go out into the garden, and his experience tended to bear out Dr. Fraser to a great extent in his principle, although that gentleman had perhaps contrasted in too vivid colours the former and the present state of the patients in the Fife Asylum (a laugh).

Dr. SKAE then read the note of "A Case of Death from Undetected Injuries," which had occurred in his asylum (see Clinical Notes and Cases, p. 99); and a paper by Dr. FINLAY MURCHISON, entitled "What is our present position in reference to the Use of Mechanical Restraint in the Management and Treatment of the Insane?"

THE MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Some discussion took place as to the time at which the quarterly meetings of the Association in Scotland should be held; and it was agreed that the next one should be held in the first week in March, and the following one in the first week in October; and that after that they should be held in the first week of February, and first week of September; the hour of meeting to be one o'clock.

Votes of thanks were then given to Dr. LAYCOCK and Dr. JAMIESON for presiding, and to the Royal College of Physicians for the use of the hall.

The proceedings then terminated.

THE IRISH LUNATIC ASYLUM SERVICE.

It will be within the recollection of the readers of the "Journal of Mental Science," that at the Annual Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, which was held last year in Dublin, a paper was read by Dr. Stewart, of Bristol, on the subject of the Irish Lunatic Asylum Service. Dr. Stewart's paper, which was listened to with great interest, contrasted the position of English and Irish Medical Superintendents of Public Asylums, and pointed out that Irish Superintendents were required to perform so many and such various duties that little time was left to them for the cultivation of the scientific branches of psychology, that they are, for instance, held responsible for the discharge of duties that in England fall to the share of the Clerk to the Committee of Visitors, and to the Steward of the Asylum. English Medical Superintendents were somewhat surprised to find their Irish colleagues charged with the duty of making out voluminous returns, conducting the whole correspondence of their establishments, paying the salaries and wages of the staff, managing the asylum farms; and that in the majority of Irish institutions for the insane, these duties had to be performed without even the assistance of a second resident medical officer. The fact of the meeting being held in Dublin, and the large number of Irish members of the association who were present, led to a long discussion upon the subject-matter of Dr. Stewart's paper, and the Irish Superintendents were gratified to observe the warm interest manifested in their behalf by the English and Scotch members of the Association present. For the information of those who were not able to attend the Annual Meeting, we may observe that the position of Medical Superintendent of Irish District Asylums, until the discussion of last year, had been little known or understood by their English brethren. In England the appointment of Superintendent rests in the hands of the Committee of the respective Asylums—he is their officer, entirely under their control, and is paid by them. Whether this is in accordance with the most advanced ideas of asylum management or is the best possible relative position, either for the medical men themselves, or the patients under their care, may perhaps be a matter of doubt. In Ireland the case is very different; there the appointment of Superintendent is made by the Lord Lieutenant; the Superintendent holds his office from Government, is dismissed only by order of the Lord Lieutenant, is responsible

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to him, but receives his pay from the county cess levied for the general support of the Asylum—an anomalous position, and one which, in these days of change, can hardly be expected to last.

The Irish Superintendents, alive to the necessity of speedy action, and with the view of improving their position, in the event of approaching legislation, determined to lay their case before the Chief Secretary.

A meeting having been convened on the last day of November, and Dr. Lalor having been called to the chair, the following, amongst other, resolutions were unanimously passed:—

Copy of Resolutions passed at a Meeting of Medical Superintendents of Irish Lunatic Asylums held in the Hall of the King's and Queen's College of Physicians, on Tuesday, Nov. 30th, 1875.

RESOLUTION No. I.—That a Committee be appointed to further the interests of the Irish Superintendents.

RESOLUTION No. II.—That Dr. Courtenay be appointed Secretary and Treasurer.

RESOLUTION No. IV.—That we, the Resident Medical Superintendents of District Asylums in Ireland, being Government Officers, appointed under warrant of the Lord Lieutenant, respectfully request that our Salaries may be paid by the Government out of the Capitation Grant now paid to the several Asylums.

RESOLUTION No. V.—That we think it advisable that Assistants to Resident Medical Superintendents should be appointed to all the Asylums, in order that Privy Council Rules 47 and 50 may be carried out in their integrity; and that in Asylums containing more than five hundred patients there should be two, and, when more than a thousand, three Medical Officers, in addition to the Superintendent.

RESOLUTION No. VI.—That we call the attention of the Government to the omission of any provision for the Salaries of Medical Superintendents of Irish District Lunatic Asylums containing over eight hundred patients, and that we consider our pay should increase in proportion with the number of our patients, no matter how large the Institution.

RESOLUTION No. VII.—We consider that No XXXV. of the Privy Council Rules and Regulations for the management of District Lunatic Asylums in Ireland is most objectionable, placing us on the same footing as the Matron with regard to leaving the Asylum.
And we further think, that the words in Rule XIII. "She shall not absent herself from the Asylum at the same time as the Resident Medical Superintendent," should read "She shall not absent herself from the Asylum without the leave of the Resident Medical Superintendent."

The meeting, convinced of the necessity of the co-operation of their whole body, so as to make their case as strong as possible in the eyes of the public, directed their Secretary to forward the following letter to each Irish Superintendent:—

9th December, 1875.

SIR,—I am directed to forward you a Copy of certain Resolutions, passed at a Meeting of Irish Resident Medical Superintendents, held at the College of Physicians, on Tuesday, November 30th, 1875, and to inform you that a Deputation, consisting of Drs. LALOR, TYNER, EAMES, ROBERTSON, and COURTENAY, waited afterwards upon the Inspectors of District Lunatic Asylums, when these Resolutions were submitted for their consideration and advice thereon, and I am happy to have to state that the deputation was favourably received by them; on consultation, it was deemed advisable to turn all our efforts to obtaining the end pointed out in No. IV. Resolution, as, that being granted, the question of Superannuation would of necessity follow.

Having decided to wait upon the Chief Secretary at the earliest opportunity and urge our claims, I will communicate to you, when SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH will be willing to receive that deputation, when it is earnestly requested you will attend, as our success, to a very great degree, will depend on the unanimity and co-operation we evince in pressing our claims.

With reference to Resolution No. VII., it was, of course, only intended for the consideration of the Inspectors.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
E. MAZIÈRE COURTENAY, M.B.,
Hon. Sec. and Treasurer.

At a meeting subsequently held at the King and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland, it was resolved to press upon the attention of the Chief Secretary for Ireland the desire of the Irish Medical Superintendents that their salaries should form a first charge upon the capitation grant of four shillings per head, which Parliament had voted on the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in relief of the local burthen falling upon county cesspayers. It was felt by the Irish Superintendents that, if they could carry this point, their claim to be placed upon a more favourable footing as to superannuation would follow as a matter of course, inasmuch as their being paid their salaries out of the

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Consolidated Fund would, at one step, constitute them civil servants, and bring the scale on which they could retire within the terms of the Act 22 Vict., ch. 26. Resolving, therefore, to concentrate their efforts, so far as the Chief Secretary was concerned, upon this important point, the following memorial was drawn up and signed, we understand, by 22 out of 24 Irish Superintendents of Asylums:

To Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bart., Chief Secretary for Ireland.

The Memorial o the Resident Medical Superintendents of District Lunatic Asylums in Ireland,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

That our position at present is an anomalous one, different from any other Branch of the Service, as we are appointed by the Lord Lieutenant and responsible to the Government, but are paid by the Rate-payers.

That by reason thereof we are deprived of the benefit of the Superannuation Act of 1859, not being recognised as Civil Servants, as our Salaries are not paid through the Treasury, and we can therefore only obtain a Pension under the Act of 30 & 31 Vict., cap. 118, sec. 8, under which Act we must hold office for Forty Years in the same Asylum before we can obtain two-thirds of our salary as Superannuation, whilst our Brethren in England are entitled to the same pension after Fifteen Years Service (25 & 26 Vic., cap. 3, sec. 12).

That the Public Service suffers from the present state of the law, as senior men of many years' experience refuse the charge of larger Asylums, knowing that by removing from one Asylum to another they would forfeit their right to a pension should the length of their service not extend to forty years in the latter.

That the Government now contribute so large a share through the Capitation Grant to the support of District Asylums (about two-thirds of the whole amount), the payment of the Medical Superintendents out of that Grant would cause no increase of expenditure.

That the Poor-Law Medical Officers of Unions in Ireland, who are not appointed by Government, and over whom the Executive have no control, receive half their salaries from the Consolidated Fund.

Memorialists therefore respectfully request that you will take this matter into your favourable consideration, so that steps may be taken if it be deemed right that our salaries be in future paid by the Government out of the Capitation Grant, now paid to the several Asylums.

AND MEMORIALISTS WILL EVER PRAY.

It will be observed that another most important object would be attained by the success of the effort thus made to have the salaries of the Irish Superintendents paid out of the rate-in-aid. Such salaries would cease to be a local charge, and, in the event of an Irish Superintendent being transferred from one asylum to another of greater magnitude, or of greater difficulty of management, the number of years that he had served in one county would not be lost to him on his transfer. He might be moved as often as the executive thought fit, and finally superannuated upon the whole term of his service. At present, a Superintendent serving for 20 years in one county, and afterwards transferred to a more difficult and responsible post, where he might serve say for 10 years longer, would, upon superannuation, lose the whole of the 20 years' service. This has all along been felt to constitute a very real grievance, inasmuch as it imposed a penalty upon promotion, and induced very able Superintendents to remain in small asylums, where their length of service had given them a claim to some superannuation in the event of their being unable to continue the active discharge of their duties.

Early in February the Chief Secretary signified his readiness to receive the deputation, which accordingly waited upon him. Dr. Lalor ably represented the views and wishes of the Irish Lunatic Asylum Service; but, in the short account of the interview that has reached us, we remark that the Inspectors of Irish Asylums are conspicuous by their absence. We may be permitted to observe that, upon such an occasion, we should have expected to find one or both of the Inspectors present, and prepared to support the very reasonable and respectfully urged request of our Irish brethren. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, while receiving the deputation with marked courtesy, said that he did not at present feel prepared to legislate further on the subject of Irish Lunacy, and that when the opportunity for so doing might arise, the wishes of the deputation should be borne in mind; and, at the same time, he remarked upon the absence of any representations from the Boards of Governors of Irish Asylums on the subject of the memorial. We counsel our Irish friends to take the hint,

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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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