PARISH COUNCILS AND SCOTTISH ASYLUMS.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Secretary of State for Scotland, received a deputation from parish councils on the 23rd January. The deputation appeared in support of a memorial urging the promotion of legislation to secure direct representation of parish councils on district boards of lunacy, and on the boards of royal and chartered asylums. It was stated that 356 parish councils supported the contentions of the deputation, and that these councils had under care 8377 insane persons, whereas 450 parishes with 4260 patients had taken no action in the matter.

Lord BALFOUR, in reply, insisted on the difference between poor-houses and asylums. He said that asylums have large curative effects, and should be as good as modern science can devise. He could not promise immediate legislation, but he pronounced himself entirely in favour of the independent audit of the accounts of district lunacy boards. Lord Balfour pointed out that the parish councils are not responsible for the treatment of lunatics, but are only bound to remove them to an asylum and pay for them there. The treatment rests with the district boards of lunacy, subject to the control of the General Board in Edinburgh. He further showed that the county council constituency is the same as the parish council constituency, which is really representative of all classes of the ratepayers, and deprecated any great increase in the numbers of the district lunacy boards. Referring to Inverness, eighty-three parishes would require representation. As to the plea that payments and representation should go together, Lord Balfour pointed out that where parish councils manage their own asylums (*e.g.* Edinburgh) the town councils suffer the same injustice, being requisitioned for the money to build, yet without representation. The town councils would naturally make the same request as the parish councils if the question is touched, and he doubted if the parish council of Dundee would care for that. He recognised that if parish councils were represented on district boards having no asylums of their own they would be parties to the making of contracts for the maintenance of their insane patients, but did not think that would carry them far, as the General Board has power to fix the cost. Lord Balfour suggested that the county councils should elect those of their number who are also parish councillors, in so far as possible, to the district lunacy boards, and thus gain much without legislation. With regard to the royal asylums he saw grave difficulties. Although they have privileges which should not be continued, they were built by charitable donations, and not by public rating. The intimate connection in these institutions between private and state-paid patients would have to be considered, and in view of the difficulties it would be necessary to consult the General Lunacy Board and the Local Government Board. Lord Balfour guarded himself against any promise of immediate legislation.

TYPHOID FEVER CAUSED BY CELERY.

In a report published by the Springfield *Republican* of December 14th, 1899, on an outbreak of typhoid fever which occurred recently in the Insane Asylum, Northampton, Massachusetts, U.S.A., the disease appears to have been originated and spread by means of celery. It seems that up to September 9th, 1899, the institution had been singularly free from typhoid fever, there having been only four cases in ten years. But on and after that date cases occurred with alarming frequency, so much so that in about two weeks forty inmates were stricken with the malady, which, moreover, exhibited no signs of abating. Accordingly the services of Dr. Morse, of the Massachusetts State Board of Health, were requisitioned, and he was requested to make an investigation. The fact was then disclosed that patients, nurses, farm help, and kitchen help were affected, and further, that the only patients attacked were those who paid for their care at the institution. Therefore it seemed probable that the cause of the epidemic was due to some article of food of which the patients, nurses, and servants partook, and in which the non-paying patients had no share. The discovery was made that the paying patients were sometimes supplied with extra articles of food, such as fruit and vegetables. At the time of the epidemic they received celery raised on the farm.

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This vegetable was ultimately decided to be the cause of the disease, and investigations were set on foot thoroughly to probe this theory. It happened that the sewage after being filtered was on the celery beds, and owing to the methods used in cultivating celery, by banking the stalks of the plant with earth, the vegetable provided a very favourable medium for the transmission of the disease. Celery was first used at the Massachusetts Asylum in August, and became quite a common article of diet for the paying patients, the nurses, the house help, and the farm help. The most significant fact of all, however, is that one of the farm servants, not realising the danger of eating celery, and disregarding the injunctions forbidding its use, ate some, and quickly contracted typhoid fever. After orders had been given to stop the further consumption of celery the epidemic immediately subsided.

RETIREMENT OF THE REV. HENRY HAWKINS.

Mr. Hawkins, who is, we believe, the senior chaplain of the English asylums, retires after thirty-two years' service at Colney Hatch, with a previous service of eight years at Haywards Heath.

This long period of service has been distinguished not only by the faithful diligence with which Mr. Hawkins has performed the daily round of duty, but by unbounded sympathy with the suffering poor to whom he has ministered.

His unremitting industry and kindly charity have also led him to take an active part in general movements for the welfare of the insane. The After Care Association was entirely due to his initiative, and to his steady persistence it owed its survival in the earlier stages of its existence. He has been active, too, in promoting other societies for the weal of the insane and asylum workers.

Literary contributions, of value both to physicians, attendants, and chaplains, have also formed another outlet of his never-resting desire to do good.

That he may long enjoy the leisure for other forms of activity, which his retirement will give him, is the sincere wish of the large number of friends with whom he has worked for so many years.

OBITUARY.

Dr. William Marcet.

Dr. William Marcet, who recently died at Luxur, was the grandson of Dr. Alexander Marcet, of Guy's Hospital. His principal scientific inquiries were in regard to respired air, and he also wrote on climatology. To alienists his most interesting work is that on Chronic Alcoholic Intoxication, published in 1860. In this he followed on Huss' work, from whom he differed in laying stress on causes and treatment.

Miss Matilda Robins Giddings.

Miss Giddings died on 20th March, 1900, and the event claims mention in this Journal, as possibly marking the severance of the last tie of this generation of asylum workers with the great Conolly. Miss Giddings went to Hanwell in 1850 as an Assistant Matron, having been attracted by the fame of Dr. Conolly. There she had charge of *The Bazaar*, the female work-room, and played the organ in chapel and the piano at dances. Only female patients took part in the dances at that time, and it is a note of interest that the late Dr. Parsey, of Warwick County Asylum, claimed to have been the first to associate the sexes at these entertainments, an innovation which then involved a very great deal of consideration.

Miss Giddings spent three years at Hanwell, and was thereafter appointed Matron at the Perth Royal Asylum in 1853, when Dr. Sherlock undertook the duties of Resident Physician. On his appointment to the Worcester County Asylum in the following year, her sister, Miss Eliza Giddings, who had also served in Hanwell, was asked to become Matron at Powick. Both sisters retired on pensions about eleven years

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