IRISH DIVISION.

THE SUMMER MEETING of the Division was held at the District Asylum, Kilkenny, by the kindness of Dr. West, on Thursday, July 5th, 1906.

The members were first driven through the town of Kilkenny, and visited the castle and the cathedral, with their many points of interest; after which they were entertained at luncheon by Dr. West.

At the meeting subsequently Dr. West occupied the chair, and there were also present Drs. C. Norman, A. Fitzgerald, T. Drapes, and W. R. Dawson (Hon. Sec.), as well as Dr. L. Buggy, who was present as a visitor.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read, confirmed, and signed, the Hon. Secretary reported with reference to various matters therein contained, and a short informal discussion took place.

Letters from Mrs. Molony and Dr. Oscar Woods relative to resolutions of condolence passed at the last meeting of the Division were read.

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Division at the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin.

Dr. G. F. WEST contributed a "Note on Kilkenny Asylum."

KILKENNY DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM.

The Kilkenny Asylum, which was opened in the year 1852, is on almost the same plan as the Mullingar and Omagh Asylums. The original buildings consisted of a central block containing the offices and officers' quarters, and two wings, one for the male and one for the female patients; the kitchen, laundry, and airing yards being in the rear.

The only difference in the design of the asylums was, that in Mullingar and Kilkenny the corridors faced the front of the building and the sleeping apartments looked to the rear, while in Omagh Asylum the reverse was the case, the sleeping apartments looking to the front and the corridors towards the rear.

There have been two additions built to this asylum; in the first addition the two wings were prolonged backwards. A portion of each addition was three-storied, like the original building, and the rest was only two-storied. This, I think, was a mistake.

About ten years ago a second addition was built to the asylum. This consisted in prolonging the wings which were two-storied, and at the extremities of these prolongations two high water towers were erected.

The water is pumped into the tank in the water tower on the female side, and a pipe from this tank descends to the ground, and running under the surface till it reaches the water tower on the male side, ascends to the second tank and empties into it.

If the main building had been all three-storied the pipe connecting the two tanks could have been run in the roof, and, in addition to this, it would have been easy, by means of T-pieces, to have had several hydrants with hoses attached running from the garret down through the three floors, with fire hoses attached.

I hope shortly that the members of the Committee of Management will see their way to putting up stand-pipes through the interior of the whole building.

I think it would have done just as well to have built one water tower, with a tank equal in capacity to the two existing tanks, and thus have saved the expense of the second water tower.

There were several improvements made when the last addition was built. An entirely new laundry was erected and fitted up by Messrs. Bradford. The machinery is worked by a steam engine.

The kitchen was enlarged, and a new cooking apparatus put up by Messrs. Ashwell and Nesbett, and also a vegetable kitchen with potato steamers.

There was a new boiler-house built, containing two boilers 6 ft. 6 in. diameter and 24 ft. long. It would have been better if a third boiler had been put in. It takes one boiler to do the ordinary work of the house, viz. driving the laundry machinery, cooking, and heating the water; this boiler burns about 1½ tons per day. There is a system of heating the house with steam pipes in the winter time, which is certainly very effective; but it requires the second boiler to do this, and

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it is unable to do any more. The result is that during the four winter months of the year the two boilers have to be kept constantly going; this would not be of so much consequence if the water supplied to this asylum were not so hard.

It takes 2 tons of coal to heat the house with steam. A couple of years ago the boilers were fitted with Meldrum furnaces, by means of which slack can be burned instead of coal, and thus a great saving in cost is effected.

There were also two general bath-rooms built, in which there are baths lined with glass which give great satisfaction, and the whole sanitary system of the house was renewed, new lavatories and wash-hand basins were put up, and a new system of sewers put down.

The water supply of the asylum is taken from a well, about 400 yards distant, and close to the river. The supply is practically inexhaustible. Last year, viz. 1905, was very dry and hot, but the well did not show any signs of becoming dry.

Within the last two years the city of Kilkenny has got a new water supply, and I am in great hopes that the members of the Committee of Management will see their way to take this water into the asylum. At present the steam pump is only just able to pump up the day's supply, and the tanks are nearly empty in the evening. In case of fire this would be a very serious matter.

There were new workshops built, and also a Roman Catholic and a Protestant Church. They were designed by Sir Thomas Drew, and the Roman Catholic Church is a very handsome building.

A new farmyard was built, which is a great improvement. I am of opinion it would have been better if it had been made larger, and with more shed accommodation, it is also rather far from the house, and it would have been better to have placed it in the rear of the building and near the kitchen.

The airing yards have been done away with, and the patients occupy two fields behind the asylum.

It would be a great improvement to instal electric light in the asylum. Although the gas made from Castleconur coal is unfit for illuminating purposes, it does very well for driving gas engines, and by using this form of motor power I believe electricity could be generated very cheaply.

Originally there were about twenty-five acres of land attached to this asylum, which is still surrounded by the old boundary wall. About fifteen years ago the Board of Control purchased twenty-five acres of adjoining land. This was a great advantage to the asylum, although the farm was still small. I am glad to say the Committee of Management has taken steps to purchase the house and grounds of a place close to the asylum. This will add about nineteen acres of land to the asylum, and the house when some internal alterations are made will accommodate about eighty patients.

I may remark that the asylum farm is to a large extent a vegetable garden. All the vegetables used in the asylum are grown on it, and potatoes sufficient for three months' supply, leaving very little land for corn and hay.

Before concluding I would like to bring some figures concerning the asylum population before you.

On the 31st December, 1852, the number of patients resident was 126.

On the 31st December, 1870, that is to say, eighteen years after, the number resident was 226, thus giving an increase of 100 patients in eighteen years.

On the 31st December, 1880, the number resident was 243, giving an increase of 17 patients in ten years.

On the 31st December, 1890, the number resident was 320, giving an increase of 77 patient in ten years.

On the 31st December, 1900, the number of patients resident was 441, giving an increase of 121 patients in ten years.

On the 31st December, 1905, the number of patients resident was 465, giving an increase of 24 patients during the last five years.

From these figures it will be seen that the principal increase in the asylum population occurred in the twenty years between 1880 and 1900. Since then the increase has not been so rapid, and I am in great hopes that we have nearly reached the high water-mark. A good deal of the increase in late years has been due to the fact that several chronic cases were sent here from the county workhouses. If this continues to be done it will help to keep up the numbers, but

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when this generation of paupers dies out I think it probable that the number of patients will decrease, or at least remain stationary.

Dr. CONOLLY NORMAN made a communication on "An Ancient Form of Physicians' Register," which he exhibited.

A short discussion followed, in which most of those present joined, and the meeting terminated.

OBITUARY.

OSCAR THOMAS WOODS, M.D., PAST PRESIDENT M.P.A.

We have to chronicle with much sorrow the death, at a comparatively early age, of our genial colleague, our President of 1901–2, Oscar Woods of Cork.

Dr. Woods was a native of Parsonstown in the King's Co., where his family have long been settled and have been held in much esteem. It has been observed that Parsonstown, which is a military depôt, has rarely been without a member of the family in command. Dr. Oscar Woods' uncle, Dr. Thomas Woods, practised in the town for more than fifty years, and being possessed of a keen scientific mind and a very capable pair of hands, was of much service to the late Lord Rosse in constructing his great telescope. He was also a pioneer in photography, and it is interesting to note that he gave their first lessons in this art to a couple of his young fellow townsmen who took it up as a trade, one of whom became afterwards one of the best known photographers in the world.

Oscar Woods was a graduate of the University of Dublin. He began his studies in insanity, like so many men of his time, at the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield. He then went to the Warwick Asylum, where he soon rose to be senior assistant medical officer. We have heard—and it speaks well for the kindliness of his heart—that there are still surviving patients and members of the staff who, after the passage of more than thirty years, remember him and speak of him with affection.

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland appointed Dr. Woods superintendent of the asylum at Killarney in 1875, and fifteen years later, in 1890, he was appointed superintendent at Cork, where he died on August 2nd, 1906, æt. 58.

Dr. Woods in his earlier years was a frequent attendant at quarterly and annual general meetings, and to the end was an industrious attendant at the Irish divisional meetings of our Association. His contributions to the *Journal* were thoughtful and well expressed, though less numerous than they would have been could he have commanded more leisure and more detachment of mind. As a superintendent he was a very hard-working and devoted man, thoroughly absorbed in his work, most kind to his patients, and always thinking first of their interests. In everything he was an upright gentleman.

His life was probably shortened and his later days were certainly clouded by many troubles. His eminent services to the insane did not save him from calumny and inconceivable annoyances. Readers of this *Journal* do not need to be reminded of some of these, but only the students of the local newspapers could credit the perpetual vexations in which he lived. This sort of thing told upon him very severely, for he was a sensitive man, and being conscious of none but the highest motives felt intensely the treatment he received. Recently he suffered under domestic troubles of a severe nature—the death in quick succession of a bright and hopeful son and of his eldest daughter—which he felt acutely, for he was of a most affectionate nature.

Those who were present at the Cork meeting in 1901 will recall how successful and pleasant it was and how well organised, how genial and agreeable our President, who did not allow his own worries to interfere with his duties either at the meeting or in the delightful excursion which followed it. In the words of the Irish poet—"He forgot his own griefs to be happy with you." His kindly nature gladdened when he saw enjoyment in those around him. No one could then have supposed that his subsequent life would have been so short.

Dr. Woods was interred in his family burial place at Parsonstown among the friends and neighbours of his youth. His sons, brothers, cousins, and many other friends followed him to the grave, including one or two old chums of college days. *Vale, longum vale.*

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