THE AFTER-CARE ASSOCIATION.

THIS Association, whose objects are to assist cases discharged recovered from asylums for the insane, has just held two important meetings. (1) On July 4th, at All Saints' Vicarage, Highgate, by the kind invitation of the vicar and Mrs. Hawkins. The chair was taken by the Hon. John Mansfield (Lord Chancellor's Visitor in Lunacy). The meeting was addressed by Mr. Stanley Keith, Mrs. Sikes and Mr. Thornhill Roxby. There was a large attendance, a good collection made, and several new members enrolled. (2) On July 8th, at Cane Hill, by the kind invitation of Sir James and Lady Moody. The chair was taken by Sir James Moody. The meeting was addressed by Sir George Savage, M.D., Dr. Percy Smith and Mr. Thornhill Roxby. There was again a very good attendance, much interest being shown in the work of the Association, and a useful addition to the funds obtained. A vote of thanks to the host and hostess was proposed by Dr. Campbell, and seconded by Dr. Pasmore, to which the chairman suitably replied.

This charity is the only one of the kind in Great Britain, and assists cases from all parts of the country.

ASYLUM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

ABSTRACT FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1912.

THE Central Executive Committee beg to submit their Annual Report for 1912. The Asylum Workers' Association has, since 1895, laboured "to raise the *status* of asylum attendants and nurses, and to promote their general welfare" by all legitimate means, at the same time striving to impress its members with a due sense of the beneficent character of their calling, differentiating them from the mere mechanical worker. Ministering, as they do, to the needs of the most afflicted class of their fellow countrymen, they are rendering a national service, in return for which they merit every consideration at the hands of the public authorities, and the recognition of this by Parliament in the passing of the Asylums Officers' Superannuation Act of 1909 was the first evidence of the awakening of the national conscience to its obligations to asylum workers. The concessions then made were as considerable as could be obtained under the exigencies of Parliamentary procedure in the case of a private member's Bill, and the position of asylum workers generally throughout the three Kingdoms was thereby made more satisfactory and definite with reference to pensions than ever had been the case before. In order to secure this consummation, which even Government measures had previously failed to carry into law, it proved necessary to compromise with formidable, if unreasonable, opposition during the passage of the Bill through the two Houses, and unfortunately some of the points originally provided for had to be relinquished on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread." An attempt is now being made to remedy these unavoidable defects, and there is no justification for the allegations made that the A.W.A. is insensible to the remaining grievances of the rank and file in asylum service, for which the Executive Committee is always eager to grasp any opportunity of obtaining redress. We regret to have to record for the first time for several years a falling off from our membership, which at the end of 1912 stood at 4,310. There are, however, cheering signs of returning allegiance on the part of several asylum constituencies, many former members who withdrew having applied for readmission in 1913.

CONVALESCENT FUND.

Grants of £2 10*s*. were made from this fund to twenty-eight cases (against twenty-seven in 1911), including the extra grant or £1 1*s*. under special circumstances.

These grants have been fairly well distributed throughout the United Kingdom, it being remembered that since June, 1912, the Irish Division have had a separate fund under their own control, £25 having been paid over by the Central Executive Committee to the Divisional Treasurer as a nest-egg. Considering that the Con-

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valescent Fund is dependent upon voluntary donations outside membership subscriptions, a more liberal response to the 143 collecting cards sent out to asylums last year might reasonably have been expected, the twenty-eight returned bringing in only £27 16s. 11d. (as compared with £33 0s. 3d. in 1911).

In addition to the twenty-eight grants, three grants of £2 10s. were also made by the Irish Division to their members, so that the total number of grants from the Convalescent Fund reached, in 1912, the record number of thirty-one.

Medals for Long and Meritorious Service.

At the last annual meeting eight successful candidates (from amongst eleven applicants) received at the hands of the President these distinctions.

Parliamentary Proceedings.

The Parliamentary Session of 1912, although memorable for its long duration, was not productive of any special legislation for the asylum service.

The Bills introduced by Lord Wolmer and Sir Charles Nicholson for the amendment of the Asylums Officers' Superannuation Act, 1909, unfortunately made but little progress. Although the former was backed by the members of the Select Committee, by whom it had been re-modelled, still, it was evident at an early stage that it would meet with strong opposition, and would have no chance as a private member's Bill. Our Parliamentary Sub-Committee therefore decided to concentrate their energies on pushing the more modest Bill introduced by Sir Charles Nicholson, in concert with Sir John Jardine, and after consultation with Sir W. Collins, but were soon surprised to encounter opposition from the Home Office to many of the clauses, including some that had been passed by the Select Committee. Great efforts were made at various times to overcome this opposition, but with little tangible result. Towards the close of the session, however, a deputation consisting of our President (Sir John Jardine), Sir William Collins, Sir Charles Nicholson, M.P., Mr. Duncan Millar, M.P., Dr. Nolan, President of the Irish Division, and other members of our Parliamentary Sub-Committee waited upon Sir William Byrne at the Home Office and discussed the Bill fully with him; and we are not without hope that as a result of such conference the Government may see their way to support the Bill in a slightly modified form.

It is generally conceded that unless special facilities are forthcoming from the Government, such a Bill can have no chance of success in the new session. Our President, Sir John Jardine, has, however, re-introduced the amending Bill (slightly modified to meet Home Office objections), of which Sir Charles Nicholson, M.P., kindly took charge last year, and on May 6th spoke in favour of its provisions. The Bill is influentially backed by members of varied political views, *viz.*, Sir John Jardine, Sir Charles Nicholson, Mr. Millar, Mr. Barnes, Capt. Gilmour, Mr. Wm. Redmond, Mr. Gordon Harvey, Mr. Crooks, Sir John Bethell, and Captain Campbell.

It is now universally recognised that the 1909 Act, even with its shortcomings, has been a real boon to the vast majority of asylum workers; and we find that in most of those places (the London County Asylums, for instance) where it was always the practice to grant reasonable pensions, the salary scales have been revised and increased. It must be admitted that there are certain hardships in individual cases needing redress, and experience has demonstated the failure of Section 15 of the Act of 1909, which was intended to provide facilities for appeal in cases of dispute as to the superannuation rights of asylum employees, but which, owing to the interpretation placed upon it by the Law Officers of the Crown, has proved inadequate for the purpose. Should, however, our amending Bill become law, it is probable that but few grievances would remain for adjudication; but we still feel that it is unreasonable to expect persons in the position of attendants and nurses to have recourse to expensive litigation in the Law Courts to settle their differences.

Although only a comparatively small number are members of our Association, we have a genuine sympathy for those permanent Scottish employees who have been entirely excluded from the established list, as well as for those who have reason to complain of their classification. It is chiefly for their sake that we inserted a clearer definition clause in our new Bill.

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The Committee have also been concerned as to the position of those engaged in the lunatic wards of Scottish poorhouses, and have determined to watch their interests.

With our Irish members, now organised as a National Division of the Association, we have every sympathy, and feel strongly that the low rate of wages current in many Irish asylums entitles them to special consideration. In such cases it seems no more than equitable that asylum committees should raise the scale of wages at any rate so as to cover the deductions now made for the purposes of pension.

The Mental Deficiency Bill, which was introduced into Parliament last year by the Government, but dropped before it passed the Committee stage, proposed creating new institutions for the feeble-minded; and as this Bill has again been introduced and seems likely to pass into law, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee will deem it to be their duty to watch the interests of those to be employed in the new service.

The passing of the National Insurance Act did not cause any great perturbation or excitement in the asylum service. In most asylums the committees had been in the habit of dealing reasonably and even generously with their employees in times of sickness, so that in those cases it did not require much consideration to see that, by pledging themselves to continue such practice, and to give disablement benefit when a superannuation allowance was not possible, they could procure a certificate of exemption which would prove to be a much cheaper way than working the Act.

A few committees, however, decided to apply the Act, but we doubt whether they will find it profitable policy.

From the asylum workers' point of view the Insurance Act is certainly beneficial, for it now means that any young attendant or nurse who might break down before being qualified for superannuation would have financial help; whilst those who contracted out of the Superannuation Act can look forward to a certain 5*s*. per week pension (or disablement benefit) when permanently incapacitated.

Irish Division.

The organisation of the Irish Division has proceeded under the presidency of Dr. Nolan (Down District Asylum), with Messrs. M. Brophy (Maryborough Asylum) and Mr. W. Hanna (Downpatrick) as Hon. Secretaries. Dr. O'Doherty (Omagh Asylum) has acted as Honorary Treasurer. Ten branches were in existence during the year 1912, and on April 11th the Annual General Meeting of the Division was held in Dublin and was addressed by the President, who set forth the condition and prospects of asylum legislation then pending, especially as it affected Irish Workers. A resolution in favour of the substitution of $\frac{1}{40}$ for $\frac{1}{80}$ as the rate in computing superannuation allowances was passed by the meeting, on the ground of inferior scale of wages and salaries in Irish Asylums as compared with those in England and Scotland.

"Asylum News."

The Association is again indebted to Dr. James Nicoll for his able and gratuitious services in the editorship of *Asylum News*. At his suggestion Dr. J. F. Powell (of Caterham Asylum) and Dr. Ralph Brown (of Bethlem Royal Hospital), having kindly volunteered their services, have been appointed to act as Assistant Editors. It is hoped to make the magazine more and more interesting to our members, and the Editorial Staff will always welcome contributions of general or local interest, or hints as to the improvement of the paper. A "competitive fund" has been established (to which we invite contributions) for the purpose of giving periodical prizes to writers of essays likely to promote a better knowledge of the work required of asylum workers on behalf of patients under their charge.

Acknowledgments.

The Executive Committee have again to express their gratitude to Mr. Henry Hipwell (late of Bethlem Royal Hospital) for making a collection amongst his friends in aid of the funds of the Association, amounting to ten guineas. Dr. Moore

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forwarded as a contribution from Holloway Sanatorium the sum of £10 2s. 0d, inclusive of £1 2s. 6d. from the chapel offertory, and offertories at Leavesden (£2 5s. 3d.), Notts City Asylum (£1 5s. 9d.), Hellingly (10s.) formed welcome additions to the benevolent funds of the Association—examples which might be well followed in other asylums. Several of our Life Members and Vice-Presidents have been good enough to repeat their contributions from time to time, and some to send a guinea as an annual subscription, and to these we are specially grateful.

To Sir John Jardine the Association is greatly indebted for his valuable services as President, and for his continued efforts for the furtherance in Parliament of amended legislation in the interests of asylum workers, in which he has had the powerful assistance of Sir Charles Nicholson and Mr. Duncan Millar, to whom our gratitude is also due. The services of Mr. Morgans as Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee also call for grateful recognition, absorbing as they have a large share of his valuable time in correspondence and in attendance at the House. The Executive Committee have to thank the Rev. Dr. Kirkland-Whittaker for acceding to their request to act as permanent Chairman and so preserve the continuity of their deliberations. To Mr. W. J. Hill, of Virginia Water, we are again ndebted for his kindness in auditing our accounts.

Honorary Secretaryship.

It will be remembered that at the last annual meeting the resignation (on the ground of advancing years and increasing professional work) by Dr. Shuttleworth of the post of Hon. Secretary, which he had held since 1897, was reluctantly accepted, but that he was good enough to consent provisionally to carry on the duties of the office pending the appointment of a successor. It having proved difficult to find a suitable successor, the Executive Committee desire to express to him their obligations for having fulfilled these duties, with the able co-operation of Mr. Wilson, the Assistant Secretary, up to the present time. Owing to the recent serious illness of the latter, from which we are happy to add he is now nearly recovered, Dr. Shuttleworth's generous services have proved invaluable in the emergency, and it is difficult for the Committee adequately to put into words the appreciation which they feel for his unselfish consideration, during so many years, of the interests of the Association, in multifarious matters of which our members at large can perhaps form but a vague conception. As he still feels that the time has come for him to hand over the secretarial duties to a younger man, though recognising the relief experienced, since Dr. Kirkland-Whittaker and Mr. Morgans have been good enough to undertake a larger share of executive responsibility, the Committee trust that a suitable successor may ere long be forthcoming, and are glad to have the assurance of Dr. Shuttleworth that his active interest in the work of the Association will be still maintained.

THE LIBRARY OF THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

The Library is open daily for reading, and for the purpose of borrowing books. Books may also be borrowed by post, provided that at the time of application threepence in stamps is forwarded to defray the cost of postage. Arrangements have been made with Messrs. Lewis to enable the Association to obtain books from the lending library belonging to that firm should any desired book not be in the Association's Library.

The following books have recently been added to the Library:

White and Jelliffe.—*Nervous and Mental Diseases* (vol. i).
Franz.—*Handbook of Mental Examination Methods.*
H. di Gaspero.—*Hysterische Lähmungen.*
Kraepelin.—*Clinical Psychiatry* (third edition).
Overbeck-Wright.—*Mental Derangements in India.*
Dubois.—*Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders.*
Freud.—*The Interpretation of Dreams* (English translation).

Dr. R. Percy Smith has kindly presented to the Library ten volumes of the *Review of Neurology and Psychiatry*, and has offered also to present future volumes as they appear.

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