ninth, such examination was made, as the Act directs, "not more than seven clear days previously."

The difficulty of arriving at an indisputably clear conclusion on this important point is confirmed by an observation of Lord Mansfield: "Probably no question has more exercised the minds of judges in former times than the question as to the proper mode of computing time." Unfortunately we labour under this exercise of mind at the present day.

It need hardly be added that the broad and not the narrow interpretation is the one we should desire to be correct, as the time is often inconveniently short between the examination and admission. All we wish is to have the law unmistakably clear, lest by pursuing the broad way some unhappy asylum physician find that in his own experience it but too surely leads to destruction.

Provision for Indigent Idiots and Imbeciles.

All who are acquainted with the demands made upon the Public Charities by families which have the misfortune to have an idiot child, know how utterly inadequate is the provision made for this class in England. In the first place, there is a great mass of pauper idiocy. Undoubtedly, counties and boroughs are obliged by law to admit cases of idiocy and imbecility into workhouses and asylums in the same way as lunatics. It is not, however, necessary to prove that it is highly undesirable to mix this class with the insane in county asylums, or to retain them in workhouse infirmaries. It would be possible, indeed, to erect separate buildings exclusively for idiots on the grounds of the asylum, and this course may be adopted if no distinct provision for the training and care of idiots be provided, as was proposed a few years ago by the Charity Organization Society. We will, however, assume that such provision will be made for pauper idiots as shall meet the objection of mixing them with the insane, and that they shall receive the special kind of education which they require. There still remains a not inconsiderable number of idiots who belong to a class socially above a very poor and strictly pauper class. In many instances a small weekly payment could be made, and, indeed, nothing would be more painful to the parents of such a child than to have to seek relief and ask for the

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admission of their child into a pauper asylum through the relieving officer. For persons in this social grade, the charitable Institutions, Earlswood, the Royal Albert Asylum, Star Cross, &c., provide, but only to a very small extent, and everyone knows the extreme difficulty of obtaining votes by canvassing in order to procure admission. In short, the supply falls ridiculously short of the demand.

We are brought, therefore, to the conclusion that increased efforts must be made to provide for the idiot children of non-pauper parents who can contribute a small sum towards their maintenance and training. In some instances, no doubt, it would be difficult to pay anything, although it would not be fitting that the child should be treated as a pauper. For the corresponding class of the insane, much larger provision, although still inadequate, has been made.

Will the benevolent public come forward to increase the number of institutions like Earlswood, and free from the objectionable system of canvassing? It is time that an effort was made in this direction. It must not be done by making exaggerated statements as to the educability of idiots, or by making sensational appeals founded on promises of substituting able-bodied and able-minded workers for those who cumber the ground, but by taking the position that idiots must be removed from the families of the poor in the interests of themselves and their families, that they can be improved up to a certain point, can be rendered cleanly in their habits, and in some instances even able to earn a modest livelihood.

An effort has been recently made to obtain funds for the above-mentioned object under the City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883. Section 14 appears to warrant the application for a grant of the surplus funds so far as the inhabitants of London are concerned, for it refers to "the promoting the education of the poorer inhabitants of the Metropolis;" and after enumerating various other objects, including convalescent hospitals, the section proceeds to state: "And generally to the improving, by the above or by any other means which to the Commissioners may seem good, the physical, social, and moral condition of the poorer inhabitants of the Metropolis;" that is to say an area inclusive of the whole Metropolitan police district, viz., fifteen miles out. A formal application to the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales under the above Act was

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made in October, and subsequently a deputation waited upon Mr. Anstie, at their office, in order to urge the claims of idiots upon the above-mentioned surplus funds. Sir Edmund Currie, who introduced the deputation, made a lucid statement of the reasons which induced those who attended to make the application. The application was courteously and carefully considered. Mr. Anstie, however, expressed the opinion that the application would be more likely to succeed if funds were already obtained for the erection of an institution designed for the object in view. Without committing himself or his colleagues, he pointed out that the application might possibly be acceded to if they were asked to aid rather than initiate such a movement. We hope that this suggestion may prove the starting point of a resolute attempt to make increased provision for idiots and imbeciles of the indigent but non-pauper class of the Metropolitan district.

In this connection we should like to see schools established for intermediate cases of mental feebleness.

At the Congress of German Teachers held at Gotha in 1887, a most interesting address on such auxiliary schools was delivered by Herr Kielhorn, of whose own at Brunswick, we can speak very highly from a visit paid thereto in 1886.

In Germany, schools of this kind have been established in several of the more important towns, viz., at Dresden, Leipsic, Gera, Halberstadt, Cologne, Brunswick, and others. Into these schools those children are drafted who have shown themselves quite unable to follow the instruction given in class at the national schools. This incapacity, evidenced during a period of at least two years, is suggested by Herr Keilhorn as a test or as a definition of weakmindedness. Having entered the auxiliary schools, they there receive instruction adapted to their powers of reception by teachers who have gained experience in the methods required to call out the faculties of these children. All the children being, so to speak, at the same level, it is possible to instruct them in class. At the same time, however, the demands of each child upon the teacher are much greater than in ordinary schools, and this very arduous form of teaching will scarcely permit of a class of more than twenty children for each instructor.

Herr Kielhorn advocates his cause with great force and earnestness, and certainly carries conviction with him. There can be no doubt of the value of these schools, for there can be no doubt that children of the class we are considering cannot be taught together with the relatively keener witted

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children who congregate in our public schools. The extra care and patience which the former would require could not possibly be given by the master, and if given would only prove so much energy withdrawn from those nobler spirits, who, by-the-bye, would so much rather be fly-catching or preparing uncomfortable seats for confiding comrades than marching with Cyrus, or camping with Cæsar, or following Ulysses in his devious wanderings.

The author of the paper dwelt on the many points which mark the weakminded child, and on the many dangers which await him if let out into the world unprepared. He also points to the risks society itself runs from the uninstructed feebleminded, who add so largely to the criminal classes. On this point he refers to the words of Dr. Kind—"Which costs more (in hard cash), to instruct the idiot or to neglect him?" And he truly says that this holds equally for the weakminded, *i.e.*, short of idiocy. The special treatment of the bodily defects of the weakminded is insisted on by Herr Kielhorn, and the importance of patient instruction in skilled manual work, in order that, being unable to train their intellects above a certain level, their quick fingers may make up for their slow and deficient mental processes.

We trust these observations may serve to awaken interest in a movement which we shall soon, it is to be hoped, ourselves enter upon. It is a movement that must come.

PART II.—REVIEWS.

The forty-first Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy. 31*st March*, 1887.

The total number of persons returned to the office of the Commissioners in Lunacy as of unsound mind on the 1st January, 1887, was 80,891, showing an increase on the previous year of 735. These were exclusive of 249 lunatics, so found by inquisition, living in the immediate charge of their committees, and 69 male insane prisoners detained in convict prisons.

Their distribution was as tabulated on p. 554.

While private patients have increased by 15 and paupers by 780 during the year, a diminution in the number of criminal patients has brought the nett increase in patients of all classes to 735; the average annual increase of the last ten

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