places for the proper care and treatment of persons suffering from disease of the mind by merely making regulations to discover ill-treatment, or trying to avoid regrettable incidents by providing additional attendants only. They are not only almost universally understaffed, thereby practically compelling the use of undesirable means of "quieting" troublesome patients; but they are, with a few notable and praiseworthy exceptions, grievously wanting in the means and appliances necessary for the treatment of such cases. The medical officers are commonly overworked, underpaid, and treated in a niggardly fashion, not calculated to encourage zeal, but rather tending to bring that essential of efficient medical service to a minimum; they are not selected for having had special experience in the treatment of insanity.

The workhouse lunatic wards, indeed, need complete and wholesale rearrangement, with the clear recognition of the all-important fact that a few days' efficient treatment of incipient mental disorder may save the need of months of asylum care, and that inefficient or neglectful treatment may be therefore most costly to the ratepayer.

The reception ward for mental cases should be organised on the most liberal scale, and approximated to the reception houses which have been found so efficient in Australia, and the improvement would extend to the chronic wards. The "regrettable incidents" of workhouse lunatic wards have been so numerous that possibly the Local Government Board may be induced to press more vigorously for reform than it has hitherto done, and not be content with the recommendation for an additional attendant or elaborate reports, to cover the manifest deficiencies of insufficient means of treatment and defective organisation.

Pathology in Irish Asylums.

We are glad to find that the Silent Sister is endeavouring to become articulate after modern methods, and that our medical brethren across the Channel seem to have at last awakened to the waste of materials and of opportunities which has so long existed in connection with the Irish asylums. We are,

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of course, quite familiar with the plea that nothing in Ireland happens in the same way that it does anywhere else, and the puzzled Saxon, it must be admitted, often feels inclined to accept this view of affairs in the green isle; but still we hold that people must generally die of disease or accident even in Ireland, and we cannot help thinking that the same results might be hoped there as elsewhere from the study, not alone of symptoms, but of post-mortem appearances. Nay, holding some respect for the Celtic genius to which Renan and Matthew Arnold paid such reverence, we cannot but regret that it has devoted itself so much of late years to politics, etc., and given so little attention to medical science.

As to pathology in Ireland up to the present, readers of this JOURNAL need not be told in what state it has stood. One or two superintendents have recognised its claims, and have done some work in this branch from time to time. Particularly we must remember the excellent though unfortunately small work done by our late distinguished associate, Ringrose Atkins—work done under great disadvantages, without assistance or sympathy, in broken health, and in the discouragement of labouring in a remote neighbourhood far from a medical centre.

At present a scheme is on foot for the establishment of a central laboratory for the Irish asylums, somewhat similar to that in Edinburgh, belonging to the Scottish asylums. Dr. W. R. Dawson deserves the credit of having worked up this project with great skill. He has induced not only the Irish Division of our own Association, who of course were not hard to convince, but a number of other scientific bodies to interest themselves in the scheme. The Dublin Branch of the British Medical Association, the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, and the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons have expressed their approval.

A difficulty arising out of the fact that the district asylums do not appear to have the power to contribute to an object outside their own district, an endeavour has been made to induce the Irish Government to introduce legislation permissive of a combination of various districts for this purpose, on the same lines as the provision in the English Lunacy Bill of last year, permitting counties to unite for this purpose. The matter was introduced to the profession and the public by Sir

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George Duffey, in his Presidential Address to the Dublin Branch of the British Medical Association, and was very sympathetically received by the public. A deputation from the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and the Irish Division of the Medico-Psychological Association, waited upon the Chief Secretary for Ireland on January 29th, for the purpose of pressing for legislative aid. Dr. Dawson made a most lucid statement, pointing out the feasibility of the scheme, and the necessity for merely permissive legislation. In his contention as to the advantages to be hoped from the adoption of his plan he was supported by Professor Cunningham, by Sir C. Nixon (President of the Irish College of Physicians), by Dr. Atthill (President of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and ex-President Royal College of Physicians, Ireland), by the Secretary of the Irish Division of the Medico-Psychological Association, and others. The Chief Secretary (Mr. Wyndham) cannot be said to have taken an unintelligent view of the question. He expressed general approval quite warmly, and disclaimed taking merely a utilitarian side in the matter. He seemed, indeed, to think that, as well as utility, the public ought to consider that the men engaged in the study of such a disease as insanity should be provided with the fullest field for study and improvement. This sympathetic attitude no doubt represents the "enlightened selfishness" with which a cultivated mind regards the progress of scientific work. Unfortunately Mr. Wyndham seemed to hold out little hope that the Irish Government would be actively helpful in the adoption of the necessary legislative change.

We must hope, however, that our Irish friends will not allow the affair to drop. In the present distracted state of public opinion across the Channel, it is a great step to have attracted so much attention to a question which does not touch on politics or personality. So much approval and promise of success has the scheme found, that we learn (*British Medical Journal*, March 9th) that the Public Health Committee of the Dublin Corporation, in reporting to the latter body on the advantages of a proposed bacteriological laboratory for Dublin, to be founded on the lines of the Jenner Institute, suggests "that one institute would fulfil all the requirements for bacteriological work, as well as for the proposed pathological

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department in connection with the Irish lunatic asylums." While we hardly share the advanced views which the Public Health Committee seem to hold as to the bacterial origin of insanity, and, indeed, think that the confusion of two things so distinct in method, as the study of bacteria and of the higher nervous centres, is more likely to harm than to help both, yet the fact is hopeful that at least one public body seems to consider the foundation of an Asylums Laboratory as a foregone conclusion.

It is unnecessary in this JOURNAL to point out the advantages of such a project, or to labour to show the hopelessness of any advance in our specialty in Ireland while the scientific side of our work is neglected. The feasibility of the particular scheme suggested by Dr. Dawson has been already demonstrated in Scotland.

Notes and Queries.

DR. W. WATSON (Edinburgh) writes in reference to Dr. Ireland's study of Nietzsche, that Nietzsche's acute sense of smell is very characteristic. He regards it as a reversion to a lower type. But specially Dr. Watson says, "The weakness of his sexual instinct is childlike. He seems to have combined the intellect of a man with the morality of a child. Does such a combination often accompany non-developed sexual instincts? It ought to do so *a priori*."

Part II.—Reviews.

The Structure of the Nervous System in Man and the Vertebrates. By S. RAMON CAJAL, Professor of Histology in the University of Madrid. Vol. I.

THE work exhibited in this, only the first volume, is vast, thorough, and of wide interest. The book contains over 500 pages of printed matter, with numerous illustrations. A large part of the book records original research, and the matter embraced in this volume extends from a general summary of the nervous system to the comparative histology of the spinal medulla.

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