

place until the cause and nature of the mental aberration can be ascertained. Until recently no serious difficulty in dealing with such cases has arisen, since they have been received into the workhouse on a doctor's note, and there dealt with as the occasion demanded. Latterly, however, the authorities of Mill Road Infirmary have declined to receive them, owing, it is stated, to there being no accommodation in the workhouse for the alleged lunatics; and there has been no alternative but to take them back to the bridewell, where there is no proper provision for attending to them, and to bring them before the presiding magistrate the following day. As these persons are not charged with any offence for which they can be committed to goal, there is no alternative but to discharge them.

It is high time that reception houses for all cases of supposed insanity were established in the great centres of population. The Barony Parish of Glasgow has set apart observation wards in the ordinary poorhouse to meet this difficulty, and we understand that good results have been obtained there, not only for the individuals, but also for the ratepayers.

---

#### LABORATORY OF THE SCOTTISH ASYLUMS.

The first annual report deals with a period of seven weeks. Four assistant medical officers had received a course of instruction, and reports had been made on material from six cases. The superintendent has entered on his duties with great zeal and ability, and has visited four asylums for the purpose of advising, besides aiding in research. The work in hand has been very varied, and Dr. Robertson is at present engaged in the study of the changes affecting the nerve cells in insanity. He states that the premises are well suited for the purpose. No doubt his report for next year will bear evidence of much good work accomplished in the same spirit as he has begun.

---

#### THE CASE OF REV. H. J. DODSWELL.

It is reported that the Home Secretary has decided not to interfere in this case. A petition was lately presented for Mr. Dodswell's release, on the grounds that the maximum punishment for the offence of which he was convicted had long since expired, and that if he was still considered insane he should now be detained in a private, not a criminal asylum. We heartily approve of the Home Secretary's decision.

---

#### FRAGILITY OF BONES IN THE INSANE.

A patient in the Cork Asylum lately died, after it was found that several of his ribs had been fractured. Dr. Oscar Woods caused an expert examination of the bones to be made, with the result that they were proved to be excessively degenerated and fragile. It would seem that such observations should put an end to the loose statements occasionally made in a contrary sense.

---

#### THE RISKS OF ASYLUM LIFE.

Dr. J. A. Campbell lately addressed a letter to the *Lancet*, in which he showed how many hardships are endured by those engaged in the treatment of bodily and mental disease. He traced the life-history of a medical man through his training to practice, and alluded to the risk of infection at post-mortem examinations or in fever wards. He specially drew attention to the services rendered by army surgeons and their inadequate recognition, and stated that he had asked for particulars as to injuries, &c., from forty-five English asylums in 1897. Dr. Campbell found that several medical officers had been seriously attacked. Lately two have had to retire owing to the results of injuries inflicted by patients. He referred to the murder of Commissioner Lutwidge, the narrow escape of Dr. Wigglesworth, and the injury to Dr. Merson. We congratulate Dr. Campbell

on having survived after having been attacked by a patient, scythe in hand, by a patient with a knife, and by a patient with a stone, in the course of his thirty-two years' service; and join with him in believing that if the public were aware of such facts they would be more liberal in dealing with asylum officials.

---

#### A QUESTION OF CONVENIENCE.

Dr. J. A. Campbell also suggests that some arrangement should be made to economise time and effort by fixing the meetings of Council of the Medico-Psychological Association for the same week as the Council of the British Medical Association, especially as the first-named are now often held in London. This suggestion deserves the most careful consideration, and it will no doubt be laid before the Association at no distant date.

---

#### SANITARY APPLIANCES.

Mr. John Lanyon, of Belfast, who has attained eminence in his profession as an architect, and whose plans for asylums have been so favourably commented upon, has sent us drawings and model of an "Anti-fouling and Contagion Water-closet," which is a new pattern of the ordinary "wash-down." Mr. Lanyon has designed this sanitary appliance with full knowledge of the requirements of public buildings, and it is largely in use in mills, warehouses, &c. Messrs. Shanks and Company, Barrhead; and Messrs. Johnson Brothers, Trent Pottery, Hanley, are the makers.

Mr. Lanyon has also designed a slow combustion stove, which shows three bright fires, burns the impure air of the room, and distributes fresh heated air. It has been tested by the Army Medical Staff in Belfast, and favourably commented on.

A new waterproof fabric has been placed upon the market by the Pegamoid Company, 144, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C. It has many advantages, and should have a careful trial in asylums.

---

#### COMPLIMENTARY.

We observe that Professor Ludwig Meyer of Göttingen attained his seventieth birthday on the 27th December last. We heartily join in the congratulations with which the event was greeted by his many friends. The name of Conolly was brought into prominence on the occasion, for Professor Meyer has devoted his long official life to a consistent effort to work on the principles Conolly laid down, and to induce his colleagues to adopt his practice.

We have also to congratulate Dr. G. Marriott Cooke on his promotion to Whitehall. Dr. Cooke had the advantage of serving under the late Dr. Sherlock, and has maintained the Worcester Asylum at a high level of excellence. He has taken an active interest in the affairs of the Medico-Psychological Association, and his many friends, especially those of our specialty, have every confidence in Dr. Cooke's ability and desire to forward the best interests of the insane and those responsible for their welfare.

Another honour has been done to a distinguished member of our department of medicine. Sir John Batty Tuke has been raised to the knighthood in recognition of his long and brilliant services. We wish him many and happy days, and look forward with much interest to the Address on Psychological Medicine which he is to deliver at the Edinburgh meeting of the British Medical Association.