

## OBITUARY.

*On the 7th March, at Littlemore, William Ley, Esq., aged 62, late Superintendent of the County Asylum, Oxford.*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Mr. Ley, who filled the office of Treasurer to the Medico-Psychological Association from 1854 to 1862. Mr. Ley was also President of the Association at the Oxford Meeting, in 1848, when the establishment of the Journal of Mental Science was resolved upon. Mr. Ley deeply felt how desirable it was that the nominal representation of this Association should be severed from a periodical, now defunct, and which, in his opinion, bore too strongly the impress of private speculation and private interests. Those familiar with Mr. Ley's single-minded love of truth and devotion to the study of Psychology will even at this distance of time realise the strong desire which urged him, in conjunction with two other members of this Association, now gone to their rest, Dr. Alexander Sutherland and Dr. Conolly, to free the Association from this possible control by the establishment of the *Journal of Mental Science*. Mr. Ley also was one of the chief advocates for placing the conduct of the new Journal in the hands of Dr. Bucknill.

In the first number of the Journal of Mental Science, we find the following:—  
“At the Oxford Meeting owing to the combined attraction of the Provincial Medical Association, and the public spirit of W. Ley, Esq., the Superintendent of the Oxfordshire Asylum, who not only exerted himself to bring the members together, but entertained them most hospitably afterwards, the attendance of asylum officers was numerous and influential. A long and interesting discussion on the best mode of establishing an Asylum Journal took place. One member alone thought that some portion of an existing journal might be made subservient to the wants of the Association. The other members expressed their conviction that a special Asylum Journal was urgently needed; that the magnitude of the interests at stake, the difficulties of asylum management and lunacy treatment, the residence of those engaged in overcoming these difficulties from each other, the impediments of personal intercourse arising from their duties, the peculiarity of those duties, and their professional experience, all made painfully evident the want of a medium of inter-communication, and a means of record of matters of practical importance in their department of science.

“Dr. Conolly added the weight of his great authority, and spoke with much emphasis of the *treasures hitherto hidden in asylum case books*, likely to become known and useful to mankind through the intervention of such a journal. The Association came to an affirmative decision *nemine contradicente*, not only on the main question of establishing an Asylum Journal, but also on the secondary one of confiding the editorial labours and responsibilities to Dr. Bucknill.”

Mr. LEY was the first Superintendent of the Asylum at Littlemore, and only resigned his post after years of ill health in 1868. His health was already sadly broken, and it was evident to his friends that even then his days were numbered. Few superintendents have left a kindlier remembrance in the minds of all than has Mr. Ley. A modest, unobtrusive man, he performed with scrupulous diligence his daily work. He was beloved by all who knew him, and probably no man holding a difficult public office made fewer enemies. His last anxious wish was fulfilled in seeing the post he vacated filled by his faithful colleague of the previous twelve years, Mr. Heurtley Sankey. The writer of this notice remembers how, suffering and in ill-health, and troubled about his own pension, Mr. Ley's chief anxiety yet was to secure to Mr. Sankey the succession which he so strongly felt to be his due.

Mr. LEY regularly attended the annual meetings of the Medico-Psychological Association, and took an unwearrying interest in its work and success.