

liberty of putting it to Dr. Savage whether he would prefer a discussion upon his own paper separately from that on Dr. Ewart's, or whether, the subjects being so evidently allied and running parallel, it would not be better to discuss them both together. He thought it would be the wish of the meeting, having heard Dr. Savage's paper, and, he hoped, having read Dr. Ewart's in the Journal, to adopt that course. But in discussing the papers he thought it would be well that, as far as possible, those who preferred to talk of the duty of the physician towards the patient on this question should separate it as largely as possible from the wider question which Dr. Ewart had raised concerning the duty of the State towards the mentally defective. That question at the present moment was assuming enormous proportions in the public mind, owing to the interest which the proceedings of the Divorce Commission was creating, and he felt sure that those who discussed the question would do so with the gravity which it deserved. He would ask Dr. Ewart to communicate a short *précis* of his paper which had appeared in the Journal.

Dr. C. T. EWART then recapitulated the main points in his paper, "Eugenics and Degeneracy," which had already appeared in the *Journal of Mental Science*, October, 1910, pp. 670-685.

The two papers were followed by an interesting and earnest discussion, in which the following visitors and members took part; Mr. MONTAGUE CRACKENTHORPE, K.C., Drs. HYSLOP, DONKIN, MERCIER, Miss DENDY, Drs. FLETCHER BEACH, HAYES NEWINGTON, CARSWELL, BRISCOE, BEVERIDGE SPENCE, EDEN PAUL, and the PRESIDENT.

Dr. EWART replied, Dr. Savage having meanwhile been obliged to leave the meeting (see p. 111).

The members afterwards dined together at the Café Monico Restaurant.

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#### SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION.

The AUTUMN MEETING of the South-Eastern Division was held, by the courtesy of Dr. T. E. K. Stansfield, at the London County Asylum, Bexley, on Wednesday, October 5th, 1910.

Among those present were Sir James Moody, Drs. R. R. Alexander, G. F. Barham, David Bower, G. Clarke, R. H. Cole, M. A. Collins, O'C. Donelan, A. C. Dove, G. Evans, E. Faulks, F. C. Gayton, S. J. Gilfillan, T. D. Greenlees, H. E. Haynes, G. H. Johnston, J. R. Lord, J. Macarthur, R. B. Mitchell, A. S. Newington, E. S. Pasmore, G. E. Peachell, O. P. N. Pearn, J. P. Race, E. F. Sall, J. G. Smith, T. E. K. Stansfield, R. H. Steen, F. R. P. Taylor, F. Watson, and D. Hunter (Hon. Sec.).

The visitors included Andrew T. Taylor, Esq. (Chairman of the Visiting Committee), T. Hunter, Esq., L.C.C., H. F. Keene, Esq., W. C. Clifford Smith, Esq., Rev. J. J. Brownhill, Drs. Brander, Dixon, Lee, and MacDonald.

From noon to 1.30 p.m. the asylum wards and grounds were visited. At 1.30 Dr. Stansfield entertained the members to luncheon. At the close of lunch Dr. David Bower proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Stansfield and the Committee for their kindness in so hospitably receiving the Division. Dr. Stansfield and Mr. Andrew T. Taylor, Chairman of the Committee, responded.

The meeting of the Divisional Committee was held at 2.15 p.m. The General Meeting was held at 3 p.m., Dr. Stansfield in the Chair.

The minutes of the last meeting, having appeared in the Journal, were taken as read and confirmed.

The invitation of Dr. Hyslop to hold the Spring Meeting of the Division at the Bethlem Royal Hospital on April 25th, 1911, was unanimously accepted with much pleasure.

Dr. T. E. K. STANSFIELD read a paper entitled "Heredity and Insanity" (see p. 55).

At the end of the paper Dr. Stansfield suggested that discussion should be deferred until Dr. Faulks had read his paper, which was virtually a continuation of the subject.

Dr. E. FAULKES then read a paper entitled "Sterilisation of the Insane" (see p. 63). In the discussion which followed Dr. E. S. PASSMORE remarked that his experience of 500 cases admitted to the Croydon Asylum coincided with Dr. Stansfield's results. He found that 55 *per cent.* of his cases had a history of hereditary insanity. One fact that prominently appeared was that insanity was transmitted from mother to son, and from father to daughter. He recommended caution in advocating sterilisation as a general measure, because an unsound parent might produce sane and insane offspring, but agreed with Dr. Faulkes that the measure would be efficient and advisable in cases of masturbation and sexual perversion. He also referred to a diagram he had devised to facilitate the recording of family histories.

Dr. R. H. COLE, in criticising the papers in a friendly spirit, thought that it was possible that the doctrine of the hereditary transmission of insanity might be pushed further than facts would fairly warrant. It was surely evident that Nature, by her own processes, leads to the extinction of an essentially degenerate stock. He believed it was incontestable that insanity was occasionally, if not frequently, a variation from an otherwise healthy family. He wished to point out also the natural tendency for disease to revert to the normal under suitable conditions. As an instance of the recuperative force in Nature he cited an example of a youth, who had gained a scholarship at a public school, and who was begotten of a father in the second stage of general paralysis, and was so far doing well. He believed that insanity was frequently inherited from other neuroses, and that it was impossible to foretell with accuracy the result of the progeny of an insane parent, although the risk of defect was great. As to the suggested operative interference he was not fully convinced that, if permissible, it would in adequate proportion so reduce the numbers of admissions to asylums as to justify its recommendation in discharged patients. It would, in his opinion, tend to have a demoralising effect on humanity. It was demonstrated that the increase of insanity was mainly recruited from the pauper classes, who should be elevated by education and other means to a higher sense of their obligations rather than be subjected to operative interference. He considered that the hopelessly defective and weak-minded should be segregated.

Dr. LORD said: It is not often that I raise my voice before this Association, but I cannot resist the temptation to add my tribute to the excellency of the papers of my old "chief," Dr. Stansfield, and my former colleague, Dr. Faulkes. As a result of over twelve years' thought and experience certain definite conclusions are crystallising out in my mind on "heredity." I do not believe that it is possible for any acquired mental state, normal or otherwise, or, better still, a tendency to a mental state, to be transmitted from parents to offspring. How frequently is genius descended from common-place, and, on the other hand, the imbecile from remarkably erudite parents? It is ridiculous to suppose that Nature has devised a special set of laws concerning heredity as regards mankind only, apart from those governing other living things. Acquired insanity, to me, is definitely not transmissible. I am equally convinced, however, that in a good proportion of insanity, say 40 *per cent.*, the tendency to mental disease is innate, germinal, and largely inevitable. Such people are born to become insane given the slightest chance. Furthermore, a number, often the majority, of the members of these families, although never insane themselves, yet transmit to their progeny a terrible fate. Such being my views, the application of sterilisation is one of great difficulty, and granting that all insane persons could be so treated, I beg of you not to expect too great a benefit. In my opinion the great difficulty is how to deal with the *sane* member of neuropathic families. How can sterilisation be applied to them? During the past year in the County of London 1,220 lunatics were discharged "recovered." Of these, roughly speaking, it was possible, but by no means probable, for 813 to have children. Although not a statistician, I doubt very much whether such an annual output would answer for the admission-rate of 2,893 (imbeciles and first attack cases)—or of even 40 *per cent.* of them. Insanity must largely be drawn from sources other than those who have been discharged recovered from asylums. In spite of all this I see no reason why we should not do what good is possible by sterilisation, although limited. There is no doubt in my mind that a large number of our "recoveries" ought to be sterilised before discharge. I think the voluntary consent of the patient or guardians will be necessary, and each case should be carefully considered and the innate tendency to neuropathy

clearly demonstrated. The operation should be made an illegal one except when undertaken under certain definite conditions and by those specially authorised. The community is sure to benefit in the long run, and in thanking, as I do very heartily, Dr. Stansfield and Dr. Faulks for their excellent papers, I trust this meeting will mark the beginning of a new era in the prophylaxis of insanity. As regards those of the community existing outside asylums, but who have the germs of insane states within them ready to transmit, it is only by the proper education of the public, in the main alive to its own welfare, that these can ever be reached.

Dr. R. H. STEEN was of opinion that though sterilisation was the best cure, it was not practicable. He disagreed with Dr. Stansfield on the question of detention in farm colonies, and thought they were the best available methods of preventing the propagation of insanity.

Dr. M. A. COLLINS did not think we had sufficient facts at our disposal to justify us in recommending sterilisation to the public. He thought that much more could be ascertained by extending comparative inquiries among sane families, and by carefully tracing the histories of sane members of insane families. He, however, agreed that in some cases sterilisation was the only remedy.

Drs. STANSFIELD and FAULKS replied.

Mr. T. HUNTER, L.C.C., of the Visiting Committee, in proposing a vote of thanks to Dr. Stansfield and Dr. Faulks for their papers, said that his wish was that the medical profession should lead the Committees, and not *vice-versa*. Many of the London Asylums' Committee were giving much thought at the present time to such problems as had just been discussed. He expressed his warm appreciation of the papers and discussion, and thought it would be an excellent thing if the Committee could hear all that had been said. He concluded with a spirited appeal to the medical profession, and particularly the junior members, not to be too cautious in pressing the question on the public notice and in giving their advice.

Mr. H. F. KEENE seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

After the meeting Mrs. Stansfield kindly entertained the members to tea in the Medical Superintendent's house.

#### SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

The AUTUMN MEETING of this Division was held at the University of Bristol on Friday, October 28th, 1910.

The following members were present:—Drs. Blachford, Bullen, Sydney Cole, W. S. Graham, Lavers, P. W. Macdonald, Morrison, Morton, Nelis, Eden Paul J. R. Perdrau, Phillips, Pope, Prentice, J. M. Rutherford, Soutar, Thomas, E. Barton White, and the Hon. Divisional Secretary.

Prof. Fawcett, and Dr. Schölberg, Pathologist to the Cardiff Infirmary, were also present as visitors.

Dr. Soutar having been voted to the Chair, the minutes of the last meeting were taken as read and duly signed.

The following candidates were elected members of the Association:

John Cosserat Mackenzie, M.B., C.M.Edin., Assistant Medical Officer, City and County Asylum, Hereford. (Proposed by Drs. Morrison, Aveline, and J. W. Rutherford.)

Thomas Waddelow Smith, L.R.C.P.Lond., M.R.C.S.Eng., Second Assistant Medical Officer, Devon County Asylum, Exminster. (Proposed by Drs. Davis, Richard Eager, and Aveline.)

Jean René Perdrau, M.B., B.S.Lond., Third Assistant Medical Officer, Devon County Asylum, Exminster. (Proposed by Drs. Davis, Richard Eager, and Aveline.)

Edward Barton White, L.R.C.P.Lond., M.R.C.S.Eng., Assistant Medical Officer, Cardiff City Mental Hospital, Whitchurch, Glam. (Proposed by Drs. Goodall, Aveline, and J. W. Rutherford.)

It was resolved to hold the Spring Meeting fixed for April 28th, 1911, at the Somerset and Bath Asylum, Cotford, near Taunton.

A letter was read from Mrs. Manning, in which she expressed her thanks to the members for their kind sympathy.