

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The following letter has been laid before the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association :

Hospital for Insane, Ararat, Victoria,  
18th October, 1897.

Sir,—As Honorary Secretary of the Annual Conference of the Medical Staff of the Department of Hospitals for Insane, Victoria, I am empowered to address your Council.

For the better working medically of our various hospitals, of which there are six in the colony under Government, administered by an inspector of asylums, with the Under Secretary as permanent head of the Department under ministerial (Chief Secretary) control, the medical staff as a whole, three years ago, formed an association with a view to the exchange of medical opinions, and in hopes of arriving at some unity in the matter of higher administration and treatment, and reporting to the Minister the resolutions arrived at. In 1895 and 1896 matters administrative were largely dealt with, including such subjects as nursing lectures and examinations, uniform for nurses and attendants, the grading of the work of the nursing staff, the appointing of the nursing staff, &c.; in all of which matters medical superintendents laboured under disabilities, since all ranks of our department are under a Public Service Board, who, by order of Governor in Council, make all appointments and deal with all dismissals and punishments over five pounds (£5). Suffice it to say that without permission, as an officer of the Government, I cannot further particularise; however, many of our wants on behalf of the patients in the above particulars have been well ventilated, and, in part, acted upon. The probationary nursing and attendant staff must now attend lectures and pass examinations before approval of permanent appointment. The attendance on a senior course of lectures and examinations for certificate is still a matter of option unfortunately, though we hope to be permitted, by an arrangement of regrading the work and making the pay coincide, to largely overcome this defect without in any way bearing harshly on such members of the staff as may be old in the service and soon retiring, and to this matter we addressed ourselves at our third series of meetings this month—we have three days each year in October,—and passed resolutions urging (1) that in the interests of treatment and discipline uniforms be worn and provided at once after passing the probationary examination, which, with a small additional salary, would induce a better stamp of applicant to present himself, and from whom more is now expected; (2) that the salaries of the junior medical officers are not sufficient to induce good men to join the service and remain with us (the superintendents magnanimously standing back for the present); and (3) that as superintendents are of opinion that existing arrangements do not give as much benefit to the patients as those existing elsewhere, they would beg to urge suggestions in order that the Victorian asylums may not be behind the advances of other countries.

These matters were placed before the Under Secretary by the Inspector of Asylums and a deputation from the Medical Superintendents, and well received, with promises to urge their recommendations on the Minister and the Public Service Board;—the Minister I may say is at present our very kind friend, but we are just over a General Election, and benefits to the attendants have not always gone hand in hand with benefits to the patients, and in this lies the crux of the whole matter. But to return to the meeting. This year we had papers from four asylums on “The Effects of Insanity on Bodily Disease,” “Delusions, &c., in their Relation to Complaints,” “Folie à Deux,” and “A Case of Traumatic Insanity relieved by Trephining.”

The final step of the meeting was one of distinct advance, the Inspector of Asylums, Dr. McCreavy, stating that on a recent visit to New South Wales, having talked over the matter of our meetings with Dr. Manning, the

Inspector there, he had now to propose—"That Dr. Norton Manning and the Medical Staff of the New South Wales Lunacy Department be invited to join us in forming a Medico-Psychological Association, the meetings to be held in each colony alternately, and that the first meeting be held in Melbourne, Victoria, in October of next year," and that as Hon. Secretary I be asked to communicate with the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain in order to ascertain how far, in the event of New South Wales joining us, it would be possible for us to be affiliated or become a branch of that Association; and I would ask your kind interest in this matter on behalf of alienists at the antipodes in time for me to prepare a statement for our next conference.

I would like to mention that in the event of New South Wales joining us we would then approach South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and New Zealand, the other colonies of Australasia, and that at the annual meetings each colony would have its representatives from superintendents and medical officers—a system we adopted from the first,—and that nothing of individual asylum administrative work would arise unless of general interest, this being the more to be desired since each colony has its own governmental methods.

The details, however, are still to be worked out when we hear from you.

At the moment I am sorry I have not material at hand to tabulate for you the extent of lunacy work in Australasia, but in New South Wales there are six large asylums with a staff of thirteen medical men; in Victoria there are six asylums with a staff of fourteen medical men; in South Australia there are two asylums with a staff of two medical men; in Tasmania one asylum with two men; in New Zealand at least three large asylums with two men each; in Queensland two asylums with three men, and of Western Australia I am not sure.

In putting these facts before you I may only be anticipating an inquiry which might strike your Council, and would finally state that without doubt many general practitioners would join our Society, and in this I speak confidently of Victoria.

You are at liberty to make journalistic use of this letter, and I trust you will understand my difficulty in making an article of it myself, though no such hindrance stands in the way of letter form to you professionally.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

W. BEATTIE SMITH,  
*Medical Superintendent.*

Percy Smith, Esq., M.D.

#### COMPLIMENTARY.

##### DR. NORTON MANNING'S RETIREMENT.

We report, with much regret, that Dr. Frederick Norton Manning has resigned the office of Inspector-General of the Insane for the Colony of New South Wales, which he had held for many years with so much credit to himself, and so much benefit to the colony and its insane.

The resignation of a public official of the type of Dr. Manning cannot fail to be a great public loss, for although it is not difficult to find officials who will be certain to discharge complex duties with adequate efficiency, it is not so easy to ensure that the man and the office shall be in absolute and acknowledged harmony, and this is what, by a somewhat rare combination of qualities, Dr. Manning was able to secure in his own case.

Commencing his medical career at St. George's Hospital, receiving his first appointment at the York Dispensary, and subsequently entering the navy, in which he remained for several years, he left everywhere pleasant impressions behind him.

While serving in the navy he lost no opportunity of visiting the various public medical institutions which were to be found in the ports at which he