

from Laehr, Berlin, stated that unavoidable circumstances prevented his attendance. Apologies and congratulations were also received from Prof. Mierzejewski (St. Petersburg), Prof. Kowalewsky (Kharkoff), Prof. Tibaldi (Padua), Prof. Wille (Switzerland), Dr. Semal (Mons), Dr. Van der Lith (Utrecht), Dr. Christian (Charenton), Dr. Brosius (Bendorf), Clark Bell (New York), etc.

Prior to the ceremony most of those who took part in it assembled at the Hospice Guislain, and were received by the present superintendent, M. Morel, who recently succeeded the lamented M. Ingels. M. Morel introduced the members of the deputation to the Commissaire d'Arrondissement and the President des Hospices, gave a rapid review of the past history of the insane in Belgium, and then escorted the visitors over the asylum, the condition of which reflects great credit upon the successors of Guislain, no less than Guislain himself.

In the evening a banquet, given in honour of the occasion at the Hôtel de la Poste, brought the proceedings to a close. Speeches were delivered by M. Lentz, M. Héger, Professor in the University of Brussels, and President of the Belgian Société de Médecine Mentale, M. de Kerchove, Dr. Poirier, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ghent, Dr. Vermeulen, Physician-in-Chief of the Asylums of Ghent, Dr. Ramaer, Dr. Steenberg, and a tribute again paid to the services rendered by Guislain to the cause of the humane treatment of the insane in Belgium.

We cannot conclude this notice of the ceremony and the whole proceedings without an acknowledgment of the admirable manner in which the business of the day was carried out, the success of which was in great measure due to the active thoughtfulness of M. Morel.

[Since the foregoing was written, the Bulletin of the Society of Mental Medicine of Belgium contains a full description of the proceedings, including reports of the discourses of MM. Morel, Lentz, Lefebvre, Boddaert, Lentz, Lippens, Tuke, Héger, de Kirchove, Poirier, Vermeulen, Ramaer, Steenberg, etc.]

Obituary.

DOROTHEA L. DIX.

No name in connection with reforms in the condition of the insane in the United States is worthy of more honour and veneration than that of Dorothea Dix. Early in the field, never disheartened by the difficulties which beset her path, firm as a rock, yet a lady in all she did, this resolute woman succeeded in not only exposing the once revolting condition and shameful neglect of the insane, but in inducing the State Legislatures to erect suitable receptacles for them. More than this, she encouraged efficient medical men to come forward to superintend these institutions, and exercised her influence in obtaining their appointment. Furthermore, she watched over the hospitals for the insane after their establishment, and promoted their successful working by all the means within her power. She frequently visited them, and was always a welcome guest. What Mrs. Fry was to prisons, Miss Dix was to asylums. The homage paid to the former by Sydney Smith may be fittingly applied to the latter, and, indeed, the reference is doubly appropriate because Miss Dix visited the prisoner in his cell as well as the neglected lunatic in the out-house and garret. "There is a spectacle which this town (London) now exhibits, that I will venture to call the most solemn, the most Christian, the most affecting which any human being ever witnessed. To see that holy woman in the midst of wretched prisoners—to see them calling earnestly upon God, soothed by her voice, animated by her look, clinging to the hem of her garment, and worshipping her as the only human being who has ever loved

them, or taught them, or spoken to them of God—this is the sight which breaks down the pageantry of the world, which tells us that the short hour of life is passing away . . . that it is time to go, like this blessed woman, among the guilty, the broken-hearted, and the sick, and to labour in the deepest and darkest wretchedness of life." Well do we remember Miss Dix telling us that as she was travelling one night along a lonely road she was attacked by a highway robber, who demanded her purse. She spoke to him, and when he heard her voice his whole demeanour changed. He expressed his contrition for his conduct, and said he remembered her visits to the prison where he had once been confined. On another occasion, after staying for a week at an inn, she asked for her bill, but the landlord refused to take a cent, stating that he had received kindness and good counsel from her when he had the misfortune to be in a prison which she visited. Unlike the thief just mentioned, he had endeavoured to lead a better life.

Those who would adequately estimate the courage displayed by Miss Dix in penetrating into the dens in which the insane and idiots were once concealed, must read her narrative of cases and her Memorials to the American Government some forty years ago. Her Report shocked the feelings of the community and aroused sympathy on behalf of the suffering insane for whom she pleaded. State hospitals were built, and she had the satisfaction of witnessing a great reform carried out, although even her powerful influence was unable to induce the authorities to do all that she wanted them to do, the State provision being often very inadequate for the needs of the insane, and numbers being allowed to remain in inferior almshouses. But if the condition of the insane in the United States at the time of her death were compared with that in which she found it, some five-and-forty years ago, the contrast would be at once startling and gratifying. To Miss Dix the change is mainly due. She laboured first, and others happily entered into her labours. The superintendents of asylums paid her the greatest respect; she was always welcome to their houses as a guest, and the American Association of Medical Superintendents of Hospitals for the Insane welcomed her on one occasion in terms of the most flattering description, and passed a special resolution in her honour. And the writer has observed in at least one asylum-chapel in the States the portrait of this saintly woman on the wall where in a Roman Catholic Church the Virgin Mary would have been placed. Miss Dix's philanthropic labours were not confined to the States. She was interested in the asylums in Canada, and at one period was painfully impressed with their bad condition. Again, everyone who knows the history of the reform in lunacy in Scotland knows that her visit to that country in 1855, her exposure of the dreadful state of things she discovered, and her vigorous onslaught on the authorities who supported them, led to a complete revolution in the care and treatment of pauper lunatics. Those who heard from her own lips the stirring incidents of that raid upon Scotland after her return to England, and her interview with the Home Secretary only a few hours before the Provost of Edinburgh arrived in hot haste on the scene in order to anticipate and nullify the good woman's appeal—but just too late—are not likely ever to forget her graphic story. Her clear statement of facts, her dignified presence, her obvious sincerity, and her dogged perseverance triumphed. She could afford to smile at the epithet bestowed mockingly upon her, "The American Invader," a soubriquet which she adopts in the autograph we have appended (from a letter) to the portrait facing the title page.

Miss Dix's health was feeble, but her indomitable energy overcame all obstacles.

During the Secession War, Miss Dix's activity was diverted into another channel. She saw her duty then lay in tending the sick and dying, and it is needless to say she was an angel of mercy in the hospitals where the wounded were nursed. Her eventful life when written, as we believe it will be, should be an interesting one. Her pen was never weary, so that out of her

voluminous correspondence there ought to be material for much valuable personal experience and opinion. The only drawback is the not easily read handwriting, written on thin paper and frequently crossed. Of letters received by the writer during thirty years, the last was dictated on the 17th April, 1886, in which she expresses herself thus:—

“I have for many weeks been wishing to write, and, with the expression of affectionate remembrance and regards, I must now say illness only has interposed. I have of late been very ill. This morning Dr. Ward brought me a message from Mr. Rathbone (M.P.) which again reminded me of, and took me to, the more immediate remembrance of my English friends. May I not ask that you soon write and inform me of hospital affairs in England?”

Although Miss Dix's health had become much impaired for some years, she retained her interest in the great work of her life. She resided in rooms set apart for her use in the upper storey of the State Asylum for New Jersey at Trenton, of which Dr. Ward is the medical superintendent.* Dr. and Mrs. Ward did all in their power to render her declining years as comfortable as possible, and for their kind care of one who had spent her life in caring for others, the friends of Miss Dix in England, as well as in America, ought to feel very grateful.

During the period Miss Dix spent in her rooms without once leaving them, her death has many times appeared to be imminent; but there had, it appears, been a slow decline in her bodily powers, whose failure seemed to be sudden at last. She became unconscious about twelve hours before her death, and continued so to the end. Dr. Ward attributed her death to heart disease.

Miss Dix died on the 17th July, 1887. We are not able to state her length of days, but they must have extended considerably beyond 80. She was not exempt from the feminine disinclination to disclose her age, and many have been the innocent attempts to induce her to betray the secret, but all in vain. On one occasion the question was abruptly put to her, but she evaded it with characteristic tact. The occurrence took place one day as she went round an asylum. It happened to be the birthday of one of the female patients. Addressing the well-known visitor she announced her own age, and immediately added (perhaps previously prompted by the superintendent) “And what age are *you*, madam?” The inquisitive bystanders thought that there was no escape. On the contrary, Miss Dix promptly replied, “*About* a hundred!” and passed on, leaving her interrogator and others thoroughly discomfited.

We are glad to be able to accompany this obituary notice with an admirable likeness of Miss Dix. With great difficulty we induced her to allow herself to be daguerreotyped during her visit to York in the year 1885. Even when taken, it nearly suffered destruction at her hands.

Her remains were laid in the Mount Auburn Cemetery, near Boston (Mass.), on the 21st, having been conveyed from Trenton, a distance of 300 miles.

Among those who attended her funeral was Dr. Charles H. Nichols, of the Bloomingdale Asylum, N.Y. We cannot better close our imperfect notice of this devoted woman, whose memory will be cherished by all who have at heart the amelioration of the condition of the insane, than by the following tribute to her honourable career by one who knew her so well and can so justly estimate the benefits she has conferred upon humanity. Dr. Nichols, in commenting on the decease of Miss Dix, writes to us:—

“Thus has died and been laid to rest in the most quiet, unostentatious way, the most useful and distinguished woman that America has yet produced.”

* To prevent what has already led to a misconception, it may be as well to state that Miss Dix did not seek this asylum on account of mental failure. It had repeatedly been her home in former years, when Dr. Buttolph was superintendent.