

George's untiring interest in the passing of the Superannuation Act of 1909. They had mainly to thank Sir George O'Farrell that Ireland was included in that Bill. He (the Chairman) spoke with knowledge of what took place during the many vicissitudes of the Bill. He concluded by saying that it was the unanimous wish of all those represented there that Sir George O'Farrell would long be spared to enjoy his retirement from active official work, and assuring him that he would always get a hearty welcome whenever he visited an Irish asylum. (Applause.)

Tributes to Sir George O'Farrell's work during his twenty years of office, to his personal qualities, and the pleasant relations which he had maintained with the members of the service, were paid by Dr. Drapes (Enniscorthy), Dr. Harvey (Clonmel), Dr. O'Neill (Limerick), Dr. M. J. Nolan (Downpatrick), Dr. Finnegan (Mullingar), and Dr. Dawson (Dublin).

Dr. GRAHAM then read the address, which was enclosed in a beautifully-designed cylinder, decorated with two enamelled plates, graphically representing the difference in asylum conditions in 1890 and 1910, and resting on a pedestal of Connemara marble.

Sir GEORGE O'FARRELL, in the course of his reply, referred to his happy relations with his colleague, Dr. Courtenay, and with the staff of the Lunacy Office, and, adverting to the reference which was made in the address and the speeches to the improved condition of the insane in the different classes of asylums in Ireland, said he could not claim to have been more than a factor in effecting that improvement, for without the co-operation of all the members of the service his efforts would have been like those of Sisyphus, wearisome and unproductive. He was proud that at the end of his twenty years' service they should still hold him as their enduring friend. (Applause.)

The proceedings then concluded.
(*Irish Times*, October 6th, 1910.)

OBITUARY.

ROBERT BAKER, M.D.

Born February 12th, 1843. Died August 18th, 1910.

Robert Baker was a member of an old Quaker family which for many generations lived in the Cleveland district of North Yorkshire. He was the third son of John and Mary Baker, and was born at Thirsk on February 12th, 1843. Educated at the Friends' Schools at Ackworth and York, he afterwards had a distinguished career as a medical student at Edinburgh, where he became M.D. in 1864. He also studied in Paris, and was House-Surgeon to Syme and Resident Physician to the Royal Infirmary, and President, Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh.

In 1867 he married Jane Martha Packer, of Thirsk. At one time he practised medicine in that town, but in 1872 he went to York and succeeded William Pumphrey as licensee of Lawrence House. Two years later he was appointed Medical Superintendent of The Retreat, York, which post he held until 1892, when, owing to failing health, he resigned. He remained, however, as Consulting Physician until his death on August 18th, 1910.

One of his brothers, Gilbert Baker, F.R.S., of Kew, distinguished as a botanist, is still living. His widow and one daughter and two sons survive him.

During Dr. Baker's *régime* at the Retreat this hospital for the insane was considerably enlarged by the erection of pavilions, a detached house, an adjoining property, was purchased in order to increase the accommodation for patients apart from the main buildings. He strongly advocated the use of Turkish baths in the treatment of insanity, and a very complete suite of rooms was erected for this purpose.

After a severe attack of typhoid fever, which greatly undermined his health, Dr. Baker went to America in 1884, and, accompanied by the late Dr. D. Hack Tuke, visited a number of institutions for the insane.

When there he called on the Quaker poet Whittier, then advanced in years, and afterwards he looked back with great pleasure to this interview.

Dr. Baker took a great interest in the Medico-Psychological Association, and in 1892 was elected President—the same year that the centenary of the Retreat was celebrated in York.

Dr. Baker possessed great charm of manner, and was peculiarly persuasive in his dealings with his patients. He was, therefore, in a remarkable degree successful in inducing them to follow his advice. His kindness and personal attention to the less intelligent patients was especially marked, and the manner in which the faces of these would light up when he paid his periodical visits as consulting physician was witness to the great esteem in which he was held by his old patients. One was reminded of the words of Samuel Tuke in speaking of the insane—"In the wreck of the intellect the affections not infrequently survive," and it seems reasonable to conclude that Dr. Baker was influenced by the same considerations which led Conolly to write—"Constant intercourse and constant kindness can alone obtain the entire confidence of patients, and this confidence is the very key-stone of successful management."

Dr. Baker was not a voluminous writer; the following articles were published by him: "Case of Delusional Insanity; Autopsy," *Journal of Mental Science*, 1878; "The Insane in United States and Canada," *The Friend*, 1885; "Ten Years' Experience in the Use of the Turkish Bath in the Treatment of Mental Ill-health," *Journal of Mental Science*, 1889; "Notes on Some Asylum Specialities in use at The Retreat, York," *ibid.*, 1890; "Notes Descriptive of a New Hospital Villa at the York Retreat," *ibid.*, 1891; "Presidential Address on the Retreat Centenary," *ibid.*, 1892.

The following note is added by one who knew Dr. Baker well:

"I knew Dr. Baker well and intimately from the time he was a medical student in Edinburgh. He was popular as a student, and his career was a successful one. In midwifery he won the Gold Medal in Dr. Matthews Duncan's class, in itself no small distinction. He was fortunate enough to become Resident to Mr. Syme, who was then at the zenith of his fame, in the surgical wards of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and in this post, which was eagerly coveted, he greatly distinguished himself by his devotion to his work and his successful management of the frequent difficulties with which he had to deal. On the recommendation of Mr. Syme he afterwards became assistant to the late Mr. Bickersteth, of Liverpool, with whom he remained for about two years, till, an opportunity arising of beginning practice in his native town, he settled there. Soon after he was joined in practice by his brother-in-law, and, with him, he speedily laid the foundation of what promised to be a large and successful practice. But his stay in Thirsk was short, for, five years after going there, he went to York and turned his attention to that branch of practice to which nearly all his professional life was devoted.

"Dr. Baker possessed in a high degree the capacity for making friends. He was peculiarly kindly, pleasant and attractive in manner, and those whom he so attracted usually became his attached friends for life. To such as needed help he was ever willing to extend a helping hand, and by them his ready kindness will always be gratefully remembered. His last illness was a long and trying one; it was borne with wonderful fortitude and resignation, and his memory will ever be cherished by the sorrowing friends he has left behind him."

REPORT OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND THE PREVENTION OF INSANITY TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IN 1910.

Since its formation, in 1907, the British Committee of the International Institute for the Study of the Causes and the Prevention of Insanity has met on four occasions in London. Two of the meetings were held subsequently to the reunion of the International Committee in Amsterdam, in 1907, and two since the last meeting of the International Commission at Vienna, in 1908. The resolutions adopted at the International meetings were communicated to the British Committee. The question as to what steps should be taken by the British Committee in order to support the work and objects of the International Commission always occupied a prominent place in the discussions of the British Committee, but it was felt to be inexpedient to assume any definite attitude or to approach any public body, society, or private individual, until it was definitely known what finan-