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THE AFTER-CARE ASSOCIATION.

At the invitation of Dr. and Mrs. Bower, of Springfield House, Kempston, several ladies and gentlemen attended a drawing room meeting at their house on Wednesday afternoon, when a deputation attended to explain the objects of the After-care Association for poor persons discharged from Asylums for the Insane. The Rev. Paul Wyatt presided, and the deputation consisted of Dr. H. Rayner (Chairman of the Association and late Medical Superintendent of Hanwell Asylum) and Mr. H. Thornhill Roxby (Secretary), while those present included Dr. and Mrs. Bower, Rev. V. Wyatt, Dr. Butters, Dr. Selby, Mrs. and Miss Smith, Mrs. Simpson Craig, Mrs. Bousfield (Bedford district agent), Mrs. Rider, Mrs. Carroll, Miss Ward, Mrs. Theod. Pearce, and Mrs. E. R. Green. The Duchess of Bedford wrote regretting her inability to be present to take the chair, and numerous letters had been received from other ladies and gentlemen unable to be present.

Rev. P. WYATT said of all the ailments they were prone to none were so bad as the loss of reason. They were very grateful for the humane treatment of persons so afflicted, and for many years past they had recognised that the institution near which they were now met had under the able management of their host been a living exemplification of that humane treatment.

Dr. BOWER then read a list of subscriptions and donations totalling £35 2s. 6d. he had received from the following ladies and gentlemen: The Duke of Bedford, Lord St. John, Sir Fredk. Howard, the Mayoress of Bedford, Miss Norton, Miss Cole, Mrs. Farrar, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Kilpin, Mrs. Bower, Mrs. Carroll, Miss Smith, Mrs. Rider, Miss Ward, Miss Risley, Mrs. Holmsted, Mrs. Horn, Col. E. R. Green, Rev. P. Wyatt, Dr. Butters, Dr. Hartley, Dr. Holland, Dr. Lawford, Rev. V. Wyatt, Rev. W. H. Jackson, Rev. C. F. Farrar, Capt. Colburne, Dr. Gordon Brown, Major Benning, Dr. Simpson Craig, Messrs. T. Bull, S. Foster, Mayles, Nutter, W.W., M. Cook, G. Farrar, Ell. Seabrook, Hamblin, Marks, T. Barnard, jun., Battams, Robinson, Newman, H. T. Eve, L. Walker, Beagley, O. Carpenter, Tompkins, Page, C. Bower, Valentine, J. H. Howard, Underwood, Anstee, Prole, G. Hurst, D. J. Willis, J. Miller, J. Pedly, J. F. Hatfield Harter, Fitzpatrick, J. Smith, J. E. White, and Leeds-Smith.

Mr. ROXBOROUGH said the Society was established in 1879 mainly by the exertions of those well known for their experience as medical men and philanthropists interested in the care of the insane, the object being to facilitate the re-admission of convalescents from lunatic asylums into social life. The Association had been doing a quiet work, which must to a certain extent be limited, because it could only help a certain class of people. One way in which help was rendered was by boarding out the patients in cottage homes, for which they paid from 10s. to 16s. per week, owing to the great care that was necessary for their supervision. After the patients had been in the homes a few weeks situations were found for them, in which matter the Association had been most successful. The females were mostly found situations as domestic servants, and they generally had more applications than they could find servants for. Last year 147 cases were treated, and of these only 3 broke down, which showed that the money spent upon them was well laid out. Another way in which patients were helped was by grants of money or clothing, and though that might be considered bad as a principle, it was the only way in which some cases could be assisted, especially men who had to go about looking for work. He quoted cases where grants of money had enabled homes to be kept together and gave instances of other patients who had been found good situations. Cases were recommended to them from various asylums and by Boards of Guardians, and no doubt many more cases could be benefitted if the notice of the Association was called to them. The chief aim of the Association was to prevent patients from breaking down again, and it was much better that they should be sent to cottage homes than be taken care of by their own friends, as the latter were too apt to pick out and magnify their peculiarities. He expressed his surprise and pleasure at Dr. and Mrs. Bower's subscription list, and said the Association would be thankful for gifts of clothing. They treated cases from all parts of the country.

Dr. RAYNER said there were 75,000 people in asylums in England and Wales, and 7,000 were discharged recovered annually, so there must be many more who stood in need of their Association's help. It was the only society of the kind, and while 14 per cent. of cases sent to asylums were patients who had been discharged and broken down, only three out of the 147 cases treated by the Association last year had relapsed, which was a most favourable comparison. In the London County Asylums of late years there had been such a demand for vacancies that pressure had been put on the medical staff to discharge patients at the earliest possible date. He thought there would be an undue proportion of relapses in consequence, and his opinion was that these relapsed cases furnished more incurable cases than any other class, so that the premature discharge of patients from asylums might lead to an increase of insanity. He trusted in the future the Association would be more liberally supported, so that it could extend its work.

Rev. V. WYATT said their thanks were due to Dr. and Mrs. Bower for inviting them to be present that day. This was an age of philanthropy, and he felt convinced that the objects of this Association only wanted to be known in order to enlist sympathy and support. He paid a tribute to the management of the Three Counties' Asylum at Arlesey by Dr. Swain, who had for many years been connected with this Association.

Votes of thanks were also accorded to the deputation and to the Chairman, and refreshments were then served.