

nervous disorders may be no longer delayed, and a grievous injustice to a very large class of suffering humanity may be removed.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

PONTYPRIDD.  
 THOMAS BARLOW.  
 CLIFFORD ALLBUTT.  
 G. H. SAVAGE.  
 FREDERICK W. MOTT.  
 ROBERT ARMSTRONG-JONES.  
 JOHN LYNN-THOMAS.  
 W. MCDUGALL.  
 CHARLES S. MYERS.  
 G. ELLIOT SMITH.  
 R. PERCY SMITH.  
 BEDFORD PIERCE.  
 ROBERT B. WILD.  
 DAVID DRUMMOND.  
 A. H. TROW.  
 M. THOMAS.  
 E. GOODALL.

*Times*, February 6th, 1920.

#### MENTAL DISORDERS.

*To the Editor of the Times.*

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

SIR,—As one living under different and happier laws than the writers of the letter on the above subject, I desire to point out that in Scotland mentally deranged patients who have means, or whose friends can pay for their support, are able at the present time to receive curative treatment in any house or home without being certified to be insane and without being sent to any asylum. Insane patients are accordingly often sent by physicians from England to Scotland to benefit in this way by the kindly provisions of its considerate system of laws, and to avoid the stigma of certification as a lunatic or detention in an English asylum while undergoing curative treatment. These powers have existed in Scotland for half a century, and after such a prolonged and completely successful experiment there should be no hesitation in conferring similar privileges on the people of England, and in removing not only an invidious but what is to many sensitive persons and families a most cruel anomaly.

I have, in the second place, to point out to reformers of the lunacy laws that something more requires to be done than the mere repeal of laws that obstruct reform and the enactment of others that confer new powers; there is also the question of financial aid. In Scotland we possess practically all the powers the signatories desire, but the voluntary treatment of the poor—that is, the State-aided or parochial class—is for practical purposes a dead letter for this peculiar reason: that a grant in aid is given by the State for the maintenance of any person who is certified to be a lunatic, but this grant is withheld, although the patient be treated on similar medical lines, if he or she be not certified insane. Human nature being what it is, this is a cause of delay in obtaining treatment, and it encourages the certification of the patient as a lunatic for the sake of the Government grant, rather than treatment without certification.

The objects desired by the signatories have the sympathy of everyone engaged in the care of the mentally afflicted. Our legislators may grant the powers asked for with an easy mind, as they have existed in Scotland for over 50 years and they have not been abused. Lastly, the financial problems connected with these admirable ideals must be carefully worked out, otherwise the powers, if granted, may be found worthless in practice.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE M. ROBERTSON,  
*Professor of Psychiatry.*

*Times*, February 12th, 1920.