

R. V. FLETCHER.

Many members will have heard with regret of the death of Dr. Fletcher, who had been Superintendent of the Ballinasloe Asylum for close on thirty years. His student days were spent in Steevens' Hospital, where, as Resident Pupil, the many friendships which he formed with men who afterwards became eminent in other specialties stimulated throughout life his interest in professional subjects not directly connected with his own work. After qualifying he spent some time as physician to the Hon. David Plunkett, one of whose nieces he subsequently married. When Down Asylum was opened in 1870 he was appointed as Assistant to the late Dr. Tyner, being the first Assistant appointed to an Irish asylum.

After a few years there he was selected by the Government for the Superintendentship of the Waterford Asylum, where he found a well-stocked arsenal of obsolete armaments for the cure of disordered minds; and after a short period, made a bonfire of straight-waistcoats, anklets, and other therapeutic instruments. His action was the subject of admonition, protest, and warning from asylum officials and lay governors, who in a short time handsomely recognised the improvement he had effected. His good work had its reward in 1874 in his promotion by Government to the larger and more important District Asylum of the counties of Galway and Roscommon. Here he quickly formed hosts of friends, and in a short time his keen judgment, wide experience, and intuitive insight were so thoroughly trusted by the then Board of Governors that his advice was eagerly sought and confidently followed in all matters affecting the institution. Coming to an asylum which was then old as asylums go, he found many things to remedy, and effected many improvements. For several years he agitated on the subject of employment as a curative measure, and persuaded almost against their will the Governors to purchase a large farm adjoining, the management of which he carried out with much profit and benefit to the institution.

He then began to claim the provision of a modern hospital for the acute and sick. After much misgiving the claim was conceded and provision made in a manner satisfying the most exacting requirements and equal to anything to be found elsewhere. Socially he was a type of a kindly courtly gentleman, good natured, pleasant, and much sought after, with a keen sense of humour and a large fund of stories. Some years ago he was one of the best shots in the west of Ireland and an authority on all sporting matters. In the hierarchy of the Masonic order he held a high place. On the occasion of his silver wedding in 1897 he received a presentation of plate from his colleagues and the staff, with whom he was always most popular. Since the death of his wife, to whom he was much attached, he has gone but little into society, and after a lingering illness, he died on December 17th last, at the age of sixty-three; his old friends, Dr. Little, of Dublin, and Dr. Rutherford, and his senior assistant, Dr. Mills, attended him.

He leaves one daughter, married to P. S. Golding, Esq., Ballinasloe, who received from all public bodies in the district, resolutions of sympathy.

By his colleagues, to whom he was always a kind and trusted friend, he is much regretted, and he has left behind a memory of constant thoughtfulness for others and unfailing courtesy in all relations of life.

JOSEPH PEEKE RICHARDS.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Joseph Peeke Richards, formerly superintendent of Hanwell Asylum. An obituary notice will appear in our next issue.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL HOME RELIEF CONGRESS
(ASSISTANCE FAMILIALE).

PRESIDENT.—The Right Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, K.T.

Vice-Presidents.—The Right Hon. the Lord Provost of Edinburgh; the Lord Provost of Glasgow; the Lord Provost of Perth; the Lord Provost of Dundee; M. le Duc Decazes; the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen; the Rt. Hon. the Countess of Aberdeen; the Lady Kinross; the Lady Marjorie Mackenzie; Mrs.

Wauchope of Niddrie; Miss Flora Stephenson, LL.D., chairman of the Edinburgh School Board; Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., London; the Hon. Morton G. Stuart Gray, of Kinfauns; the Right Rev. the Moderator of the Church of Scotland; the Rev. the Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland; the Right Rev. Bishop Dowden; the Most Rev. Archbishop Smith; Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, Bart., of Gairloch; Sir John Batty Tuke, M.P.; Malcolm M'Neill, Esq., C.B., Vice-President Local Government Board; the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; the President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh; the President of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow; Robt. T. Paine, Esq., Boston, U.S.A.; Dr. F. B. Sanborn, Concord, U.S.A.; M. le Dr. A. Marie, Paris; Dr. Peeters, Ghel, Belgium; Professor Tamburini, Milan; Dr. Alt, Uchtspringe, Germany; Dr. Van Deventer, Holland; Dr. F. Sano, Antwerp; John Fraser, Esq., F.R.C.P.E., H.M. Commissioner in Lunacy; Professor Sir Henry Littlejohn, M.D., LL.D.; Professor John Kirkpatrick, LL.D.; Conolly Norman, Esq., F.R.C.P.I., Dublin; C. S. Loch, Esq., London Charity Organisation Society; Chas. Booth, Esq., F.R.S., London.

Chairman of Executive Committee.—Sir John Sibbald, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.

At the Second International Home Relief Congress, held at Antwerp in September, 1902, it was agreed that in 1904 the Congress should meet at Edinburgh. Accordingly, on 16th June, 1903, at a large meeting, representative of the charitable organisations of Scotland, it was unanimously resolved that the Congress should be invited to meet at Edinburgh, as proposed. A committee was appointed, and the Congress has been fixed for Tuesday, 7th June, 1904.

The Right Honourable Lord Balfour of Burleigh has accepted the office of President, and will deliver the Opening Address in the Hall of the New College, Mound, Edinburgh, where the various meetings will be held.

The Objects of the Congress are explained in the following synopsis of a preliminary statement by Sir John Sibbald:

"We have endeavoured to make this preliminary meeting representative of Scotland, and not merely of Edinburgh, and our thanks are specially due to those who have come from Glasgow and other places at a distance. I shall endeavour to make my statement as short as is consistent with a clear explanation of the purpose of the meeting.

"As you are aware, a proposal has been made that the fourth of a series of annual international congresses shall be held in Edinburgh next year for the discussion of the ways in which aid can best be given to the distressed poor, in their own homes, or under conditions of home-like character. Two such congresses have already been held—one in Paris in 1901, and one in Antwerp in 1902. Another is to be held this year, the place selected for it being Bordeaux; and it was resolved at the Antwerp Congress that the meeting in 1904 should, if possible, be held in Edinburgh.

"It is scarcely necessary to say that though these congresses have solely in view the discussion of questions relating to home help, their motive idea is in no way antagonistic to that important branch of charitable work which is carried on in hospitals and similar institutions. The idea of holding these congresses arose, indeed, at a congress held in Paris in 1900, which dealt with charitable work of every kind, the work of hospitals and other institutions among the rest. But the discussions which took place in the section devoted to home help were found specially interesting. They showed clearly that the questions relating to home help present special problems and special difficulties of their own; and it was felt that these embraced so wide a field, and were of such urgent importance, that it was resolved that in future an independent congress should be devoted to their consideration.

"I have chosen the words 'Home Relief' as the best English rendering of what the French mean by '*Assistance Familiale*,' and it will be understood that this includes every kind of organised aid to the poor in their own or other private homes, whether outdoor relief under the Poor Law, or similar aid from either public or private sources.

"An idea of the work of the proposed congresses may be indicated by a reference to the proceedings at Paris in 1901. The meetings occupied the last five days of the month of October. The congress was divided into sections which

dealt with different branches of the work, according as it referred to children, to persons in the working period of life, or to the aged. The work referring to aid given at the working period of life was divided into two sections, one of which dealt with aid given in sickness, and the other with aid given for other reasons; and a separate section dealt with the care of the insane and the imbecile in private dwellings. The meetings of sections were held in the forenoons, and general meetings were held in the afternoons.

"The kinds of aid which formed the subject of discussion included, not merely the giving of material aid in the form of food, clothing, lodging, or money, or medical aid in the form of advice, nursing, drugs, and medical appliances, but also included the dissemination of useful sanitary and economic information, and the fostering of habits likely to develop health of body and of mind; and it also included a discussion of that most difficult and most important subject, the promotion of agencies likely to develop and stimulate the spirit of self-help.

"It would take up too much time were I to attempt in detail an enumeration of the subjects brought before the sections; I may, however, for illustration mention some of those dealt with in the section for children. I select the work of various charitable organisations which were described, and whose merits or demerits formed the subject of discussion. It seems useful to mention such work because it gives an idea of the directions in which the thoughts of French philanthropists have been turned in recent years, and of the increasing extent to which, in France, the importance of promoting the development of healthy and capable citizens is being recognised. One of these associations aims at the removal of conditions and customs prejudicial to the health of women at the period preceding childbirth. Another aims at getting more efficient preparation made for the care of children whose advent is expected. Another aims at securing as far as possible the efficient nourishment of children during the period of lactational nursing. Much attention was also given to the difficult subject of saving children from the consequences of parental neglect; and in regard to this, frequent reference was made to the beneficial influence of the law of July 1889, introduced by my venerable and revered friend, the Senator Théophile Roussel, which enables the authorities in those districts which have adopted it to remove neglected children from their parents. The providing of fresh-air holidays for city children, as is done in this country by such organisations as the Fortnight Holiday Fund, which in Edinburgh is identified with the name of Mrs. Stirling Boyd, was also discussed. And with reference to the advantages attending the international exchange of ideas in questions of charitable work, I think Mrs. Stirling Boyd could tell us how much we have learned in regard to holiday homes from Pastor Bion, of Zürich.

"In Paris, the last-mentioned work is done partly by the official *Assistance Publique*, and partly by an association originated by Drs. Dubois and Marie, of which Madame Schmahl, a lady known to some of us in Edinburgh, is the President. There was full discussion also of the system of boarding pauper children in rural localities which is largely resorted to in Paris, and in the adoption of which the parishes of Edinburgh and Glasgow and other urban parishes in Scotland have the distinguished honour of having led the way. I shall not detain you any further by examples of the subjects discussed at the Paris Congress, except to mention the admirable system under which the harmless and incurable insane belonging to Paris are boarded out in the departments of Cher and Allier. This great organisation is due to the zeal and ability of my distinguished friend, Dr. Marie, who delights in acknowledging how much, in carrying out his work, he has been indebted to the example of Scotland.

"In this enumeration I have, not being free from the patriotic weakness common among Scotsmen, mentioned two instances in which our own country has taken a leading position. But I should convey a very wrong impression if I led you to believe that I left the Paris Congress with a feeling that we have little to learn from other countries. I think, on the contrary, that it would show a want of intelligence on our part if we failed to learn a great deal from what the great nations of Europe and America have to tell us. Though each nation has its own peculiar social and economic conditions to deal with, most of the problems that have to be solved are, in principle, the same; and much light is thrown upon them by comparing the different ways in which they have been worked out. I hope, therefore, that you will be disposed to give a cordial approval to the holding of the

congress next year. There are many defects in our own arrangements, of which most of us are conscious, and we may find that the best way of removing some of these may be shown by the experience of others elsewhere. If I might indicate one of the ways in which the proposed conference might be useful, I would suggest the contribution of short accounts of the work of philanthropic organisations in which not only their successful work would be described, but also the difficulties which had been found impossible to overcome.

"I should like to say that though the proposed congress is called international, we might find it useful in giving an opportunity of comparing the experiences gained in different places within our own country. An illustration showing where this might be useful is given in the letter in which Mr. Patten MacDougall, the legal member of the Scottish Local Government Board, expresses his regret at not being able to be present with us to-day. He says, 'It is a curious fact that in the debate in the House upon pauper children, two nights ago, no reference was made to our Scottish system and to the marked success which has attended it.' A similar reflection occurred to myself when reading the report of the debate, and I think I may say that those who are acquainted with the working of the system in Scotland would probably have been able to explain the causes of certain defects alleged to be present in the system as practised in England. Some light might be thrown on this subject at the proposed congress.

"I have ventured to give some reasons for my belief that the proposed congress would be useful to ourselves. But even if no such reason had existed, I should still plead for its being held. The wish of the Antwerp Congress to hold it here is no light compliment to Scotland, and we must receive it courteously. Many of us have had cause to be grateful for generous welcomes extended to us in foreign countries, and we must be willing to reciprocate such kindness with equal cordiality. To put the case, however, at its lowest, it would not be worthy of us, as Scotsmen, to refuse to confer with the representatives of foreign countries who sought to discuss with us the ways in which we can best help our necessitous fellow-creatures. I am strongly of opinion also that such gatherings tend to promote kindly international relations."

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME.

Note.—All written contributions to the work of the Congress should be forwarded as soon as possible to the Secretary of the Section for approval of the Sectional Committee. The titles of such contributions should be sent to the Secretary before March 1st, and the papers themselves on or before April 30th, 1904.

SECTION I.—CHILDREN.

President.—The Right. Hon. the Earl of Mansfield.

Vice-Presidents.—J. B. Fergusson, Esq., of Bagarth; Miss E. S. Haldane, Auchterarder; John MacDonald, Esq., Edinburgh; W. Leslie Mackenzie, Esq., M.A., M.D., Edinburgh; Rev. J. B. Paton, D.D., Nottingham; Miss Flora Stevenson, LL.D., Edinburgh; John Thomson, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.E., Edinburgh.

Secretary.—John Jeffrey, Esq., Local Government Board, 125, George Street, Edinburgh.

Subjects.—(1) The Supervision and Home Care of Children and Young Adults who are Mentally Defective (Imbecile, Feeble-minded, and Backward) *conjoint discussion by Sections I and V*. (2) The Boarding-out of Pauper Children. (3) The Methods of Organising Home Relief for Cripples. (4) Prevention of Cruelty to Children. (5) Home Relief in Relation to the Feeding of Infants and of School Children. (6) The Care of Young and Middle-aged Widows and Children who are in Receipt of Out-door Parish Relief.

SECTION II.—OLD AGE.

President.—A. W. Black, Esq., M.P.

Vice-Presidents.—W. A. Brailward, Esq.; W. S. Brown, Esq., City Treasurer, Edinburgh; G. Matheson Cullen, Esq., M.D., Edinburgh; Andrew Ferrier, Esq., Edinburgh; David Paulin, Esq., F.R.S.E., Edinburgh; J. R. Reid, Esq., C.I.E., Edinburgh.

Secretary.—W. B. Wilson, Esq., W.S., 137, George Street, Edinburgh.

Subjects.—(1) Old Age Pensions—the General Question. (2) Old Age Pensions from the Point of View of Friendly Societies. (3) The Danish and German Systems of Relief and their Moral and Economic Effects. (4) The Scottish Practice and Experience of boarding out Aged Paupers.

SECTION III.—ABLE-BODIED ADULTS.

President.—Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.D.

Vice-Presidents.—Sir Samuel Chisholm, Bart., Glasgow; Sir Robert Pullar, Perth; Rev. J. L. Brooks, Lingfield; George Dott, Esq., J.P., Glasgow; Lieut.-Col. A. B. M'Hardy, C.B., R.E., Edinburgh; Rev. David Ross, D.D., Glasgow.

Secretaries.—James C. Dunlop, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.E., 33, Chester Street, Edinburgh; and James R. Motion, Esq., Parish Council Chambers, 266, George Street, Glasgow.

Subjects.—(1) Labour Colonies. (2) Model Lodging-houses. (3) Compulsory Detention of Paupers. (4) The Evolution of the Criminal and the Means of checking the Supply. (5) Prisoners' Aid Societies. (6) The Care of Habitual Inebriates.

SECTION IV.—SICK ADULTS.

President.—Malcolm Morris, Esq., F.R.C.S.E.

Vice-Presidents.—Professor Calmette, Lille; Professor Landouzy, Paris; Arthur Newsholme, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., Brighton; R. W. Philip, Esq., M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.E., Edinburgh; Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., London; J. B. Sutherland, Esq., S.S.C., Edinburgh.

Secretaries.—A. Dingwall Fordyce, Esq., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P.E., 15, Melville Street; and W. Leslie Lyall, Esq., M.B., C.M., 8, Murrayfield Gardens, Edinburgh.

Subjects.—(1) The Organisation of the Home Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. (2) The Relation between Hospital and Home Relief of Sick Poor (3) The Best Scheme of Home Attendance on Puerperal Women in Large Centres.

SECTION V.—INSANE AND EPILEPTICS.

President.—The Master of Polwarth.

Vice-Presidents.—John Carswell, Esq., L.R.C.P.E., J.P., Glasgow; John Macpherson, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.E., Edinburgh; Alex. Robertson, Esq., M.D., Glasgow; J. F. Sutherland, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.E., Edinburgh; A. R. Urquhart, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P.E., J.P., Perth.

Secretaries.—W. A. Parker, Esq., M.B., C.M., Gartloch, Glasgow; and A. R. Turnbull, Esq., M.B., C.M., Springfield, Cupar-Fife.

Subjects.—(1) The Best Method of administering the System of Family Care of the Insane, and the Best System of Supervision. (2) After-care of Friendless Patients discharged from Asylums. (3) The Supervision and Home Care of Children and Young Adults who are Mentally Defective (Imbecile, Feeble-minded, and Backward) (*conjoint discussion by Sections I and V*). (4) Epileptic Colonies.

Tickets of membership of the Congress, including the right to receive a copy of the printed Report of the Proceedings, may be obtained, price 16s., from Isaac J. Cowie, Secretary and Treasurer to the Congress, 59, Frederick Street, Edinburgh.

Return tickets to Edinburgh will be issued at a single fare and a quarter to Members of Congress at all stations on British railways, on presentation of a voucher signed by the Secretary of the Congress.

THE LIBRARY.

The Committee urge members to examine the Catalogue of the Library, and to send to the Librarian, 11, Chandos Street, any books that they may wish to contribute, and also to suggest books which they would wish to see added to the Library.