

LIBRARY
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL COLLEGE
NEW YORK CITY

MAY 1 1 1938

THE
JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE

[*Published by Authority of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association.*]

No. 348 [NEW SERIES
No. 312.]

JANUARY, 1938.

Vol. LXXXIV

DANIEL FREDERICK RAMBAUT.

By the passing, on November 30 last, of Dr. D. F. Rambaut, the Royal Medico-Psychological Association has lost one of its most ardent supporters. He was, indeed, one of the pioneers of modern psychiatry.

Son of the Rev. E. F. Rambaut, Vicar of Christchurch, Blackrock, Dublin, he was born at Waterford in 1865. He was educated at Rathmines School, Dublin, the Royal School, Armagh, and Trinity College, Dublin—where he obtained honours and prizes in logic and mathematics, and the first place in his final medical examination.

Early in his career Dr. Rambaut's ambition was to study the pathology of the nervous system, and with this object in view he studied at Wakefield Mental Hospital under Bevan Lewis, and at Vienna University under Obersteiner. Circumstances, however, prevented his pursuing these studies.

He was for nine years Assistant Medical Officer and Pathologist at the Richmond Asylum (now the Grangegorman Mental Hospital), Dublin. In 1902 he became Medical Superintendent of the County Mental Hospital at Shrewsbury, and in 1913 he was appointed Medical Superintendent of St. Andrew's Hospital, Northampton, the largest registered mental hospital in England.

Since 1894 he had been a member of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association; and since 1924 he had been its Registrar.

This latter appointment was a peculiarly happy one, as Dr. Rambaut had always taken a keen interest in the training and welfare of the mental nurse, and he was proud at being able to say that he had introduced the training and examination of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association into three different mental hospitals. He was convinced that this training changed the whole attitude of the nurse from one of harshness to one of kindness and sympathy towards the patient. He also realized that the quality of the nursing staff was to some extent influenced by the reputation of each particular hospital

for making the nurses comfortable ; and one of his innovations was the construction of a model nurses' hostel in the hospital grounds.

The year 1927 saw the realization of one of Dr. Rambaut's chief ambitions, viz. the completion of a new Reception Hospital, now called Wantage House. The main aim of this new hospital was the provision of adequate facilities for diagnosis and treatment of the acute psychoses. In its planning and equipment Dr. Rambaut was fortunate in having the generous and enthusiastic support of the Hospital Committee. Without minimizing the psychological factor in the causation of mental disorder, Dr. Rambaut was convinced of the importance of a thorough and exhaustive investigation of the physical condition of the patient. With this end in view, Wantage House was thoroughly equipped for bacteriological, pathological and biochemical research, as well as the most up-to-date X-ray department. Being a great believer in hydrotherapy, this form of treatment was amply provided for. In a separate building there is a Turkish bath, complete in every detail. This particular bath has been found most helpful in the treatment of depression.

Dr. Rambaut also considered occupational therapy a very important form of treatment. When Assistant Medical Officer under Conolly Norman at the Richmond Asylum he installed hand-loom weaving and other crafts. Latterly, however, he stated that he was not an advocate of organized groups for occupational therapy. He believed that the interests, education and upbringing of each patient required careful study in order to ascertain which particular occupation was likely to be of benefit.

Dr. Rambaut was always a keen supporter of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association and was a constant attendant at its meetings. His work as Registrar was meticulously carried out. In 1934 his services were recognized, when he was made President of the Association.

In his younger days Dr. Rambaut was a noted athlete. His skill as a Rugby three-quarter was largely instrumental in achieving the first Irish victory over England, he having converted two tries. At a time when Ireland provided some famous hurdlers he was twice champion. In fact he had played most games with one exception, namely golf ; he never played it, and when asked why, he would jocularly reply that he was "not yet old enough" or that he "only played games" !

While strong of purpose, Dr. Rambaut possessed a kindly and sympathetic nature. He was a man whose personality inspired confidence, and he was beloved by his patients and his staff.

Dr. Rambaut leaves a widow and three children.

NORMAN R. PHILLIPS.