effect, so has been the improvement in the general condition, not of the labouring classes only, but of the whole community as influenced by them. The improvement has been so great as to be well nigh incredible by a generation in which the horrors of the past are either unknown or forgotten. It is good sometimes to call these horrors to remembrance; and it is justifiable to conclude that wisdom thus tested by experience may be accepted as a safe and certain guide for the social legislation of the future.—The Times, October 21.

The Westminster Review on Obscure Diseases of the Brain.

The fourth edition of Dr. Winslow’s Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind proves the interest which the public feel in sensational anecdotes of madness, and in a medley of quotations from all sorts of authors concerning it. The reader is not unlikely to finish the perusal of the book with a conviction that any confusion which its incoherent character may naturally have produced, is an indication of some obscure disease of the brain or mind requiring instant medical advice. In that case, the book may possibly have answered its purpose.—The Westminster Review, October, 1868.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Education, Position, and Pay of Assistant Medical Officers of County Asylums.

We have received the following letter from Dr. Crichton Browne with reference to the Occasional Note on the “Education, Position, and Pay of Assistant Medical Officers of County Asylums,” published in the October number of the Journal of Mental Science:

West Riding Asylum, Wakefield,
22nd September, 1868.

My dear Dr. Robertson,—

The medical staff of this Asylum consists of a Medical Director, two Assistant Medical Officers—one acting in the male and one in the female department—and two Clinical Clerks—one acting under the direction of each of the Medical Assistants. The salary of the Senior Medical Assistant for the time being is £125, with the usual allowances, and that of the Junior, £100, while the Clinical Clerks receive no salary, but only furnished apartments, board, &c., and instruction in mental and nervous diseases, in return for their services. After eighteen months’ experience of them, I am strongly impressed with the value of those Clinical Clerks, and should not now like to be without them. They are of great service, not merely in keeping the case books, but in widening and extending that general and unremitting supervision which I believe to be so important in a large establishment like this, and in helping on the medical work in various ways. It is almost impossible for me to describe to
you the vivifying influence which these ardent young men, fresh from the
schools, exert upon the more confirmed Asylum Medical Officers. They rub off
the rust of routine, and create a necessity for vigorous reading. They afford,
too, wonderful facilities for carrying out scientific investigations and careful
treatment, while they are themselves undergoing the best preparation for subse-
quent Asylum appointments, and even for general practice. One of my present
assistants commenced here as Clinical Clerk. The important point is that the
Clinical Clerks should be wisely and cautiously chosen, as it would not do to
introduce young practitioners indifferently into an institution of this kind.
Judicious selection, however, together with paramount and summary authority
over them left in the hands of the Medical Superintendent, ought to obviate
every danger and difficulty. I hold each of my Medical Assistants responsible
for the good conduct of his particular clerk, and have never any trouble. They
all work quietly and discreetly, and harmoniously together.

When the additions now in progress here, which will raise the number of
lunatics to 1,300, are completed, I mean to suggest to the Committee of Visitors
some modifications of the present arrangements. I shall propose that the salary
of the Senior Assistants be raised permanently to £150 per annum, that of the
Junior remaining where it is at £100, and that £50 a-year be allowed to each of
the Clinical Clerks. I feel persuaded that even this small sum will enable me to
command a very superior class of men, will render those appointed more con-
tented, and will induce them to remain with me for twelve months.

By the way, the best Clinical Clerk who has joined me is a graduate of the
Edinburgh University, with first-class honours. When he was appointed I had
a Cambridge man as an applicant, and the next vacancy I have promised to an
F.R.C.S. Eng., by examination.

In great haste,
I am,
Dear Dr. Robertson,
Yours most faithfully,
J. CRICHTON BROWNE.

Dr. Lockhart Robertson, &c, &c.

Regulations as to Clinical Clerks.

1. They shall be appointed by the Medical Director, for periods of three or
   six months, or longer duration under special circumstances, and shall be subject
to summary removal by him on account of misconduct or neglect.

2. They shall devote their whole time to the duties of their office, and shall
   not engage in any other occupation.

3. They shall be under the control and authority of the Medical Director, and
   subject to his supervision, shall receive instructions from the Assistant Medical
   Officers as to the performance of their duties.

4. They shall accompany the Medical Officers on their ordinary visits to the
   wards of their respective departments, and shall take careful notes of their obser-
   vations on the various cases and the treatment ordered, for insertion in the case
   book.

5. They shall also visit the wards of their respective departments at other
times when directed by the Medical Officers to do so, with the view of obtaining
additional information respecting the cases under treatment.

6. They shall aid the Assistant Medical Officers generally in the discharge of
their duties, but shall pay special attention to the condition of the case books,
in which they shall keep careful records of all the cases under treatment, being
more particularly full and explicit regarding those which are of recent origin,
which are undergoing modifications in their character, which are being subjected
to active treatment, or which are complicated by accidents or dangerous pro-
penities.
7. They shall attend in the waiting rooms of their respective departments on
the admission of new patients, shall note their condition, and endeavour to obtain
from the relatives or friends, or Poor Law Officers accompanying them, reliable
information as to their antecedent history.
8. They shall attend all post mortem examinations and assist in their per-
formance, or take notes of the pathological conditions revealed, according as
they may receive instructions from the senior Medical Officer present.
9. They shall assist in any surgical operations or scientific investigations that
may be in progress in the Asylum during the period of their residence there, and
in the absence of the dispenser shall compound the medicines for the wards,
under the supervision of the Assistant Medical Officers.
10. They shall exert what moral influence they can with the patients for their
benefit, and shall endeavour to promote their employment and recreation.
11. They shall immediately report to the Medical Director any instance of
misconduct or neglect on the part of a subordinate officer, attendant, nurse, or
servant, that may come to their knowledge.
12. They shall not leave the Asylum together, and shall only absent themselves
at any time with the sanction of the Medical Director, and for such period as
he may permit.

J. CRICHTON BROWNE,
Medical Director.

Books, Pamphlets, &c., received for Review, 1868.
(Continued from Journal of Mental Science, July, 1868).

Books Received.

1.—Sea-sickness and How to Prevent it—an Explanation of its Nature and
Successful Treatment, through the Agency of the Nervous System, by means
of the Spinal Ice-bag, with an Introduction on the General Principles of
Trübner and Co., 1868.

This edition contains a concise and lucid introductory exposition of the Author's
pathological and therapeutic doctrines; a section on the Physiology of
Vomiting has also been added; and the number of cases showing the suc-
cessful use of the spinal ice bag in sea-sickness has been increased. It does
not, of course, fall within the scope of this Journal to give any opinion on the
treatment of sea sickness; but the arguments adduced by Dr. Chapman in
the introductory part on the General Principles of Neuro-Therapeutics, have
a really practical bearing on the treatment of insanity. We are certainly
not prejudiced in favour of Dr. Chapman's opinions; on the contrary, we are
rather prejudiced against them; but we think it much to be desired that some
one of our readers, who has the opportunities, would give the application of heat
and cold to the spinal cord a fair and rigid trial in the treatment of the
different forms of insanity. To us it undoubtedly appears that the pathological
doctrines of Dr. Chapman are based on insufficient support, and too theoret-
ic; but it may well be that the practice is good, though the reasons given
for its success, ingenious as they assuredly are, are not altogether well founded.

2.—On the Wasting Diseases of Infants and Children. By Eustace Smith, M.D.
London: Physician-Extraordinary to his Majesty the King of the Belgians,