

OBITUARY.

JOHN B. CHAPIN, M.D.

IN the fulness of years, in quiet retirement after more than a half century's active professional toil, amid scenes endeared to him by early years of association and work, surrounded by his children, having the admiration and love of the members of his profession, and the affectionate gratitude of unnumbered persons to whom or to whose friends he had been physician, guide, counsellor and friend, Dr. Chapin died at his home in Canandaigua, N.Y., on January 17th, 1918.

"Life's work well done,
Life's race well run,
Then comes rest."

These words form the opening passage in an appreciative and sympathetic obituary notice of the late Dr. Chapin in the *American Journal of Insanity* for April last from the pen of Dr. Brush. It occupies some seventeen pages of the journal, and we regret that the space at our disposal will only admit of an abstract being given of what is really an interesting memoir of a member of our specialty on the other side of the Atlantic, who was a man of exceptional talent and administrative ability, of unflagging industry, lofty aims, and sterling character; a man who was held in affectionate regard by a large circle of friends, both professional and lay, who felt his death as nothing less than a genuine personal bereavement. The notice is not merely a memoir of the man, but it also embodies a sketch, brief no doubt but illuminative, of the progress of enlightened ideas and action in America as regards the care and treatment of the insane over a period of more than half a century.

On his father's side Dr. Chapin was of Puritan ancestry, being in the eighth generation from Samuel Chapin, who was born in Paignton, Devonshire, in 1598. This Samuel Chapin was one of the founders of Springfield, Massachusetts, and is commemorated by St. Gauden's beautiful statue in that city. His father was William Chapin, a man of artistic tastes and literary ability, and with a practical knowledge of the art of steel engraving. He early became interested in the education of the blind, and made this his life-work. He was for some time Superintendent of the Institution for the Blind at Columbus, Ohio, and subsequently Principal of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind in Philadelphia. His mother was Elizabeth H. Bassett, daughter of the Rev. John Bassett, D.D., a graduate of Columbia College, and the recipient of honorary degrees from several other colleges, minister of the Reformed Churches at Albany, at Bushwick, and at Kingston, all in New York State, and was partly of French, partly of Dutch origin.

The educational opportunities at Columbus not being satisfactory young Chapin was sent to Philadelphia, and entered the North-west Grammar School there. He took the A.B. degree in Williams College, Philadelphia, in 1850, and the same year, having decided to enter the medical profession, in accordance with the custom of the time he entered the office of Dr. John A. Swett, one of the physicians to the New York Hospital, as a student of medicine. Soon afterwards he obtained a substitute internship in the hospital, and in 1852, after examination, an appointment on the house staff. During this period he had attended medical lectures at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, from which he received the degree of M.D. in 1853. In 1854 he was made House-Physician in the New York Hospital, where he had a period of very active service, cholera and typhus fever being epidemic at that time, and yellow fever more or less prevalent. In April, 1852, while an interne at the hospital, he attended the seventh annual meeting of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, now the American Medico-Psychological Association.

Having no predilection for private practice, when he had completed his service in the hospital, Dr. Chapin had the intention of entering the medical service of the United States Army. Just about this time Dr. John P. Gray, Medical Superintendent of the New York State Lunatic Asylum, now the State Asylum at Utica, offered him an appointment as Assistant Physician at that institution. This being in accordance with his inclinations, he accepted, and in September, 1854, entered

upon the duties of the position. He had no previous training in psychiatry, but his training in general medicine enabled him to meet and surmount any difficulties resulting therefrom. The *American Journal of Insanity* was edited and published in this asylum, being printed by the patients under competent supervision, and in its editorial conduct in connection with the medical superintendent Dr. Chapin found congenial occupation.

The condition of the insane in the county almshouses was about this time occupying the attention of superintendents of the poor, and Dr. Chapin by request took up the work of procuring data and drawing up a report on the subject, which appeared as Senate Document No. 17, January, 1856, N.Y. State Legislature. Thus began his work for the better care of the chronic insane of New York, and the removal of all insane persons from the county almshouses, which culminated in the establishment of the Willard Asylum, now the Willard State Hospital, with which his name will be forever inseparably connected. The result of his investigations was that a Bill was introduced in the Senate in 1857 creating two additional asylums for the insane, and an asylum for the reception of insane convicts and criminals. The first provision failed owing to selfish contentions as to the location of the asylums, but a measure was passed creating an asylum for insane convicts at the State prison at Auburn.

In 1857 he resigned his position at Utica, and had an idea of starting practice in either Philadelphia or New York. When returning to Philadelphia he called on Dr. George Cook at Canandaigua, who proposed that he should join him in the conduct of Brigham Hall, a small private hospital for mental disorders which Dr. Cook had established at Canandaigua in 1856. The addition of a new wing was agreed upon, to be completed in 1860, and meantime Dr. Chapin was engaged in organising a new institution for the blind in St. Louis at his father's suggestion. This was, of course, only a temporary position, and in 1860 he resumed his professional work amongst the insane along with Dr. Cook at Canandaigua. His work and associates there were most congenial, and his mind turned there as to a pleasant haven of rest when he retired from hospital work in 1911.

After the failure in 1854 to effect any improvement in the condition of the insane in almshouses, nothing was done in this direction until in 1864 the State Medical Society inaugurated a movement on their behalf, into which Dr. Chapin heartily entered. A committee consisting of Dr. Charles A. Lee, Dr. S. D. Willard, and Dr. George Cook, in conjunction with members of the Legislature, formulated a Bill, which became law in April, 1864, directing the county judges to appoint a physician in each county to visit the almshouse and report upon its condition and that of the insane contained therein. The reports were made to Dr. Willard, Secretary of the State Society, and in April, 1865, a Bill was passed creating the new asylum, which was named the Willard Asylum in memory of Dr. Willard, who died just before its final passage. Its title was "An Act to Authorise the Establishment of a State Asylum for the Chronic Insane Poor." Sections of the law stating its purpose to remove the chronic insane from the almshouses to the new asylum, and making it mandatory to transfer and in future commit acute cases to the asylum at Utica, were mainly Dr. Chapin's own composition. He with two others were appointed Commissioners by Governor Fenton to locate and build the new asylum. This was designed on the villa system, the buildings being arranged in detached groups located convenient to the gardens and farm-barns, where the patients would be near the work in which they might be engaged. This was a radical departure from existing methods, and met with the usual adverse criticism. The plans also provided for an administration building with a main hospital group attached. For these Dr. Chapin was wholly responsible, and under his direction the buildings were located and completed, and for the first time in this country an institution was established with a thoroughly elastic plan, with a segregation rather than an aggregation of buildings, and with the distinct purpose in view of facilitating the occupation of patients upon the farm, and in other ways to aid in their own support. This was really the beginning of State care in New York. The principle of State care was engrafted in the Willard Act. It was intended to take and thereafter keep from county almshouses the insane poor.

The first Board of Trustees appointed under the Act elected Dr. Chapin medical superintendent of the new asylum—a position he had not sought or desired; nor did he accept it until after three months' consideration, when he did so on the

condition that the service was to continue during the period of organisation only, and not longer than three years. This, however, he did not adhere to, and remained in charge until 1884, when he was called to succeed Dr. Kirkbride at the Department for the Insane of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia. The invitation was twice declined; the roots had struck deep in Willard—there was a disinclination to abandon a work to which for many and obvious reasons he was deeply attached—but finally he became convinced that it was his duty to accept, and in September, 1884, he entered upon a service in Philadelphia which continued for twenty-seven years. He had at that time reached the age of fifty-five, was still active, and by no means lacking in enthusiasm and initiative.

Shortly after going to Philadelphia a fire occurred in the insane department of Blockley, the city almshouse and hospital. Several insane patients lost their lives, and much property damage was incurred. Blockley Asylum had long been condemned as a place for detention for the insane, and after the fire Dr. Chapin and Dr. Brush were asked to confer with the Board of Guardians of the Poor as to the best course to follow. At that conference Dr. Chapin outlined a plan which, if followed, would have given Philadelphia the honour of establishing the first psychiatric clinic in the United States. He pointed out to the Board the real situation, showing them that Blockley was badly overcrowded, that there were no adequate means of exercise in the open air, no provision for occupation, no proper nursing, and not sufficient medical care and supervision. He called attention to the very large annual admission-rate, small recovery-rate, and a large death-rate. He then dwelt on the need of training in psychiatry for young men, which then in this country in medical schools was wholly lacking, and the excellent opportunities at Blockley for the medical schools of the city. He said:

“Establish here a small hospital of from 100 to 200 beds, to which all cases coming under city care shall be sent at once. Concentrate here the medical work, to be done by a large, resident staff under a competent chief. Establish laboratories and all the requisites of a good hospital, and use the material for clinical instruction. A certain proportion of the cases admitted will need but a few weeks' care here, many others longer care, and many permanent care. Establish therefore in the country a colony farm, with its hospital, medical, and nursing staff, and its groups for permanent cases, who should be employed on the farm and in shops, and contribute to their own support.”

We have given here but a hasty outline of a lengthy conference, but it can be seen what an excellent scheme was laid before the Board, only, alas, to be rejected as too expensive! The burned wards were rebuilt, and the old routine went on, to the everlasting disgrace of the city of “Brotherly Love.”

Dr. Chapin received the honorary degree of LL.D. from Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, and from his *alma mater*, Williams College. He was a Fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and an honorary member of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland and the Société de Médecine Mentale de Belgique.

On December 1st, 1904, he was given a complimentary dinner at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, which was very largely attended, and which marked the completion of fifty years' work in hospitals for the insane. On this occasion he was presented with a life-size portrait of himself. He had at this time exceeded the Psalmist's limit of three score years and ten, and had more than once brought before the managers of the hospital the question of laying down his office; but it was the desire of the Board that he should continue at his post, and so for seven years longer he remained at the hospital in West Philadelphia, resigning and moving to a home which he had prepared in Canandaigua in the summer of 1911. His last attendance at a meeting of the Association was in 1913 at Niagara Falls, when he showed but little of the physical weakness of age and no perceptible diminution of his mental vigour. [In this feature of the maintenance of freshness and power of intellect a not unworthy comparison may be drawn between him and our own countryman, the late Dr. Henry Maudsley, who died within a week after Dr. Chapin's decease.—Eds. J.M.S.]

In 1858 he had married Miss Harriet E. Preston, and in her death in the summer of 1916 he met the greatest grief of his life, after more than fifty-eight years of the most intimate and loving association. After her departure he seemed more or less dazed. He could not adjust himself to the changed conditions—he had lost not

only his occupation in looking after her every wish, but he had lost his bearings in a measure.

His home life was made as cheerful as possible by the continued presence in turn of one of his three daughters. He went about the streets of the beautiful old town when the weather permitted. A day or two before his death he went down town with his daughter, and shortly after returning home complained of feeling ill. When a physician was sent for he said it was unnecessary, as he knew what was the matter—it was the breaking down at the end, and so it proved to be. He retained his old jocular manner almost to the close. His medical adviser called in a consultant, and together they gave their patient a thorough physical examination. As they went from the sick room to confer he remarked, "They'll go down stairs and give my disorder a name, but that will not change the result." The end came rapidly, with fortunately little suffering, and on the afternoon of Thursday, January 17th, 1918, in his eighty-ninth year, "in the comfort of a reasonable religious and holy hope," he fell asleep.

Dr. Chapin's great force arose from his self-control and his careful preparation for the work before him, which led him to study every problem presented with a feeling, as he expressed it, that the knowledge obtained would become available "somewhere, at some time." He was a man of most straightforward character, with no suspicion of indirectness in his methods. Of deep religious convictions, he carried his religion into his daily life, and made it a religion of service to God and his fellow men. In this he exemplified Whittier's dictum, "He who blesses most is blest."

As a great administrator, as a far-seeing philanthropist who accomplished more for his fellow men than can now be estimated, as a conscientious and well-trained physician, he has set his mark upon the history of his country and his profession.

"Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
The better fight."

ALFRED HUME GRIFFITH, M.D.Edin., D.P.H.Camb.

Superintendent and Medical Officer of Lingfield Colony for Epileptics, Surrey.

ALTHOUGH Dr. Alfred Hume Griffith was but a comparatively recent member of our Association, his many activities and his manifest zeal for the welfare of others demand that his premature death—which occurred on September 24th, and by which the medical profession has lost a member of the type it can most ill spare—should receive something more than its record in our obituary list. The second son of the late Reverend Edward Moule Griffith (B.A.Cantab.), he was born in Worcestershire in 1875, and received his preliminary education at Persse School, Cambridge, and at Totnes and Bedford Grammar Schools. The spirit of altruism and of the missionary—in the best sense of that word—strongly characterised even the earlier years of his manhood, and it was in order to fit himself in what seemed to him the best possible manner to be of service to others, and not at all from its lucrative possibilities, that he decided to enter the medical profession. With this intent he matriculated at Edinburgh in 1893, and graduated in Medicine in 1899. In the following year he married Mary, daughter of George Welchman, of Cul-lompton, and immediately thereafter they went out to Persia in order that he might take temporary charge of the medical mission work at Ispahan. In 1901 he was appointed to undertake pioneer work in Kerman, and it was there—during a year of strenuous work, reluctantly relinquished on account of his wife's ill-health—that by his personal influence and by the magnetic force of his character, fortified with his medical training, he was so successful in breaking down much opposition and hostile fanaticism—dangers which, in similar circumstances, have all too often cost the lives of those determined to face them. During part of 1902 and of the following year he assumed charge of the medical mission work at Gaza, and finally left Persia in 1903. After a short furlough, largely spent in study at Edinburgh and during which time he took his M.D. degree, Griffith offered himself for work in Palestine; he was appointed to the C.M.S. hospital at Nablus, and while pro-