

NORTHERN AND MIDLAND DIVISION.

THE AUTUMN MEETING of the Northern and Midland Division was held at the kind invitation of Lieut.-Col. Vincent, at the Wharnccliffe War Hospital, Sheffield, on Thursday, October 26th, 1916. Col. Vincent presided.

The following twenty-two members were present: Drs. M. A. Archdale, J. S. Bolton, A. I. Eades, S. Edgerley, J. A. Ewan, J. W. Geddes, D. Gillespie, R. W. D. Hewson, C. L. Hopkins, W. S. Kay, H. J. Mackenzie, H. D. MacPhail, S. R. Macphail, J. M. Mathieson, G. E. Mould, P. G. Mould, B. Pierce, W. Starkey, R. C. Stewart, J. B. Tighe, W. J. N. Vincent, T. S. Adair (*Hon. Sec.*), also a number of visitors, amongst whom were many of the officers of the Hospital.

A number of apologies for non-attendance were received.

(1) The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

(2) Drs. McDowall, Pierce, and Street were unanimously elected to form the Divisional Committee for the next twelve months.

(3) Col. VINCENT then gave a short sketch of the formation of the War Hospital. He pointed out what led up to the Asylum being taken over, and described generally the numerous and varied alterations that were necessitated, such as the conversion of rooms into operating theatres and rooms for X-ray work—the lighting of single rooms by gas, etc., increased bath accommodation, and the introduction of special baths for treatment. He described how the existing Asylum staff had been incorporated into the new work, and the numbers of staff, nursing and military, that were then required to work the hospital. After some general remarks on the arrangements for feeding, etc., he mentioned that they had a school of arts and crafts for painting, wood carving, etc., that entertainments were frequently given, and that a committee of ladies looked after comforts for the soldiers.

(4) Major MATHIESON then read an interesting paper in which he brought forward a brief *résumé* of some of the work done in connection with "nervous breakdowns occurring in soldiers on active service." He considered it very difficult to state any one definite cause for these breakdowns, but he thought one writer summed it up neatly in saying they were "the nervous effects of intense emotional strain involving the risk of death." The ætiological factors might be divided into three classes—psychical, physical, and chemical—of which the first is by far the most important. In the histories he had obtained, heredity appeared to play an important rôle as a predisposing agent. The chief physical causes were hard work, trauma, and wounds. The inhalation of gases, such as C.O., formed the main chemical cause. The symptomatology was found to be "extraordinarily varied and variable." After briefly reviewing the symptoms as they affected the various systems of the body, he mentioned that one fairly common symptom noted and incidentally a most troublesome one, was persistent vomiting after and even during meals—this condition might go on for many months. The prognosis tended to be in the direction of a slow recovery hampered by the continuance of the war. The treatment adopted was that of building up the general condition by means of "graduated exercises, tonics, Faradic baths, and massage," coupled with encouragement and sympathy and a removal of the inducing causes. Isolation of the cases, he considered, was certainly contra-indicated; they tended to improve more quickly when a number of similar cases were together.

Several members spoke on the subject afterwards.

(5) In the forenoon batches of the members were shown round the wards, etc., by the medical and surgical staff, and many cases of very great interest were pointed out. Special attention should be called to the dayrooms, which had been converted into operating theatres, and the very complete manner in which they had been equipped; and to a most interesting and valuable demonstration in the X-ray department, where the methods used for locating the exact position of a bullet or other foreign body were shown, and a large number of stereoscopic plates exhibiting bullets, etc., *in situ*.

A most interesting and enjoyable meeting was brought to a close with a hearty vote of thanks to Col. Vincent for his kindness and hospitality, and to the Hospital Staff for the trouble they had taken to make the visit so pleasant and instructive.