

## INSTRUCTION OF ATTENDANTS.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the important duties attendants have to perform, and anything which tends to help them to do them effectively deserves praise and support. Such an object is surely a very fitting one for our Association to assist and encourage, and the thanks of its members are due to those who must certainly have spent no inconsiderable time and labour over the *Handbook for the Instruction of Attendants on the Insane*, prepared by a sub-Committee of the Medico-Psychological Association, appointed at a meeting in Glasgow on the 21st February, 1884. It is a very praiseworthy endeavour to inform and raise the tone of attendants upon the insane. Opinions will differ, we cannot doubt, as to whether some parts of the instructions are desirable. In the main we think they will be approved. We are not quite sure ourselves whether it is necessary or wise to attempt to convey instructions in physiology, &c., to ordinary attendants. Will they be the better equipped for their duties for being told that the brain consists of grey and white matter and cement substance? Or that "the grey skin of the brain may be compared to a great city, the head-quarters of the telegraph system, and the grey clusters scattered through the white substance of the brain are the suburbs," and so on. We hardly see what is to be gained by superficial knowledge of this kind. However, we may be mistaken; and our criticisms, or rather misgivings, do not apply to the practical directions given. We certainly hope that this Handbook will be in the hands of all our attendants. We have only to add that copies can be readily obtained through Dr. Campbell Clark, Bothwell, Glasgow. It is understood that this issue is experimental, and suggestions, therefore, will be gladly received, with the view of making the Handbook supply what is felt to be a real want in most of our asylums.

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*Obituary.*

## DR. W. A. F. BROWNE.

We regret to have to record the death of Dr. Browne, of Dumfries, on the 2nd of March, in his 80th year. Death appears to have been sudden at last. Happily, notwithstanding his advanced age, his mind remained clear.

He received his education at the High School, Stirling, and studied medicine at the Edinburgh University. He became an ardent disciple of George Combe, and occasionally lectured for him. In his work, "What Asylums were, are, and ought to be," he expressed his strong conviction of the truth of Phrenology and its extreme practical importance to the physician of the insane. That he and others should commit themselves to the doctrines of Gall, Spurzheim and Combe, not only in their general outline, but in their organological details, is one of the problems relating to systems once tenaciously held, but now discredited, which might be discussed with interest, but this is not the occasion to pursue the subject further. Dr. Browne will be remembered for the good work he effected, first as Superintendent of the Montrose Asylum and subsequently of the Dumfries Royal Institution. The latter was opened in 1839, Dr. Browne being the first superintendent. He held this post till 1857, when, in consequence of the revelations of the terrible condition of the insane in Scotland, a Lunacy Board was instituted, and Dr. Browne was appointed a Commissioner. It is true he looked with no friendly eye upon the visit of Miss Dix to Scotland and the agitation which followed, but the experience he obtained in his new office soon convinced him that there was but too much ground for the outcry which had been raised. The work done by him and his colleague, Sir James Cox (also a disciple of Combe), in their capacity of commissioners, was soon effective in improving the state of the insane in their various domiciles. At the age of 65 Dr. Browne had the great misfortune to lose his eyesight through a carriage accident, and with this of course ceased his duties as Lunacy Commissioner. His cheerful resignation to his lot for fifteen years was as admirable as the assiduity which characterised his course when in the enjoyment of full