

Occasional Notes.

The Late Dr. Charles Arthur Mercier.

A fine personality and untiring intellect has gone to rest in the death of Dr. Charles Arthur Mercier, who was gathered in on September 2nd, 1919.

He occupied an unique position in medicine and philosophy. He had a mentality of absorbing interest, and one about which, no doubt, there will be many diverse views, but all who knew him will agree that his demise has created a vacancy in the intellectual world which can never be filled. There can be no second Mercier, and his loss will be keenly felt in more directions than one.

He was well known to us on the Editorial Staff of this Journal, to which he contributed freely, and it is fitting that our pages should contain an authoritative memoir of him. Sir Bryan Donkin has kindly undertaken this for our next number.

We shall be glad also to publish any recollections of him which Dr. Mercier's many friends and acquaintances may think fit to send us.

In the meantime, we republish in "Notes and News" the *Times* summary of his life and works.

Part II.—Reviews.

Sixty-seventh Annual Report of the Inspectors of Lunatics (Ireland) for the year ending December 31st, 1917.

The statistics of lunacy for the year 1917 show a very material diminution in the number of insane under care in Ireland. This is the third year in succession in which a reduction has been recorded, and not only this, but a progressively advancing reduction, the decreases for the three years 1915, 1916 and 1917 having been respectively 77, 337 and 874. Although caution in forming conclusions on merely statistical grounds has been frequently urged in these columns, it cannot be denied that the figures for the past several years have clearly shown, first, a tendency to fall, as indicated by a reduction in the rate of increase from what it was in previous years, and now for the past three years there has been an absolute and progressive decrease in numbers to the extent above stated, so that each successive year seems to bring us a more certain assurance that insanity in Ireland has passed its zenith and is on the downward grade. The proportion of insane under care per 100,000 of estimated population for the years 1915, 1916 and 1917 has been 579, 571 and 551 respectively—a reduction during the two years 1915–1917 of all but 5 *per cent.* The admissions have also fallen from 3,538 to 3,444 in 1917,—a drop of 94—the number