2. That the following hospitals be added to the list of fever hospitals recognised by the Board:
- a. Sheffield City Hospitals for Infectious Diseases.
 - b. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals for Infectious Diseases.
3. That the following asylums be added to the list of lunatic asylums recognised by the Board:
- a. South Yorkshire Lunatic Asylum, Wadsley, near Sheffield.
 - b. Northumberland County Asylum, Morpeth.

Mr. Pickering Pick was re-elected a member of the Committee of Management; and Mr. Henry Power was re-elected for one year a member of the Laboratories Committee.

The report received from the Laboratories Committee was approved and adopted:

1. *The Work on Diphtheria for the Metropolitan Asylums Board.*

(a) Examination of Material for Diagnosis.

Since June 15th 4,360 specimens have been examined and reported upon.

The average number of specimens examined per diem has been 55.89. The highest number examined on any one day was 158, and the lowest 9 specimens.

(b) The Preparation of Antitoxic Serum.

Since June 5th the Director has supplied 701 doses of antitoxic serum containing 4,000 units, and 1,358 doses containing 1,000 units, for the treatment of diphtheria in the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and all the demands have been fully met. This is the first quarter during which doses of 4,000 units have been supplied to the hospitals under the Board. During this period 4,162,000 units have been supplied, against 3,910,000 units last quarter, being an increase of 252,000 units, equal to 252 doses of 1,000 units each.

2. *Researches in Connection with the Grant from the Goldsmiths' Company.*

Dr. Sidney Martin having been appointed to the Professorship of Pathology at University College, has been unable to report any further researches. The Committee have made further grants of £50 to Dr. Cartwright Wood and £75 to Dr. T. G. Brodie, both of whom are continuing their investigations.

William Robert Nuttall Maloney was removed from being a Member of the College for adopting modes of practice held by the Council to be disgraceful in a professional respect.

The Bradshaw Lecture will be delivered by Mr. Reginald Harrison on Wednesday, December 9th, at 5 P.M. Subject: Observations on Vesical Stone and Prostatic Disorders.

Mr. Bryant was re-elected a member of the Council of University College, Bristol.

Permission was granted to Mr. H. J. Brooks to engrave the portrait of the Council for publication.

IRISH WORKHOUSE REFORM.

By W. R. MACDERMOTT, M.B.,

Poyntz Pass, Newry.

III.—THE ECONOMY OF DEATH.

THE first significant passage in the report of the Irish Local Government Board (1895) is the following, obviously intended to meet the criticism of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL: "The financial condition of many of the unions situated in the poorer districts, and the difficulty of levying increased rates therein, preclude the guardians of these unions from placing the workhouses and hospitals under their charge upon the same level as regards comfort and equipment as the modern hospitals with which they have been to their disadvantage so frequently contrasted. While, therefore, it is our invariable practice to use every effort to persuade Boards of Guardians to adopt any reforms or improvements which will tend to lengthen the lives of the aged poor and add to the comfort of the sick, we are bound in dealing with the guardians of the western unions to keep the difficulties they encounter in their financial administration constantly before us." (P. 6.)

This means that the Board has to exert pressure on the guardians generally to maintain the workhouses decently, a thing we know well, but that the pressure is tempered in respect of certain unions on the ground of want of means. If, however, such unions were able on this ground to obviate waste of life, the responsibility would devolve on the State, and the duty of saying so at once on the Local Government Board. But the plea, even if not illusory, is unfair.

As a matter of fact the poor western unions call for no excuse in particular; absolutely and never minding means the pauper is better treated in them than in many rich and lightly taxed unions. The value set on his life does not go by ability, but by opinion, feeling, and inclination. The Board might gather that from an elementary apprehension of the law it administers, from its own reports and every-day work. In law the pauper is an object of the discretionary charity of 159 little local bodies of employers. The chief

business of the Board is to temper the incalculable vagaries of that discretion. It is the one element in the system that mitigates its cruel absurdity, that renders the thing at all tolerable, and we would deprecate words which are not consonant with its function.

Keeping to what immediately concerns the actual necessities of the workhouse pauper, his actual maintenance, we can best see the arbitrary discretion on which his life is made to depend. For the food and necessities of each pauper one union, Carlow, spends 7d. a day; another, Stranorlar, 2½d., and we have everything between these figures. This discretion is purely arbitrary; it does not follow ability, the price of food, which indeed varies little from place to place, or the extent to which the workhouse is a hospital. In Londonderry a union with a valuation of £171,549 and a rate for poor relief of only 5½d. the figure is 3½d. For the whole of Connaught it is 5d.; in no single western union, however poor, is it what it stands at in the rich unions of north-eastern Ulster, although their workhouses serve, I believe, more as hospitals than anywhere else. Pressure from the Local Government Board and workhouse reform is much more necessary in Ulster than in any of the western unions, however poor.

This may give an idea of the deadly caprice of the thing our local government seek to leave unbridled. We have the pauper, an aged or disabled labourer, left, as regards his very life, to little bodies of farmer employers, and we see how they act even under the restraint of the Local Government Board. *Il faut que chacun soit servi à sa mode*; the mind of one is sevenpence, of another twopence three farthings.

But the Poor-law "economist" is even more inconsequent. He has already the economy of death; it might satisfy him. On the average of twenty years, of 8 Irishmen that die 1 dies and is buried as a workhouse pauper. The workhouse administration besides buries the 56,619 outdoor paupers—I admit not at quite so furious a pace. The service rendered is, however, to only half the Irish population—the labourers; 1 Irish labourer out of every 4 is thus got rid of in disability and death, to the benefit of his employer, who, moreover, pays only a fraction of the cost. We have nothing more economical to propose, with the reservation that the meaning of the term economy is not ours.

If the enormous death-rate of the workhouse was reduced, all the nice little plans of economy I am familiar with would go for nothing. More efficient treatment of the sick in theory would shorten the time they are a public burden, but practically the present system shortens it far more effectively. If the 10,000 to 13,000 deaths which occur annually in the workhouses were reduced to 2,500, that would still be treble the outside rate, but the consequent accumulation of paupers would vastly increase the expenditure for maintenance, even if the maintenance was no better. But again, if our economist will only condescend to dry figures he will find that reduction of expenditure, to be anything worth his being called an economist in this direction, must take place in the actual maintenance and personal service of the pauper. If then the threepenny-halfpenny unions satisfy him, all he can do is to bring down the sevenpenny ones to the lower level. It would be an unsatisfactory partial result, for which his thanks would be small; Carlow would laugh at him and say that he was for infringing the sacred principle of local self-government, while Londonderry would be grateful only if shown how to do the thing under 3½d.

The economy of our discretionary administrative charity is simply an economy of death in the interest of a few employers in whom the administration is vested. The speedy death of the sick and worn-out labourer, the rapid clearing away of the natural and necessary encumbrances of labour is accomplished in our workhouses in a way that leaves little to be desired except the task of truthful description and definition calculated to reach the public mind and conscience.

THE annual meeting of the Anglo-American Continental Medical Society took place in Paris on November 11th. Among those who attended were Dr. the Hon. Alan Herbert (President), Dr. Faure-Miller, Dr. Halstead Boyland, Dr. Bull, Dr. Austin, Dr. Barnard, Dr. Chamberlain, Dr. Hein, Dr. Rolland Faure-Miller, etc. Seventeen new members were elected. In the evening the members dined together.