

of the most valuable manuscripts and books which it is possible to accumulate for those who desire to explore the antiquities of Celtic literature and Celtic history." The Prime Minister went on to point out that it was a patriotic duty to assist the National Library and the National Museum by "adding to the treasures of which these great national institutions are to be the storehouse."

The National Library of Wales was founded by Royal Charter granted by H.M. the King in 1907, and entered upon the first stage of its existence on Jan. 1st of the present year in a temporary building at Aberystwyth, a building admirably adapted for the storing and cataloguing of the collections pending the removal to the permanent building which will be erected on a magnificent site of four acres close to the town of Aberystwyth, generously given for the purpose by the Right Hon. Baron Rendel. A large number of valuable gifts of books, manuscripts, prints, and drawings has already been made to form the nucleus of the library, which at this moment contains the finest collection of Welsh MSS. in existence, including the famous Hengwrt and Peniarth MSS.; the collection of MSS. and early Welsh books made by Moses Williams, afterwards the property of the Earls of Macclesfield; and a number of MSS. derived from other collections. The Hengwrt Library includes not only the oldest texts of Romance literature, but also one of the most valuable MSS. of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and other MSS. of great importance. The number of printed books already in the library is nearly 50,000. We need, however, very many books in Celtic literature and, even more, works of general reference, standard books in English and other languages, sets of transactions of literary, historical, and scientific societies, sets of the great periodicals, dictionaries, encyclopædias, and many other books of various kinds which we have no funds to acquire.

The Charter provides for the circulation of duplicate books for educational and research purposes, and this will be an important feature of the work of the library. The case of Wales is exceptional. Its University consists of three national colleges situated at Aberystwyth, Bangor, and Cardiff, while there are other important centres of educational activity, all urgently in need of the aid which it is hoped the National Library will be able to give to the higher branches of study. I wish particularly to state that while the Celtic side of the library must be its strongest feature, yet the object for which it was founded is much wider. It is to be a national library in the best sense, designed to afford in Wales that opportunity and encouragement for study and research hitherto wanting, and the lack of which has placed Wales at a disadvantage as compared with the other divisions of the United Kingdom and with other countries. England, Scotland, and Ireland enjoy great privileges under the Copyright Act which Wales has not received, and can hardly now expect to receive. Three libraries in England and one each in Scotland and Ireland are entitled to one free copy of every book published in the British Islands, while five or six other libraries which formerly had the same privilege now receive an annual grant from the public funds in lieu of it.

It is contemplated to proceed, as soon as circumstances will permit, with the erection of permanent buildings, and plans have been provisionally adopted. A sum of £21,000 has been subscribed towards the building fund. To erect a suitable and worthy building will cost a far larger sum. The contributors to the fund include residents in all parts of Wales and Monmouthshire, and many residing in London and elsewhere, including Welshmen abroad. The fund is a truly national one, and is made up of sums ranging from £5000 to 3d. The quarrymen of Festiniog and neighbourhood, for instance, made up a list of 744 names for a contribution of £70 18s., while the teachers of Cardiganshire agreed to make up £100. In Carmarthen, Swansea, Cardigan, Aberayron, and other centres, large and small, committees were formed to collect subscriptions. The contributors to the fund fully represent the Welsh people and their enthusiasm for the National Library is clearly shown. The library has also received gifts from kindred institutions. The British Museum, the Library of Congress at Washington, the Smithsonian Institution, the Corporation of London, the John Rylands Library, Manchester, the National Library of Ireland, and the principal public libraries have each sent sets of their publications,

while the University of Oxford has made a grant of publications of the Clarendon Press. Several eminent scholars at home and abroad have also sent gifts of books, in many cases spontaneously, and with a graciousness which greatly enhances the value of their gifts.

The library is managed by a court of governors and a council, to which bodies members are nominated by H.M. Privy Council, by the county and borough councils of Wales and Monmouthshire, the University of Wales, and the three University Colleges. The maintenance is provided by a grant in aid from H.M. Treasury, which at present only provides for bare working expenses. No sum for purchasing the large number of necessary books is at present available.

I venture to ask those of your readers who feel an interest in this effort to bring within the reach of the residents in Wales the advantages which a National Library offers to make gifts of books or money for the book fund and donations to the building fund.

Communications may be addressed to me at the National Library, Aberystwyth.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN WILLIAMS, President.

Plâs, Llanstephan, Carmarthen, July 12th, 1909.

METHODS OF BARBARISM IN ITALIAN HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The two events denounced in your columns under this title by a correspondent in Rome as having taken place in our hospitals—namely, the expulsion of a doctor from one of them on account of "moral turpitude" and of a sister from the other—are unfortunately true, but they took place with an interval of several years between them and have obviously been brought together in order to disparage our hospital institutions. I may add that the guilty persons received prompt and exemplary punishment. The other *irregularities*, of which, according to your correspondent, the two facts mentioned serve as a small demonstration, are not known to us, and we invite him to expound them in detail and to report concrete facts. Thirdly, the neglect of dying people on the part of sisters and nurses has never been shown to exist either in the Policlinico or in the other Roman hospitals. Fourthly, the confidence of the Roman public in the Policlinico and the other hospitals not only is not shaken but is steadily increasing, as is shown by the constantly rising number of patients and the fact that among these are many belonging to the leisured classes. Fifthly, our medical *personnel* is not inferior to that of other hospitals in other countries, and if the actual staff of assistants has not so far attained perfection, still, it has not all the faults attributed to it by your correspondent, while it is undeniable that it is improving steadily owing to carefully considered recruiting and a wider development of nursing schools. So much for the sake of truth. Then, as regards the close of your correspondent's letter, up to the present time we are really quite unaware of having any Anglo-American protectorate over our hospitals. The Roman hospitals live on their own incomes and on direct subsidies from the State, therefore if there is a limit to Anglo-American loyalty and liberality it is no concern of ours. In the hope that you will publish these few remarks of mine in your widely-read paper,

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Professor AGOSTINO CARDUCI,

President, &c.

Rome.

* * We publish this letter with pleasure, but it seems to have escaped Professor Carduci's attention that our correspondent was quoting the Italian journals, and gives the reference to much of what he reports as appearing in the *Tribuna*.—ED. L.

THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION IN REGARD TO ANÆSTHETICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The present situation with regard to this question requires the careful attention of the medical profession, and the remarks which follow have no relation whatever to the practice of anæsthetics as a specialty, but apply to the