

A "COLONY" FOR EPILEPTICS AND IMBECILES IN LANCASHIRE.

The Joint Asylum Committee of the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians have applied to the Local Government Board for sanction to the purchase of an estate near Chorley, known as the Anderton Hall estate, for the purpose of providing an asylum on the "colony" system for imbeciles and epileptics.

The committee recently appointed two of their number, Dr. Rhodes and Mr. Alderman McDougall, a deputation to visit Belgium, France, and Germany. These two gentlemen visited a large number of asylums, and had come to the conclusion, reinforced by the findings of their committee, that an asylum on the "colony" system was required. The Anderton Hall estate was found to be the most suitable for this purpose. It is pleasantly situated on a slope opposite Rivington Pike, above the Rivington reservoir. It contains 237 acres, could be purchased for £19,000, and was not more than twenty miles from the two unions; two railway stations were easily accessible from it.

The committee proposed that the asylum should be occupied by epileptics and imbeciles of the harmless class, of whom they had at present about 600 in the workhouses alone. The asylum would consist of a number of villas put up on different parts of the estate, and they would be placed away from the Rivington reservoir, so that if there were any surface drainage it would run in an opposite direction. Further, the committee proposed to lay down an intercepting sewer which would absolutely stop any possibility of contamination of the reservoir water.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The coal filter briefly alluded to in the October number of the JOURNAL was first brought into prominence by Mr. Joseph Garfield, A.M.I.C.E., engineer of the Wolverhampton Sewage Outfall Works, who recommends that it should be constructed as follows:

The effluent drain-pipes are covered with a 6-inch layer of coal, about half-inch cubes in size. This layer is blinded with a little quarter-inch cube coal, above this comes a layer of twelve inches of coal, one-eighth inch cubes, and next a layer, three feet deep, of one-sixteenth cubes. The top course is a 6-inch layer of coal dust, which will pass a three-sixteenth inch mesh. This gives a total depth of five feet, and when circumstances will permit this is the minimum depth that should be used. It is unnecessary to have the filter tanks watertight, the effluent pipes being always open.

The sludge should be removed by precipitation or otherwise before the sewage is passed on to the filter. Charging the filter is effected by means of narrow metallic distributing channels placed on the surface at distances of about one foot apart. The sewage is turned on for twelve hours at the rate of about 200 gallons per square yard, and thus the filter works for twelve hours and rests a corresponding period in each day. Dr. Fosbroke, the county medical officer for Worcestershire, from whose report to his council (1) the foregoing description of the filter and its method of working has been taken, states that his "experience of the coal filter certainly brings me in full accord with the county medical officer for Staffordshire when he says 'the results obtained from these filters are highly satisfactory,' (and) on experimental data 'the preference must be given to the coal filter.'" In a lecture delivered by Dr. Reid, the county medical officer for Staffordshire, before the members of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association, he contrasts the results of experiments made with three descriptions of filters: (1) one composed of sand and gravel, specially constructed on Lowcock's principle; (2) a filter made up of coke breeze; and (3) a Garfield coal filter, in which the superiority of the last-named filter was considered to be satisfactorily demonstrated; and a table is given showing that while the Lowcock filter, though inferior to the Garfield, was still fairly satisfactory, the coke breeze filter was, to all intents and purposes, useless. "Coal," says Dr. Reid, "as a filtering medium is superior to gravel, and far superior to coke breeze;" and again, with reference to the Exeter septic tank method of purification, "from the first I looked upon this method with disfavour—notwithstanding the unanimity with