

application of heat and cold to the head had been followed by benefit. Dr. Robertson showed the original apparatus for this purpose he had devised and shown at a former meeting of the Association here some sixteen years ago.

Dr. DODDS read clinical notes on "A Case of Epilepsy."

Dr. WICKHAM said that he had tried everything that was recognized as a remedy in the treatment of epilepsy with very different results in different cases. He had found nitrite of amyl of service in one case, and in another it was a complete failure.

Dr. YELLOWLEES asked if anyone had tried the plan of bleeding during a succession of fits as advocated lately by Dr. Wallis?

Dr. URQUHART had bled a patient quite lately. He was admitted labouring under alcoholic insanity, with an enlarged liver and an engorged circulation. Shortly after his arrival he had a succession of epileptic fits, which were promptly stopped by venesection to six ounces. Unfortunately he developed double pneumonia some time after and died.

Dr. YELLOWLEES showed a skull-cap with very great and irregular thickening in its anterior half. The bony deposit occurred in rounded wavy protuberances, and the thickness of the cranial vault at two of these was  $\frac{1}{4}$ ths of an inch. A similar condition, though not so well marked, is figured in Dr. Clouston's book. Such thickening of the bone is usually regarded as compensatory for loss of brain substance, and it is supposed to occur only with prolonged dementia. In this case the patient was not demented, but exceptionally intelligent. She died from abdominal disease at the age of 57 in her second attack of melancholia, the previous attack having been climacteric. There was no paralysis of any kind, and although the convolutions were flattened by the bony growths, there was no disintegration or manifest wasting of brain substance.

The members dined together at the Bath Hotel after the meeting.

The next business-meeting of Scottish Members will be held on the second Thursday of November.

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#### THE LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

The following has been addressed by the Honorary Secretary of the Medico-Psychological Association on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee, to the Lord Chancellor:—

To the Right Honble. the Lord Chancellor.

MY LORD,—I am instructed by the Parliamentary Committee of the above Medico-Psychological Association respectfully to submit for your consideration their views with regard to some of the provisions in the Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (1887).

The most important is the provision in Clause 3, s-s. 9 (p. 4, l. 7, *et seq.*), that notice of petition be given to the alleged lunatic by the magistrate, &c. This procedure the Committee is of opinion would be most inimical to the welfare of the insane, and would lead in some cases to the suicide of the patient, in others would induce homicidal assaults, and in many would enable the lunatic to escape from the jurisdiction of the magistrate.

The extent of the jurisdiction of the various magistrates, &c., and their power to control an alleged lunatic under petition, would appear to require definition, as well as the power of friends to exercise control over an alleged lunatic during the consideration of a petition.

This sub-section (Clause 3, s-s. 7) appears to the Committee to reduce the question of insanity to a legal prosecution, in which the relative or friend is the prosecutor, the sick man is the defendant or criminal, and the magistrate is the judge, in the place of being the guardian of the patient's interest.

This treatment of bodily infirmity as criminality would greatly obstruct and delay the prompt and early treatment of the diseased condition of which insanity is a symptom, and would lead to evasions of the law, neglect of treatment, more frequent suicides, and other deplorable results.

The power given to the magistrate of postponing the petition in any doubtful case would appear to give every necessary protection to the alleged insane person.

If this clause is allowed to stand, some provision should be made for the care of patients in the interval between petition and examination, as well as during the postponement of a petition, and for defining the status of the alleged lunatic during such intervals.

This Committee beg to reiterate their objection to the power given to the magistrate to interview the sick person as unnecessary and undesirable.

Cases of insanity after child-birth may be taken as examples.

This provision would seem to indicate to the magistrate that his duty consisted in determining the question of the presence or absence of disease, or of determining whether a certain line of treatment should or should not be adopted, and it is probable that if, consequent on such a decision, a suicide or homicide occurred, public opinion would be strongly expressed on the decision of a medical question by a legal authority.

The following points are also suggested for your lordship's consideration:—

Clause 3, s-s. 7 (p. 3, l. 30).—The exclusion of the signatory of an urgency certificate from signing a certificate on the subsequent petition, is objected to. It is not in accord with the Scotch practice from which this is copied. It would involve obtaining the services of three medical men, difficult in country places.

Clause 3, s-s. 15.—A penalty for the infringement of this clause would appear to be desirable.

Clause 3, s-s. 19.—Does 'delivered' include 'by post'?

Clause 3, s-s. 8.—Does this prevent consultation after one certificate has been signed?

Clause 4, s-s. 6.—By whom is the copy of urgency order to be sent?

Clause 8, s-s. 3 (p. 11, l. 18).—The member of the Managing Committee may certify for any other asylum: the omission of this clause is suggested.

Clause 27.—Protest is made against the houses of medical persons being singled out, and the opinion is expressed that this clause would greatly militate against the welfare of the patients, who are specially benefited by this plan of treatment.

The clauses (45 *et seq.*) relating to hospitals are specially recommended to your lordship for consideration, as in many ways militating against the welfare of these institutions.

Clause 53.—The power given to the Lunacy Commission, compulsorily to close hospitals, is specially commended to your lordship's attention, and it is suggested that such closure be only effected by the Home Secretary after special inquiry, on a report from the Commission.

The Committee ventures to suggest that a clause should be introduced to facilitate the removal of patients from Hospitals and Licensed Houses to County Asylums, which at present is attended with great difficulties. This might be met by giving power to the Superintendents of these institutions, to give notice to the relieving officer of the district in which the patient's friends reside, on which the relieving officer should act within seven days, as if the patient were resident in the district.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

H. RAYNER

Hon. Gen Sec.

Hanwell, 18th February, 1887.

On the order for the third reading of this Bill, (March 17).

The LORD CHANCELLOR said he intended to move the insertion of a new clause, the general effect of which was the result of an understanding which had been arrived at between himself and other noble and learned lords. He should do no more than ask their lordships to adopt the clause. He could not accept the amendment of which Lord Selborne had given notice.

On the question "That this Bill do pass,"

The LORD CHANCELLOR moved the insertion of the following clause:—

Page 8, after Clause 4, add a new clause:

1. When a person has been received as a lunatic in an asylum, hospital, or licensed house, or as a single patient, under an order of a judge of county courts, magistrate, or justice, without having been personally seen or examined by such judge, magistrate, or justice, the person shall (subject as hereinafter mentioned) have the right to be taken before or visited by a judge, magistrate, or justice, other than the judge, magistrate, or justice under whose order he has been received, except so far as the medical superintendent of the asylum or hospital, or the medical proprietor or attendant of the house, or the medical attendant of the single patient, within twenty-four hours after his reception, in a certificate signed and sent to the Commissioners (in the Form 3c in the First Schedule), shall state that the exercise of such right would be prejudicial to the person so received.

2. Subject to any such certificate, the superintendent or proprietor of the asylum, hospital, or house, or the person having charge of the single patient, shall, within twenty-four hours after reception, give to the person so received as a lunatic a notice in writing, in the Form 3b in the First Schedule, and shall ascertain whether he desires to exercise such right as aforesaid; and if he, within seven days after his reception, expresses his desire to exercise the right, such superintendent, proprietor, or person shall procure him to sign a notice in the Form 3c in the First Schedule, and shall forthwith transmit it by post in a registered letter to the judge, magistrate, or justice, who shall thereupon arrange, as soon as conveniently may be, either to visit the person giving the notice, or to have him brought before him by the superintendent, proprietor, or person as the judge, magistrate, or justice may think fit. After any such personal interview, the judge, magistrate, or justice shall send by post to the Commissioners a report thereupon, and the Commissioners shall take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to the report.

3. For the purposes of this section, the notice shall be sent to, and the jurisdiction exercised by, any judge, magistrate, or justice, other than the judge, magistrate, or justice who made the order for reception, then present within the petty sessional division or borough where the person received is, who shall be in such notice named by the person desiring the interview, or if no judge, magistrate, or justice is so named, any justice who shall, under arrangements which shall be for that purpose from time to time made amongst themselves by the justices in such division or borough, undertake such jurisdiction; and the notice shall, in such last-mentioned case, be sent to the justices' clerk of such division or borough for transmission to the justice.

4. The judge, magistrate, or justice shall be entitled, if he desires so to do, before making his report, to see the medical certificates and any other documents upon the consideration of which the order for reception was made.

5. If any superintendent of an asylum or hospital, or any superintendent or proprietor of a licensed house, or any person having charge of a single patient, omits to perform any duty imposed upon him by this section, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanour.

The Earl of SELBORNE moved to omit from sub-section 3 (lines 2 and 3) the words "any judge, magistrate, or justice other than." The effect of the amendment was to require the magistrate who had signed the order for the detention of an alleged lunatic to perform the subsequent duty of examination.

On a division the Earl of Selborne's amendment was negatived by 40 to 22.

Lord HERSCHELL took exception to that part of the Bill which provided that the magistrate who should be required to make the examination should be selected by the alleged lunatic himself. He was of opinion that the county court judge, magistrate, or justice should be selected by the justices of the county or borough. He moved the insertion of words modifying the measure in this sense.

The LORD CHANCELLOR assented to the amendment on the understanding that Lord Herschell had satisfied himself that the alteration could be effected without injuring the machinery of the Bill.

The amendment was agreed to.

Several verbal amendments were agreed to, and the Bill passed.