

In the other case a compromise, which so often occurs in these Probate cases, prevented any point of medical or legal interest being decided. It was the case of *Sprake v. Day*. In this case again a man who undoubtedly was insane, suffering from general progressive dementia, associated with age, made a will in June, was markedly demented in July, and died in the autumn, and yet because the provisions of the will were not unreasonable, it seems pretty certain that if a compromise had not been made the will would have been upheld.

#### ATTENDANT KILLED BY PATIENT AT THE CANE HILL ASYLUM.

An inquest was held on the 27th September last on an attendant named Finch, who had died from injuries of the head received in attempting to overpower a patient who had climbed on to the roof of the asylum, from an airing court, by means of a stack pipe. Finch voluntarily ascended to the roof and was unfortunately unhelmeted by a first blow from the patient, who was armed with a piece of board, a second blow inflicting the fatal injuries.

This occurrence emphasises the desirability of rendering pipes in such situations unclimbable, and suggests the desirability of placing on record the various plans which have been adopted under similar circumstances to retrieve the patient.

The use of the fire-hose was not resorted to in this case from fear of washing the patient off, although this has often been successful. In one recent case, the patient, left to himself, came down voluntarily, and in another a bribe of beer and tobacco proved efficacious.

This case was quoted in the October number of the Journal as an example of the necessity of obtaining power, by the County Councils, to make grants to the wives and children of attendants losing their lives in the performance of duty.

#### CONFERENCE AT WAKEFIELD ON THE CARE OF HARMLESS LUNATICS.

A conference between the members of the General Asylums Committee of the West Riding County Council and representatives of Poor Law Unions within the Riding, was held on November 11th, at the Town Hall, Wakefield, for the purpose of considering the best means of providing for harmless pauper lunatics. The alternative suggestions appear to have been: (1) Increasing the accommodation of existing asylum; (2) building a new asylum "of a simple and homely character" for patients of this class; (3) providing accommodation in workhouses. A fourth possible alternative, that of boarding-out such patients, does not appear to have been mentioned. No definite conclusion was arrived at. The majority of the guardians who took part in the discussion were opposed to the return of patients from asylums to workhouses.

Whatever course may be taken, we trust that the proposal for increasing the accommodation of the existing asylums will not be adopted. They are already quite large enough, and the policy of enlarging the number of patients in an asylum beyond that for which it was originally built is a bad one.

#### THE BENCH AND LUNACY CASES.

The annexed extract from the *Sussex Daily News* is worthy of the attention of those concerned with the admission of patients to asylums:—"At the close of the ordinary business before the Bench Mr. Parsons, Clerk to the Thakeham Board of Guardians, said he had been directed by his Board to make application respecting the decision of the Bench in regard to lunacy cases. The Board regretted that the Bench had come to the decision that in future any appointments with Justices in regard to such cases should be made through their Clerk, so that he could attend. He was directed to ask the Bench to reconsider the matter.—Mr. West said without the Magistrates' Clerk in attendance it put the Magistrates in an extremely inconvenient position, having to act without any advice. He had himself acted without the Magistrates' Clerk very much against his will, but the