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

Bench thought in arriving at the conclusion they did that that ought not to be.—Mr. Parsons said that as regarded the expense the Magistrates knew too well the great cost which had to be incurred at the present time in sending cases to all parts of England, and of course if the proceedings passed through the hands of the Court certain fees which would be incurred would increase the present great cost.—The Chairman said he should not take a lunacy case without the Clerk.—Mr. Parsons asked if the Magistrates would consider the matter again?—Mr. Flowers said Mr. Parsons, from what he had heard, could gauge the feelings of the Magistrates, whereupon Mr. Parsons withdrew."

It will be noticed that the protest against increased expense being incurred in the proceedings before justices in connection with lunacy cases comes from a Board of Guardians, but presumably the Sussex justices intend their decision as to the attendance of the Clerk to apply to private cases as well as pauper, and thus organised delay and expense will be put in the way of petitioners applying for reception orders. We cannot think that it was ever intended that the Lunacy Act of 1890 should be interpreted thus, though possibly the action of the justices may be within the wording of the Act. It would be desirable to have an explanation from someone with authority to give it as to what is meant by sec. 4, sub-sec. 2, which states, "The order shall be obtained upon a *private* application," etc. Sec. 6, sub-sec. 3, further states: "The petition shall be considered in *private*."

We are afraid, however, that the justices can take refuge behind sec. 9, sub-sec. 2, which enacts that the judicial authority "shall be assisted, if he so requires, by the same officers" as if he were acting in the exercise of his ordinary jurisdiction, and that no protest, therefore, is of any use. That there is a tendency in some justices to inflict unnecessary expense on the relatives of a patient may be illustrated by a recent case, in which, although the justice was satisfied with the *bonâ-fides* of the certifying medical man, and although he saw the patient and observed that she was acting unreasonably, yet he refused to make a reception order until his own medical man was called in, who signed a third certificate, *for which the relatives of the patient paid a fee of one guinea.*

PENSION SCHEME OF THE LANCASHIRE ASYLUM BOARD.

A Committee of this Board, appointed to consider the pension question, has drawn up a report, which has recently been adopted at a general meeting of the Board.

The age limit of fifty-five is adopted, but pensions at an earlier age may be given under special circumstances, and the rule of compulsory resignation at sixty is similarly elastic.

The scale of pension may be varied from one-third of the salary alone to the full two-thirds of the salary and emoluments, the actual pension within these limits being left to the recommendation of the Asylum Committee concerned.

If this scheme is applied in a liberal spirit it will be hailed with satisfaction, but some experience of its working will be required before expressing any strong opinion in regard to it.

It is certainly an improvement on the no pension scheme, with which Lancashire was threatened.

CORRESPONDENCE.

From Dr. Jules Morel, Ghent.

In reference to the discussion on "Forcible Feeding," published in the *Journal of Mental Science* in October, I desire to communicate the method which I have used here for many years.

Having exhausted all means of persuasion, I make a signal to the attendants, who are trained to place the patient in bed in a horizontal position. One holds the knees firmly to the mattress, another, standing at the top of the bedstead, fixes the head between his hands. A third and fourth attendant, stationed on each side, hold the shoulders and forearms. The patient having been thus dealt with, without a word passing, the physician pours the liquid food at 98° Fahr. down either nostril, little by little, by means of a small spoon.