

Obituary.

DR. W. G. METCALF.

We were not able to record in our last number the melancholy death of Dr. Metcalf, of the Kingston Asylum, Ontario, which occurred on the 16th of August last. We now proceed to give some particulars of the tragedy. No words can adequately express our regret for the sad event and our sympathy with the survivors who mourn his loss at the early age of 38. We can speak from personal knowledge of the satisfactory condition of the asylum of which he was superintendent, and where he was beloved by his colleagues and by the patients to whose interests he devoted himself.

It appears that on the 13th of August Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Clarke, the Assistant Medical Officer, were making their usual morning visit. They had just entered the new separate building, which has already been described in this Journal,* when a male patient named Maloney, who stood in the corridor, suddenly turned round and assaulted Dr. Metcalf. He had possessed himself of a knife,† and stabbed his victim in the abdomen. When removed from the ward, Dr. Metcalf was found to be suffering from a wound in the back of the thigh and another, two or three inches long, across the abdomen, from which the intestines protruded, but were not wounded. Peritonitis, however, supervened, and Dr. Metcalf died from this cause and from shock on the 16th August, 1885.

The patient Maloney had been sent to the asylum in September, 1884, having previously been in gaol as an incendiary. When awaiting his trial he is said to have acted very strangely, refusing to eat and suspecting poison. A Board of Examination, consisting of the gaol surgeon, Dr. Oliver, Dr. Sullivan, and a judge, gave their opinion in a report, Dr. Sullivan pronouncing the prisoner perfectly sane, while Dr. Oliver held that he was insane and dangerous, while the judge certified that he was weak in body and mind and unfit to take care of himself. He was not, however, sent at first to an asylum, but remained for trial at the Assizes in September, 1884, where he was indicted, but was not tried for the offence, as the jury found him insane, upon which he was transferred to the Kingston Asylum. We observe that popular feeling, indignant in consequence of the cruel fate of Dr. Metcalf, clamoured for the execution of Maloney as a responsible criminal. We are assured, however, on the best authority, that he is unquestionably a lunatic.

The funeral of Dr. Metcalf took place at Uxbridge, and was largely attended, the pall-bearers being Dr. Workman, of Toronto; Dr. Daniel Clark, of the Toronto Asylum, and Drs. Bucke and Burgess, of the London Asylum, Ontario, where the deceased physician was formerly an assistant medical officer; Dr. Covertton, of Toronto; Professor Osler, of Philadelphia; and Dr. O'Reilly, Inspector of Asylums.

Dr. Clarke, Dr. Metcalf's brother-in-law, has been promoted from the post of Assistant to that of Medical Superintendent. The Board of Management, while deploring the loss they have sustained, may congratulate themselves on having secured the services of so efficient and kind-hearted a successor. He is the son of the Hon. Charles Clarke, the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature.

PROSPER LUCAS, M.D.

The well-known author of the classical work on Heredity, entitled "*Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'hérédité naturelle dans les états de santé et de maladie du système nerveux*," died recently, at the age of 77, at Mennecey (Seine-et-Oise). M. Lucas was formerly physician at the Bicêtre and the Asylum of Sainte Anne, where we had the pleasure of meeting him in 1878.

* January, 1885.

† It is stated that the knife was an improvised one, the blade, which was three inches long, having been fixed into a handle.