

1890, 731; of whom 59 were sent to other asylums. The question arose, were they to erect, as the Lunacy Commissioners recommended, an auxiliary asylum in the district, or were they to erect one in another part of the county? When the asylum was built it cost £54,071, including land, and since then £11,150 had been expended in enlargements. Colonel Gordon was in favour of another asylum being built in the Holland division of the county, so that the people of that district might manage their own lunatics in the locality where their friends would be able to visit them. An amendment was proposed by Mr. Dickenson to the effect that the House Committee be appointed to consider and report what should be done to increase the accommodation for the patients belonging to the county. This amendment was carried. We hope that the present county asylum will not be increased in size, and that if another institution is necessary, after making full use of workhouses for chronic cases, and boarding-out harmless patients at a fair remuneration to the cottagers wherever this is practicable, it will be erected in a distant part of the county. We also hope that someone will be found to take sufficient interest in the question whether the liability to become insane in Lincolnshire has really increased, to work out the statistics of lunacy in a careful manner.

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*Mechanical Restraint.*

The distinct legalization of mechanical restraint, which hitherto has belonged to the unwritten law, is of sufficient historical importance to call for the record of the fact in this Journal. By many this action on the part of our Legislature will be regarded as retrogressive, and would no doubt have caused great pain to Dr. Conolly had he been still living.

It will be remembered that by Sub-Section 6 of Section 40 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, it was enacted that "in the application of this section mechanical means shall be such instruments and appliances as the Commissioners may, by regulations to be made from time to time, determine." The Lord Chancellor, acting doubtless on professional advice, thus throws the onus upon the Lunacy Board in a manner as ingenious as it was unkind. We can understand the painful dilemma in which this official body found itself placed. The law, however, would not admit of a refusal. The trying nature of the duty thus thrown upon the Commissioners is

clearly evidenced in the regulation which they have issued as to instruments and appliances for the mechanical bodily restraint of lunatics. Thus: "It is with great reluctance, therefore, that the Commissioners approach the performance of a duty imposed on them by the Legislature, of determining the instruments and appliances of restraint, and their discharge of the duty must not be construed as implying any greater countenance by them of this mode of treatment than they have hitherto given to it." They confess, however, that they recognize no less than the Lord Chancellor that cases will occur in which it is necessary that mechanical restraint should be applied. They admit that this necessity may arise not only for the purpose of securing the safety of the patient, and of others, but also because "mechanical restraint is beneficial to the patient." They have, of course, held that "it should be restricted within the narrowest limits possible." Moreover, it should be applied by the most humane means, and should not be longer used than is necessary.

Then comes the definition of "mechanical means," and it is declared that they include all instruments and appliances whereby the movements of the body, or of any of the limbs of a lunatic are restrained or impeded. The practical outcome of what will in future be known as the Mechanical Restraint Act is that on the occasion of the visits of the Commissioners to an asylum, etc., instruments and mechanical appliances employed since the preceding official visit must be produced by the Superintendent, etc. No one doubts that "manutension" by attendants is a form of mechanical restraint. The hands are "instruments," and by their application, the movements of the body are impeded. It follows that they ought to be produced at the next visit of the Commissioners. Soft hands may be as important as soft gloves. The regulations contained in the circular of the Commissioners, dated April 16, 1890, require "that in every case where restraint is applied a medical certificate shall, as soon as it can be obtained, be signed by the medical officer describing the means used, and stating the grounds upon which the certificate is founded. A record of all cases of the use of restraint is to be kept, and the copy of the records and certificates sent to the Commissioners at the end of every quarter. Acting in contravention of Section 40 is a misdemeanour."