

gratification can be expressed that it has been withdrawn. Unfortunately the gratuity clause has shared the same fate without any apparent reason.

The early treatment clause in the bill embodies the recommendations made to the Lord Chancellor by the joint committee of the British Medical and the Medico-Psychological Association, reported in the April number of this JOURNAL. It passed unaltered through the House of Lords.

The "urgency order" clause is still retained, and fuller consideration of the probable effect of the reduction of the duration of the order to four days has resulted in a more strenuous objection on the medical side. This will probably manifest itself in the progress of the bill through the House of Commons.

There has been considerable delay already in the progress of the bill through the House of Commons, and it is still doubtful whether it will become an Act in the present session: if blocked it certainly will not do so.

The Magistrate in Lunacy.

It was not difficult to foresee that the Lunacy Act would entail disasters if magistrates were to assume the position of revising medical opinions in regard to mental disorder. That the magistrate might, in rare and difficult cases, require independent skilled opinion is readily conceivable; but that he should override medical certificates, presented in due form and sufficient in detail, by an autocratic use of his own unenlightened judgment is a peril accompanied by no extenuating circumstances.

It is reported that an inquest was held at Exeter on 1st April last, on the body of Susan Mary Herd, who had been found dead in bed in her lodgings four days previously. Her landlord stated that she had been melancholy and depressed, that she had not been outside the house for a year and a half, and that he considered her to have been of unsound mind. He wished to have her ejected because his wife was afraid of her. Dr. MacKeith said that he had certified S. M. Herd of unsound mind after careful examination, and taking into consideration that she had previously been in an asylum. She

was very despondent, and thought that people were trying to do her harm. Her room was in an unsatisfactory condition, and there was no fire. He had got the schedule for his certificate from the relieving officer. Mr. Perkins, M.R.C.S., stated that he had been called to find the deceased lying in bed dead. He had made a post-mortem examination, and arrived at the conclusion that she had swallowed an irritant poison.

The coroner in addressing the jury said that the deceased had apparently written numerous letters which bore evidence of having been composed by an insane person and one who was evidently an object for a lunatic asylum. He thought it a very serious thing for a magistrate to take upon himself in such a case to set his opinion in opposition to that of a medical man. The jury condemned the action taken by the magistrate, and returned a verdict of death from poisoning.

It will not be creditable if this matter remains in the unsatisfactory position in which it is left by the inquest. The public have a right to demand that protection which is endangered by the possibility of a recurrence of such a calamity. Mr. S. Jones, magistrate of the borough of Exeter, is not likely to repeat his fatal mistake in the future; but there are other magistrates just as capable of exerting ignorant authority, with results just as disastrous. They ought to be warned in time.

The Care of the Epileptic.

The advance in scientific knowledge and practical philanthropy which has been characteristic of the Victorian era causes us to scan with eager eyes what is being done in our department of medicine in foreign countries. We cannot afford to lag behind in administration, a domain in which English energy and common sense has been peculiarly successful. Dr. Lord has done well in presenting to the Association a graphic account of the later developments in caring for the epileptic, and in urging the claims of that unfortunate class on the attention of our local authorities.

Epilepsy, like general paralysis, is so marked in its manifestations that the crudest classification cannot fail to differentiate it