

ference which exists between hypnotism and sleep seems to be the curative power of the former. But such curative power is altogether doubtful; and the so-called hypnotic cures, where they do exist, may possibly have to be ascribed to some emotional or psychical cause rather than to the artificial sleep. This influence is the most intricate problem of all relating to hypnotism and sleep, the limit of physiological inquiry being here drawn by the impossibility of ascertaining the physiological conditions of the brain when attention is directed to one point and when it is not. Professor Preyer found that a concentrated attention is the only *conditio sine qua non* in order to hypnotise an individual. If the attention is to be the least distorted or distracted, hypnotism becomes impossible. If, by strong and sudden stimulation, attention be forcibly concentrated on one impression, as in fright, then catalepsy is the consequence in both man and in animals. If the will direct consciousness to a certain point without any excitement, it will in many cases lose its power, and hypnotism is the consequence—*abulia*. Possibly, this occurs because the oxygen of the arterial blood in the brain has so quickly been used up, that there is not enough left to keep the grey matter of the hemispheres awake. The nervous cells are separated from each other by inactive regions, and, as in natural sleep, only certain centres remain active—for example, the respiratory and other co-ordinating centres. Here, then, is the *terra incognita*, ready to be explored.

The following gentlemen took part in the discussion: Dr. Brown-Séguard, Mr. Braid (a son of the late Mr. James Braid), Dr. Bowditch, Dr. Glaister, Dr. Beard (New York), Dr. A. Gamgee, Dr. Harvey, Mr. Langley, Dr. Norris, Dr. Gerald Yeo, and Dr. Hack Tuke. Professor Preyer replied on the whole debate, and the discussion was brought to a close.

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#### THE EASTERN COUNTIES ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS.

The July meeting, 1880, of this institution was held at Norwich, under the presidency of the DUKE OF NORFOLK, who, in his speech, observed that one might say that the instinct of self preservation made us find homes for the insane; whereas it was the divine angel of charity which urged us to procure homes for the idiot.

Dr. BATMAN, the consulting physician, who endeavoured to remove certain misconceptions about idiocy, of frequent occurrence, held that one of the most fruitful causes of idiocy is the abuse, not the proper use, of alcoholic drinks. Dr. Bateman made an earnest appeal to his audience for their merciful aid.

Mr. MILLARD, the well known and estimable superintendent, wished that the number in the asylum (99) could be doubled. He pointed out that at the Hospital for Incurable Children in London, idiots were no longer received on account of their injurious influence on the other inmates. He said that in France there were 280 cretins and idiots to 100 lunatics, and not 60 to 100 as stated in the 1872 census; hence he inferred that in England there were many more idiots than the returns of the census showed. The asylum needed a large increase of annual subscriptions.

The MAYOR, the DEAN OF NORWICH, the SHERIFF, Mr. CADGER, and others addressed the meeting, which appears to have been very successful, £400 being promised on the spot.

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#### "AFTER CARE."

A meeting of the "After Care" Association was held, on the 1st July, at the house of Dr. Bucknill, 39, Wimpole street. There were present Dr. Bucknill, President; Dr. D. Hack Tuke, Dr. Savage, Rev. H. G. Henderson, Mr. W. G. Marshall, Rev. H. Hawkins, Secretary; Lady Frederick Cavendish, Miss

Antrobus, Miss Cons, Miss Agnes Cotton, and several other ladies. The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed. The Secretary read abstracts of letters since received, a communication was read from Lord Shaftesbury, accepting the office of Patron of the Association, also a subsequent intimation that he would have been happy to have attended the meeting, had he not been prevented by a previous engagement.

It was proposed and seconded that Mr. W. G. Marshall, Medical Superintendent of the Female Department, Colney Hatch Asylum, should be requested to act as President in succession to Dr. J. Bucknill, who kindly offered his house for the next general meeting. The following resolution having been carried, the meeting separated:—

“That a letter having been received from the Secretary of the ‘Servants Home Society,’ expressing his willingness to afford a home for at least a few days, for young women leaving an asylum recovered, and in search of a situation: Resolved, that the Secretary be instructed to write to the Secretary of the ‘Servants Home Society’ stating that this Association will be glad to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by his letter.”

Several physicians, conversant with Lunatic Asylums, and with the need of “After Care” for convalescents, have expressed themselves as favourable to the general objects of the Association.

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#### INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS.

We have received the following for publication:—

The International Medical Congress is to be held in London, August 3rd to 9th, 1881, under the presidency of Sir James Paget, Bart.

*Section, Mental Diseases.*—President, Dr. Lockhart Robertson; Vice-presidents, Dr. Crichton Browne, LL.D., Dr. Maudsley; Secretaries, Dr. Gasquet, Dr. Savage.

The meetings will be chiefly held in the Hall of the University of London, and in Burlington House.

The expenses to be incurred must necessarily be considerable, and the Committee appeal to the whole profession of the United Kingdom to subscribe funds sufficient to relieve them from all difficulty in making suitable arrangements.

All communications to the Congress should be addressed to—

WILLIAM MAC CORMAC, ESQ.,  
Hon. Secretary General,  
13, Harley Street, London, W.

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#### QUESTION OF SUIT ON BEHALF OF A HUSBAND, INCAPACITATED BY INSANITY, FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE.

Before Lord COLERIDGE, the President, and Sir B. J. PHILLIMORE.

(DIVORCE COURT.)

BAKER v. BAKER, WHEELER, AND OWEN.

In this case, John Alfred Baker, of the City of Bristol, steam saw-mill proprietor the committee of the estate of William Baker, a person of unsound mind, so found by inquisition, presented on his behalf a petition for dissolution of marriage with the respondent by reason of her adultery with the co-respondents. The petition was presented by the leave and under the direction of the Lords Justices. The respondent denied the adultery, and also demurred to the petition, the broad question raised by the demurrer being whether it was competent for