

SCOTTISH DIVISION.

A meeting of the Scottish Division of this Association was held in the Hall of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow, on 11th March. Present: Dr. Margaret Dewar, Dr. Carswell, Dr. Clouston, Dr. Farquharson, Dr. France, Dr. Hotchkiss, Dr. Ireland, Dr. MacPherson, Dr. Marr, Dr. Middlemass, Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Oswald, Dr. Alexander Robertson, Dr. Skeen, Dr. Turnbull (Secretary), Dr. Urquhart, Dr. Watson, and Dr. Yellowlees.—On the motion of Dr. Turnbull, Dr. Ireland took the chair.

The minutes of last meeting were read and approved of.

Dr. Keith Campbell, Assistant Medical Officer, Murray Royal Asylum, Perth; Dr. Robert Brown Campbell, Assistant Medical Officer, District Asylum, Inverness; and Dr. T. Alf. Beadle, Assistant Medical Officer, Lanark District Asylum, Hartwood, were admitted as members of the Association.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL AND DIVISIONAL SECRETARY.

Dr. TURNBULL said that Dr. Yellowlees retired from the Council by virtue of the period during which he had held office, and was not eligible for re-election. He moved that Dr. Watson, of Hawkhead Asylum, should be suggested for nomination as a member of the Council.—The motion was seconded by Dr. CLOUSTON, and unanimously agreed to.

Dr. URQUHART moved that Dr. Turnbull be again nominated as Divisional Secretary.—This was seconded by Dr. YELLOWLEES, and unanimously adopted.

CONJOINT RESEARCH PATHOLOGIST FOR SCOTTISH ASYLUMS.

Dr. CLOUSTON, convener of the Committee of the Medical Superintendents of Scottish Asylums in regard to the scheme for the appointment of a Conjoint Research Pathologist, in submitting the first report of that Committee, said that this was not part of the business of this Association, but he thought that the meeting would be glad to hear what had been done in this important matter, for the Committee would be glad to hear any suggestions that might be made in regard to it. First, the Committee drew up a statement with regard to the pathological study of insanity. They all knew that to propose to a member of a provincial asylum Board that he should devote part of the rates of his county to research might be greatly misunderstood unless an explanation was offered as to the results of such research, and this the Committee endeavoured to meet by circulating the statement. They believed that this statement had been the means of enlightening persons who had absolutely no other means of knowledge except through the doctors of the asylums. This statement followed them to their homes. As everyone there knew, the College of Physicians had set up a splendid laboratory in Edinburgh, and they had a certain amount of accommodation not at present utilised by the workers in that laboratory. The Committee were engaged in negotiations to secure a place within the building of the College, and they thought that they could be accommodated there on reasonable conditions. The feeling of the Council of the College seemed to be that they should not form an integral part of the laboratory, for there might be some objection to have a man paid by the ratepayers, an *imperium in imperio*, as part of the laboratory. It seemed likely that they would have two rooms assigned to them for a laboratory, that these rooms would be fitted up by the College, and that they should pay some rent. Under the general control in regard to certain specified matters by the Superintendent, their pathologist would hold an independent position, and so friction would be avoided, and they would carry out the scheme in their own way. The matter was not yet decided by the College of Physicians in Edinburgh, who, of course, had the key of the situation in their hands. He was glad to say that they might undoubtedly congratulate themselves in that they had secured a sum of £505 a year* for this purpose, and in most instances secured it for five years. There was some legal difficulty about the district asylums guaranteeing it for that time, but they thought that the scheme, if once started, would go on, and the idea was that it should be at present experi-

* This is now nearly £600 a year.—[Ed.]

mental. They would carry it out on the support already promised; but there were several Institutions whose Boards had not yet made up their minds on the subject. They had communicated with those who could give them information, and they had written to all the Superintendents of the London County Council, and had their replies. There was a suggestion from Sir Windham Anstruther to Dr. Skeen, in which he proposed that on the Board which would have the appointment of the pathologist and control of the laboratory, they should have not only the asylum medical staff represented, but that the lay Boards of the asylums should be represented. The Committee would be most anxious to secure the aid of the Asylum Boards, but that their representatives should actually be on this Pathological Board, which was professional and medical in its whole character, did not commend itself to their ideas. Now they had to make out a detailed scheme for the particular duties, and the mode in which it was to be worked. When the Committee had the whole scheme prepared, they would circulate it amongst the members. In the meantime he was authorised to suggest that the Medical Superintendent of every contributing asylum should be added to the General Committee; and then they could appoint a sub-committee to look after the details.

The CHAIRMAN said they were very much obliged to Dr. Clouston for maturing this scheme, which he thought did him very great honour, and after some discussion the subject was dropped.

MIDLOTHIAN DISTRICT ASYLUM PLANS.

The CHAIRMAN explained that Dr. Mitchell had not yet been able to obtain the plans of an addition which is to be made to the Midlothian District Asylum, and consequently they could not be shown that day.

THE USE OF THYROID PREPARATIONS.

Dr. HAMILTON C. MARR read a carefully prepared paper on "The Use of Thyroid Preparations in certain cases of Insanity," which will be tabulated for this number of the Journal.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Dr. Marr for his contribution on this question, which at present interested them more than anything else. He was glad to see that the hopes of this remedy which had been held out had not been gainsaid. Perhaps they had not been realised so much as they expected, but there seemed to be little doubt that in that agent they had a very powerful aid to their *Materia Medica*. He noticed that Dr. Marr had mentioned immediate effects of thyroid, and he believed that had been noticed by a considerable number of observers. It was difficult to account for it by showing that good results were owing to change of structure.

Dr. YELLOWLEES said that a paper of that class was very valuable. It showed an immense amount of industry, which they appreciated very much indeed. Dr. Marr attributed recovery in 20 out of 100 cases to thyroid; but he was bound to say that his experience of thyroid had been disappointing. He had again and again got temporary benefit, but he had not seen in his own cases any recovery which he could credit entirely to thyroid. His feeling was that it was uncertain. He had seen it followed by disturbed heart action; but in spite of this he thought it would be wrong to omit trying it in any suitable case. He had certainly seen perfectly marvellous recoveries.

Dr. CLOUSTON said he had no doubt that thyroid in itself was a direct stimulant. He would take the last case in which he had been using it—a case of a lady who suffered from *folie circulaire*, and continued in a depressed condition. After two days' administration the temperature rose to 99 degrees, the depression vanished, she told him that she now felt well and she slept normally for the first time for a long period. Her skin was constantly covered with perspiration, and her bowels, which had been sluggish, suddenly resumed their normal action. After four days he stopped the drug, and the result was that she fell back into the previous condition. It had proved a stimulus to the mind, to the skin, the bowels, and the appetite, but that effect was not permanent. He thought most of them had seen a sufficient number of remarkable cases to make them continue the use of the drug without hesitancy in spite of failures. It had certain disadvantages.

tages, and they had better realise them. It greatly depressed the heart's action and increased the pulse rate. It depressed the general vascular tone, and he thought they at Morningside had come to the conclusion that good results were nearly always seen in young people, and bad or negative effects in the old. He did not think that there was any use of giving thyroid after 60 years of age. The melancholiacs, whose appetites were paralysed and who refused food, were difficult cases. Some such cases on a course of thyroid recovered appetite and began to lay on flesh; but there were other cases of melancholiacs where it irritated the system and produced a tendency to vomit. In one such case he was not quite sure whether they had not lost their patient in consequence. It was the last resort as the patient was going down hill. Again, did thyroid ever do good unless fever was produced? Was there any use of giving it in five-grain doses, or should they produce a short smart fever, and, if so, how long should it continue? Possibly Dr. Marr was right, and possibly they were wrong, but he thought that Dr. Bruce, who had originally suggested this treatment, had shown at Morningside that it should not be continued for longer periods than 10 days, and in some cases only five or six. Was there any advantage in giving it for prolonged periods? Some patients might take any amount of thyroid without thermal disturbance, others had fever after 15 grains. The reason of that he was totally unable to explain. They required to be most careful in giving thyroid if there was any tubercle in the body. It livened up tubercles. He had no doubt about that. He believed it might be useful in neurasthenia. He had the greatest difficulty in getting his friends in Edinburgh to try it in a vigorous manner. If they used it they might overcome the tendency to thinness in certain cases of neurasthenia. In some cases they seemed to have got an extraordinary result by giving ovarian extract. In a case of persistent and very bad insanity of two years' duration in a woman of twenty-eight, who had undergone ovariectomy, and who seemed to become insane afterwards, in a few weeks, certainly within a month, after getting ovarian extract her mental symptoms had stopped. Meantime she was now better than she had been for the last two years.

Dr. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON had no doubt that by the action of thyroid there was a very marked metabolism as proved by the usual loss of weight of all the tissues and the very rapid change. Under the use of thyroid perhaps the absorption of products or half formed products of low vitality in the cells of the cortex took place. These products were removed for the time being at all events. Afterwards, unfortunately, when the stimulation of the thyroid was removed, the patient too frequently fell back mentally. The general impression left on his mind was that thyroid was a very valuable remedy, and that cases of stuporose insanity threatening to become chronic should be treated with it. There were other remedies which might be of use in a similar way. He had been using cerebrin and myovine, and found these good stimulants. The class of cases in which they were useful was somewhat different from the cases where thyroid proved efficient. He thought cerebrin particularly serviceable in mild cases of mental disorder that did not land in an asylum at all. The last case in which he used it was the wife of a medical man, still under his care. The husband told him that he found it too stimulating, and was obliged to give it up. It did not disturb the system in any way. When one thought of the marked changes of nutrition that took place he could hardly doubt that there was some direct effect on the nerve system, for these were the parts that seemed to be particularly stimulated. The waste of tissue was far beyond what any fever could produce.

Dr. FARQUHARSON said that at the Cumberland Asylum last year they tried thyroid extract in a number of cases, giving it for a short time in large doses. In some cases the temporary effects were very marked, but in no single case was there permanent improvement. One or two patients relapsed very quickly after the drug was stopped. One or two were worse after the administration of the drug than before it, and the whole of their experience of thyroid was most disappointing.

Dr. OSWALD said in the treatment of myxœdema he believed that raising of

temperature was the universal result of thyroid administration, and he would ask was there always a rise of temperature in cases of treatment of insanity by thyroid? And if not, were the cases in which the rise did not take place those in which it did not have a good effect? In many cases of insanity they had seen good results resulting from a febrile condition which did not follow upon the giving of thyroid extract. Dr. Marr referred to a case where an attack of erysipelas intervened with a very marked improvement in the mental condition. Was that due to an increase of pulse action? He was inclined to think it due to a cleansing of the brain, which left it healthier than before. In the treatment of insanity by thyroid extract, did the thyroid have a direct influence on the brain, or was it a secondary action, or was it an effect on the brain through the circulation?

Dr. CLOUSTON said that his opinion had first been that the good effect was simply a result of febrile action, but he had altered his opinion, and now thought that the action was twofold, one febrile (because they never got good effects without the fever) and the other by direct stimulation of the nerve centres.

The CHAIRMAN said that when he first heard of the thyroid extract he was a little frightened about the danger of an overdose. One well-known member of the profession said it was a poison, and had lost one case. He himself had tried it, but must have met with patients who were insusceptible to its action. On one occasion a butcher sent him a mass of thyroid as big as his fist, and his cat ate up the whole lot, but the animal was none the worse. He noticed that some of the physicians who had used this treatment said that they administered it for ten days only, but that was different from Dr. John Thomson, who had got wonderfully good effects in children with nothing but the remains of a few milk teeth, who, under thyroid, began to develop teeth and grew two or three inches. Perhaps the mental changes were not so complete, but there was considerable improvement in the intelligence.

Dr. HITCHKISS referred to the value of recovery under thyroid treatment. Whether the patients would remain well as long after they had been cured by thyroid as if they had recovered by the ordinary methods had not been settled yet, for the reason that this treatment had only recently been tried. It would require many years, and not only time, but also observations, which they could not always obtain after patients left the asylum, because, as a rule, they lost sight of them.

Dr. URQUHART said he was not very much concerned about the theory, but he was really very urgent that gentlemen who had tried this treatment should put their cases on record whether they had been successful or not. They required to know about the patients who did not recover, because they had yet to arrive at some conclusion in regard to the therapeutic question. Dr. Clouston had told them that it was of very little use after the age of 60, and that it was a danger to tubercular patients. These were the sort of facts that should be put on record as early as possible. He doubted if at this time of day it was of sufficient importance to go into the details of each case, but rather would tabulate them in such a manner that they could be easily referred to. He hoped that would meet with a favourable response, so that they would know more about the cases where thyroid had failed. For himself he had had one case where it had been entirely successful, and one successful case covered a multitude of failures. If they could secure one recovery of a person who otherwise would have been a chronic lunatic that encouraged them to persevere. The danger seemed to be the strain on the heart; unless they produced that action the drug seemed to have no effect, and he attributed that to the position of affairs in the economy of the person. If the thyroid gland were acting well he fancied that there would be no use in giving the drug, but if the gland were in abeyance, and if they could introduce it into the system, it might be extremely useful, for it apparently supplied something that was necessary for physiological action. The only indubitably successful case that he had recorded went away

entirely recovered, after being for long in a state of stupor following on mania. He conceived that it was his duty to tell the patient that in order to keep well she should occasionally take a tabloid of thyroid, because he did not think there could be any possible harm in taking the precaution to keep in touch with this active principle.

Dr. TURNBULL said that in the cases in which he had used it he could not say that they found it very satisfactory. In one typical case it lightened up the patient and made her talk for a time, but it was morbid excitement, and when the thyroid was stopped she dropped back into her former condition. In another case the result was very successful; but here there were distinct bodily indications of myxœdema, while mentally there were distinct delusional symptoms, not the hebetude which is usually found in the myxœdematous condition. Under thyroid treatment she improved distinctly in bodily health, and at the same time she improved gradually in mind so far that she was ultimately discharged recovered. That was the most striking instance he had had of benefit from thyroid. In a case of imbecility, where the dry skin and other features were suggestive of a myxœdematous condition, they could not say that they secured any good results under thyroid treatment.

Dr. MARZ, in reply, said that in regard to the Chairman's remarks about the increase of corpuscles of the blood, he might state that he had examined some half a dozen cases, and these cases were anæmic. Whether the thyroid had an effect on the hæmoglobin he was not prepared to state. Dr. Victor Horsley thought that it had such an effect, but he was more inclined to regard the improvement in regard to these elements as secondary, and indirectly due to the increase from better bodily condition. With regard to Dr. Yellowlees' remarks, about 20 cases out of 100 having recovered, it certainly was a very large number, because at first they had selected the cases. He was working amongst myxœdema cases, and they tried it in cases of insanity showing myxœdema, and the number of recoveries was thus large. He had found the results of thyroid sometimes disappointing. He was somewhat disappointed with the use at first, but after continuing with it for lengthened periods he noticed in some cases that the results were better. With regard to Dr. Clouston's remarks that the use of thyroid in certain cases increases the appetite, he found that to be the case in some instances. There must be small doses, perhaps a quarter of a tabloid or half a tabloid. Three tabloids caused an increase in the weight of the body, and did not improve the appetite. As to the varying effect of thyroid, he was much struck with this in two cases he had treated. The one was a case of melancholia, and the other a case of stupor, and the difference in the physical symptoms was most marked. One case had dry hair; in the other the hair was oily and moist. In the one case thyroid did good, and in the other case it did harm, and he had to stop the use of it. With regard to the use of thyroid in producing febrile reaction he had not had so much experience of the method, but he was inclined to think that the value here from the use of thyroid was not in producing fever, because fever in many cases did not produce recovery. He had seen a case where it had produced recovery, but he was inclined to attribute the results he had obtained to the beneficial action of the thyroid in the nutritive fluid circulating through the body. He did not go into the nature, or what was presently thought to be the nature, of this change in the nutritive fluid. With regard to Dr. Farquharson's statement that he had not found any prominent improvement, his experience was that if he had taken longer time and smaller doses he might have had more success. He was inclined to think that the effect of thyroid was not direct, but indirect. In most of the cases by adding the thyroid they improved the conditions of nutrition, and so improved the nervous system.