

pigmented patches on parts of the skin that are subjected to pressure by buttons, etc. Indeed, as Mr. Hilton in his very interesting lectures used to enforce, you may thus often find valuable evidences of syphilitic taint which, in parts of the skin that do not undergo slight pressures, are not produced. We get from these facts suggestive hints as to the importance of easing vital organs from overstrain, etc., in persons who have syphilis about them. The case is significant as showing the effect of large doses of iodide compared with that of small doses."

HOMICIDAL INSANITY.

A case of child murder has recently been tried before the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, and the prisoner, the mother of the two children murdered, has been acquitted on the ground of insanity. The case is an important one on several grounds. Professor Laycock and Dr. Heron Watson gave evidence in favour of the prisoner's non-responsibility, and the same view was taken by the other medical men engaged in the case. The prisoner was a poor woman named Eliza Sinclair. She had been charged with pilfering in a shop; she went home, wrote a somewhat incoherent letter to her husband, killed two children by cutting their throats, and ineffectually cut her own throat. Evidence was given to the effect that she had been weakened by twelve months' lactation, and by a vesico-vaginal malady. It was also known that there was an hereditary tendency to suicide in her family. She had also been the subject of nocturnal epilepsy and somnambulism. But neither of these latter facts could be proved at the trial, on account of some peculiarities in Scottish law. Sir James Moncrieff, the Lord Justice Clerk, who tried the case, placed it before the jury in a manner which cannot be improved on by us. We therefore append the principal of his remarks:—

"If the jury should be of opinion that the woman went for the purpose of theft to the shop referred to, and that, being detected, she went home in an agony of despair, and resolved to take her own life, and not to leave her children behind her; if that was the state of mind in which she was—however lamentable and however much her mind might have been overbalanced by the sense of shame and dread of detection—he had to state his own opinion that that did not amount to a case of insanity, or anything like it. If they came to be of opinion that such was the case—it certainly approached very nearly indeed to that state of the fact, apart from the matters he was now going to call their attention to—that would not be sufficient to support the plea of insanity. When the Doctors spoke about a man's uncontrolled impulse, they did not mean an impulse which his mental constitution was not strong enough to combat with, but an impulse which, through mental disease, they had not the power of controlling; and, therefore, before a case could be brought under that category, mental disease must be proved. The question was whether she was of so unsound mind as to prevent her having the power of resisting the criminal impulse when it occurred. He thought it had been proved quite sufficiently for the purpose of the prisoner's case that there was such a form of mental unsoundness as homicidal and suicidal insanity in regard to lactation. If the prisoner was labouring under an attack of paroxysm of that kind, he knew nothing in the shape of legal proposition that could possibly prevent the jury from finding that she was of unsound mind. But the difficulty was upon the fact, for up to the time she was found, on March 6, there was not the smallest trace of her having had paroxysms of this kind or any other; and there was not, so far as he could recollect, except for a few minutes, the slightest trace of mental excitement from that time to this. But there were one or two matters of great gravity they should keep in view in judging the case. In the first place it was a murder of her own children without any impulse, as far as they could see, of the ordinary passions, and that, in a question of sane or insane mind, was of the last importance. It was also proved

by medical men that such paroxysms, although they did not generally, yet sometimes came and went with great rapidity; and, out of sight, the most important piece of evidence for the prisoner was the letter which she wrote to her husband in that agony of despair about the accusations made against her. While it indicated her determination to put an end to herself, she spoke of her children as if they were to survive. It was unquestionably indicative of great excitement, and it showed an incoherency which was consistent with an insane mind. The impulse must undoubtedly have been sudden, and the jury would judge whether it was or was not proof of unsoundness of mind."—*Medical Times and Gazette*, June 24th.

Appointments.

GOWAN, C., L.R.C.S., Edin., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer to the Worcester County and City Lunatic Asylum, Powick, *vice* R. W. Coely, M.R.C.S.E., resigned.

GRIFFIN, L. T., Ext., L.R.C.P.L., L.R.C.S.I., has been elected Visiting Physician to the Kerry District Lunatic Asylum, Killarney, *vice* Murphy, appointed Resident Medical Superintendent.

MILLSON, G., M.R.C.S.E., L.R.C.P.L., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer, Female Department, Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch, *vice* R. Carter, M.D., M.R.C.S.E., L.S.A.L., resigned.

MURPHY, WALTER WILLIAM, M.D., M.R.C.S. Eng., has been appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland the Resident Medical Superintendent of the Killarney District Hospital, which office became lately vacant by the much lamented death of Dr. Martin Shine Lawlor, who had for eighteen years held it, and fulfilled its duties most ably and devotedly.

SKELTON, J.M., M.B., L.R.C.S.I., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer to the Metropolitan Asylum, Leavesden, Herts, *vice* A. Strange, M.D., L.R.C.S. Edin., appointed to the Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch.

SHAW, THOS. CLAYE, M.D. Lond., M.R.C.P.L., Medical Superintendent of the Metropolitan Asylum, Leavesden, has been appointed Lecturer on Psychological Medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

SHEPPARD, E., M.D. St. And., M.R.C.P.L., Medical Superintendent of the Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch, has been appointed Professor of Psychological Medicine at King's College, London.

THOMPSON, G., L.R.C.P.L., M.R.C.S.E., Senior Assistant Medical Officer, and formerly Resident Clinical Clerk, at the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield, has been appointed Medical Superintendent of the Bristol Lunatic Asylum, Stapleton, *vice* H. O. Stephens, M.D., M.R.C.P.L., resigned from ill health.

WOOD, T. O., L.R.C.P., Edin., M.R.C.S.E., Medical Superintendent of Dunston Lodge Asylum, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been appointed Lecturer on Psychological Medicine in the Newcastle College, Durham University, *vice* Dr. Hugh Grainger Stewart, Medical Superintendent of the Newcastle Borough Asylum, Cox Lodge, deceased.
