

In the learned societies to which he belonged his remarks were always listened to with attention. No one has forgotten his work upon "Mégélonie," crowned by the Academy of Medicine.\*

Always lucid, always exact, his style reflected his character. Profoundly honest, a man to whom everyone who knew him well was sincerely attached, he had an excellent heart and a rare modesty. All who have worked with him or near him retain a respectful memory of him as a fellow-worker and a regretted colleague, while they address to him their last adieu with a lively and sincere emotion.

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#### DR. JOHN MILLAR.

Since our last number was issued psychological medicine has lost one of its most respected members, John Millar, Medical Superintendent at Bethnal House Asylum, London. He had promised to be present at the annual dinner of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in December, on the occasion of one of his former assistants, Dr. Peel Ritchie, being elected to fill the Presidential chair of that College, but on account of his susceptibility to attacks of bronchial asthma, he thought it prudent not to undertake the journey at that time. On the 9th of January, although advised to keep indoors, he had to be out on business, and caught a severe cold. That day he went to bed, consolidation of the broncho-pneumonia form developed, and in spite of all that medical skill could do, he gradually got worse, and died on 19th January, having with a mind at rest, ere consciousness was veiled, taken an affectionate farewell of the members of his family. He lies in the quiet churchyard at Shirley.

Dr. Millar's death is mourned by many, for all who knew him intimately could not but appreciate the kindly warmth of a true heart and a genuine nature. He was a man of upright character, who meant what he said. There was no deception about him—straightforward himself, he looked for a like return; kind and hearty in his welcome to his hospitable home; generous and good without ostentation, in the true Christian spirit of not letting one hand know the free gift the other had conferred.

As an asylum superintendent he was excellent, combining, as he did, with acute and accurate observation diagnostic skill and prognostic acumen—in fact all the qualities of a successful practitioner—with the business abilities for regulating the management and administration, the furnishing and equipment of a large asylum. His long experience at Bethnal House had given him a familiarity with all the details of asylum life which enabled him to add greatly to the comfort and happiness of his patients, whose welfare and all that could conduce to it were ever foremost in his thoughts. He had great tact in guiding them, and with those capable of forming a judgment he was in high favour.

Dr. Millar was born in Scotland in 1818. He received his professional education at Glasgow University, and in 1838 obtained the license of the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and in 1859 was admitted a Licentiate of the College of Physicians there. He was a man of scientific tastes and culture, and although not a contributor directly to the literature of science, he occupied much of his leisure time in microscopic investigations, the results of which he freely communicated to those who were working at the subject investigated. He was particularly interested in the "Spongida," and his researches have contributed to our knowledge of the structure of those animals. One species—"Alectona Millari"—which bores into the shell of the common oyster, has been named after him.

He had no jealousy in his nature, but was ever ready to appreciate the work of others, and always willing to assist them with his advice and practical suggestions in all that related to microscopical inquiry. For more than thirty years he was a Fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society, and for upwards of twenty years a member of Council. He was also one of the Publication Committee,

\* "Étude Clinique de la Folie avec Prédominance du Délire des Grandeurs." Paris, 1871.

So earnest was he in his attendance at this Society that Mr. Crisp, in speaking of him at their meeting after his death, remarked that during the last ten years he only recalled two occasions on which he was absent.

Dr. Millar was also a Fellow of the Linnean and Geological Societies, at both of which he was at one period a regular attender; and for many years a member of the Medico-Psychological Association and the Medical Society.

Since 1857 Dr. Millar held the post of Medical Superintendent at Bethnal House, where he had also been as assistant. His first superintendency was at Bucks County Asylum. That asylum was opened under his direction, but after a few years he resigned the position and returned to Bethnal House, Mr. James Phillips, then superintendent there, being in failing health. On his death, towards the close of 1857, the trustees appointed Dr. Millar as his successor.

Under the new management, great structural improvements were soon after commenced, and from time to time continued, and special means adopted for employing many of the male parish patients for whom in a city asylum it is difficult to find suitable occupation.

Dr. Millar unfortunately has left but little record of his views of the pathology or treatment of insanity. He was a great believer in physical nourishment; his dietary was liberal, and especially so during the stages of acute excitement. Employment he encouraged by all the means at his command, and sleep he promoted, the chief drug he employed for many years being a citrated liquor of opium prepared from a formula of his own and a citrated extract of hyoscyamus. He was also in favour of treating excitement by seclusion, regarding it as better that the patient should be removed from external causes of irritation than that there should be a continued struggle between him and his attendants.

Dr. Millar always allowed his patients the fullest measure of liberty consistent with their own safety and that of others, and years before the open-door system was advocated those who could be trusted were permitted to use private keys, but with a constantly changing population in an asylum so close upon the crowded streets, the open-door system was not in his opinion applicable.

Dr. Millar had much sympathy with the poor who, after living for years in our large towns without obtaining a settlement, when afflicted with insanity had to be removed from their accustomed surroundings to the county asylum in which they had legal settlement. It was on their behalf he wrote his pamphlet, "A Plea for the Insane Poor." About 25 years ago the subject of the imperfect acquaintance the medical man in general practice had with the forms to be attended to before the admission of patients to asylums led him to publish his "Hints on Insanity," a small but useful work, which has passed through two editions.

Dr. Millar was very ingenious in constructing various appliances about the asylum of a practical character. Of these his tell-tale clock\* may be noted for its simplicity and moderate cost, and also his circular cushion water bed, which permits of the removal of pressure from any part of the recumbent body when it is injurious.

We conclude this notice by quoting the words of a letter read at the Microscopical Society, which well records the feeling of most of those who knew the subject of this notice, "Yesterday I stood by the open grave of one of the best friends and truest and most loveable men I have known—John Millar, aged 69."

\* [It is to be regretted that this clock has frequently failed to give satisfaction, not from any fault in the principle, but in consequence of bad workmanship. It is to be hoped that this will not be allowed any longer to stand in the way of the general use of so useful and comparatively inexpensive a contrivance.—Eds.]