

all examinations of the brain the state of the hemispherical ganglia should be considered carefully. He was surprised to find that by several writers their importance had been overlooked. Mr. Solly, speaking in the name of the Council of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, was glad to see the association meeting in their rooms, and he trusted that he might have an opportunity of assisting in their work, the highest one, that of the advancement of the means of alleviating the disorders common to humanity.

After some remarks from Dr. Sankey, and the reading of a letter from M. Brierre de Boismont, which was referred to the Committee on the Law affecting the Insane, the first quarterly meeting of the Association closed with every prospect of successful future gatherings.

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*Deputation of the Scotch Branch of the Medico-Psychological Association to the Lord Advocate.*

A deputation of the members of the Scotch branch of the Medico-Psychological Association was received by the Lord Advocate in his chambers on the 30th October. Their object was to represent to the Government the great importance of a thoroughly scientific inquiry into the best means of preventing the increase of lunatics and of incorrigible imbeciles, and of protecting families and society. Amongst those present were—Dr. Laycock, Professor of the Practice of Medicine, and President-elect of the Association; the Medical Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland, Sir James Coxe and Dr. Browne; Dr. Maclagan, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence; Dr. Balfour, Dean of the Medical Faculty; Mr. Bruce Thompson, Surgeon to the general prison for Scotland, Perth; Dr. Skae, Medical Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum; Dr. Sibbald, of the Argyleshire District Asylum; Dr. Gilchrist, of the Southern Counties Asylum; Dr. Alexander Wood, Member of the General Medical Council for the College of Physicians; Dr. Rorie, &c., &c.

Professor LAYCOCK, in explaining the object of the deputation to his Lordship, referred to the great advance which had been made in medical science, more particularly in that branch which took special cognizance of mental disorders. But while the sciences had been rapidly developing, the administration of justice in relation to mentally defective criminals was founded upon doctrines current in what, comparatively speaking, might be called the dark ages (hear, hear). The doctrines upon which our forms of procedure were founded had become practically obsolete, and in this way the practice had become out of relation to the administration of the law. Now, it was well-known that there was a very intimate connection between imbecility and vice in the way of cause and effect, and there could be no doubt that many committed to prison for crime were more or less imbecile, so far as not to be under self control. The state of the law as regards persons of

incurably vicious propensities was very defective. It was extremely difficult, as the law now stood, for medical men to give evidence before a court in such a way as to satisfy their judgment as professional men, and their consciences as citizens. No doubt there were great differences of opinion, as there must be among so large a body of gentlemen, upon this subject, but it was not the object of the deputation to press upon Government the necessity of inquiring into what constituted insanity. They were desirous of impressing upon his Lordship, and Government through him, the necessity for a full inquiry being made into the relations between mental science and the administration of law. He trusted, therefore, that his lordship would press upon the Government the necessity of appointing a commission of inquiry.

Mr. BRUCE THOMSON, surgeon to the General Prison of Scotland, in the course of his remarks, referred to the intimate connection between insanity and crime. Founding his remarks on what came under his own personal observation, he had no hesitation in saying that one prisoner out of every nine was more or less insane, and that one out of every 140 became irresponsibly so. He referred more particularly to one class of prisoners of this kind—namely, the epileptic. He believed that many crimes were committed by epileptic criminals when they were utterly unconscious and in an irresponsible state of mind; and he mentioned cases which had come under his own observation, and which fully bore out his remarks. He thought prisoners of that class should be treated very differently than they are under the present system of prison discipline, and such a subject should be carefully considered by any commission which may be appointed. He next referred to the close connection between over-indulgence in intoxicating drinks and crime, and expressed a strong opinion that for their own sakes and the safety of society, it was absolutely necessary that men and women of this class ought to be taken care of.

Professor MACLAGAN remarked that a good deal had been said about the unreliable nature of medical evidence, but if the facts were examined, it would be seen that the difficulty did not arise so much from the purely scientific or practical portions of the medical man's evidence, but more commonly referred to causes involving mental disorder. Their object in appearing before his Lordship was not so much to point out any remedy which might be adopted for the cure of the evils referred to, as to impress upon the Government, through his Lordship, the necessity for appointing a commission to inquire into the whole matter. He next referred to the subject touched upon by Dr. Thomson—namely, the intimate connection between drink and crime, and expressed the opinion that the misery, the crime, and shame which were caused by over-indulgence in intoxicating liquors could not be exaggerated. The treatment and reclamation of dipsomaniacs were, therefore, of the greatest consequence, and would fittingly come under the consideration of such a commission.

Mr. Commissioner BROWNE also referred to the intimate connection

between insanity and crime. There were many important witnesses in support of this fact. Dr. Thomson had told them his views on the matter, and his predecessor, Dr. Malcolm, had held the same opinion. Dr. Malcolm was a plain, practical man, not given much to subtle disquisition, and he had left behind him a memorandum to the effect that of the hundreds and thousands of persons who had passed under his observation, upwards of two-thirds of them were either insane or in some degree affected. He (Mr. Browne) had also observed that crime was hereditary; the members of certain families being distinguished for insanity and crime for three or four generations, and the laws of hereditary tendency as bearing upon the responsibility of the individual might be profitably considered by a Parliamentary commission.

Dr. SKAE concurred in all that had been said; and, in his remarks, referred more particularly to the necessity of some alteration in the law with reference to medical evidence. The legal enactments which had been in use for so many years were now obsolete, and ought to be reformed in harmony with the development of science and experience.

Dr. ALEXANDER WOOD also heartily concurred in all that had been said, and spoke of a hereditary tendency to drunkenness in particular families, which invariably degenerated into crime.

The LORD ADVOCATE then said—The subject to which the deputation had called his attention was one of very great interest, but attended with considerable difficulty. He had long been impressed with the fact that great weakness of intellect existed among those placed at the bar of our criminal courts, and it was extremely difficult to determine the exact extent to which their imbecility should relieve them from punishment. The views which he had formed as to the weakness of the intellects of criminals during the time he practised at the bar, received striking confirmation from a visit he had recently paid to the General Prison for Scotland, under the management of Mr. Thomson. Certainly any observations which had been made by Dr. Malcolm upon such a subject were entitled to the greatest weight. All knew that he was not so much a speculative man as a man of practical observation, sound sense, well versed in the principles of his profession, and equally well practised in it. Now he (the Lord Advocate) understood that the deputation were desirous that a commission should be appointed to consider certain points connected with mental disease, and also with reference to the position of the medical profession as regards the evidence which they are called upon to give in courts of justice. In respect to mental diseases, the members of the deputation had not pointed out any practical measure for the remedy of existing evils; and he presumed they considered that a matter for the consideration of the commissioners (hear, hear). Now, the deputation could not expect that he would come under any pledge, as it was not a subject peculiar to Scotland, but common to

England and Ireland. He was extremely desirous that public attention should be directed to this question, and with that view he had consented to the presence of a reporter, that the public should have laid before them the views urged by the deputation. It was a very important question, and it was right that the attention of the public should be called, so as to bring out discussion upon the points raised. All he could say in the meantime was that he would take an early opportunity of bringing before the Government the views of the influential deputation he had had the honour of receiving. They would understand that the law with reference to some of those matters was not the same in Scotland as in England, and he believed that an assimilation of the laws, as much as possible, was desirable. More particularly with reference to the rights of persons, he could see no reason why the law should be different in both countries. He did not say that we should adopt the English law. We should adopt the best of both systems, and therefore an inquiry by a commission may in this respect be of great advantage. His Lordship concluded by again assuring the deputation that he would take an early opportunity of bringing the matter under the notice of the Government.

Mr. Commissioner BROWNE assured his Lordship that the society which the deputation had the honour of representing was not a local one, but composed of members from almost all countries.

The deputation having thanked his Lordship for his courtesy, withdrew.

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*Lord Shaftesbury's Speeches.\**

The volume before us may be said to contain a presentment of the political life of Lord Shaftesbury, in its relation to the reforms for which he has chiefly laboured, and there are few statesmen who can look back upon a life at once so consistent and so successful, upon objects so steadily pursued, upon aims so purely benevolent, upon victories so certainly the preludes of others yet to come. In every philanthropic effort in which Lord Shaftesbury has been engaged, some progress at least has been made, and such progress, by fulfilling the hopes and justifying the predictions of its promoters, has always prepared the way for more. The speeches now reprinted range over a period of nine-and-twenty years, and over a variety of topics; but they mostly reiterate certain cardinal *desiderata*, certain specifics against the well defined causes that add artificially to human sin and misery. At the very beginning of Lord Shaftesbury's public career these points were insisted upon, and in so far as they have not been

\* Speeches of the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., upon subjects having relation chiefly to the claims and interests of the Labouring Class. With a Preface. Chapman and Hall. 1868.