

GASKELL PRIZE EXAMINATION, 1890.

Friday, July 18th, 1890.

MENTAL DISEASE.

- 1.—Give the chief characteristics of Alcoholic Insanity.
- 2.—What is Neurasthenia? How is it distinguished from Hysteria?
- 3.—Give some account of Diseased Cravings.
- 4.—What is Katatonia? Summarize the views of writers on this subject.
- 5.—Give an account of the Insanity of Pregnancy and its treatment.
- 6.—Describe the oculo-motor symptoms in General Paralysis of the Insane.

PATHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.

- 1.—Describe the changes in the membranes and cortex at a point of adhesion in General Paralysis.
- 2.—Describe the appearances found in Pachymeningitis.
- 3.—Describe the "Miliary Sclerosis" found in the brain of the Insane.
- 4.—Give an account of the Will. How far do the Phenomena of Insanity illustrate it?
- 5.—What is meant by "Automatism?" Give illustrations of it in Health and Disease.
- 6.—Explain the Pathology of Loss of Memory.

The successful candidate was Geo. M. Robertson, M.B., Assistant Medical Officer, Royal Asylum, Edinburgh.

Correspondence.

THE WORKING OF THE NEW LUNACY ACT.

We reprint the following letter from the *British Medical Journal* of July 19th, 1890, to assist in giving it the wide circulation which it deserves :—

SIR,—The following is a sample of the difficulties experienced in the working of the new Lunacy Act by those who are so unfortunate as to have insane relatives whose admission to a hospital or private asylum is necessary.

A young man, by occupation a pianoforte tuner, took to reading theology far into the night, and sometimes all night, as well as following his work by day, and this overstrain, together with the sudden shock, resulted in a mental breakdown. He was at first taken by his relatives to the seaside, but maniacal excitement came on, and he was brought to London and admitted to Bethlem Hospital on an urgency order and an urgency certificate, on July 6th. So far, all was satisfactory. Two fresh certificates were then duly obtained, and the "petition" and "statement" filled up properly by the patient's mother. On the evening of the 8th she went to a Justice of the Peace whose name I had given her from a long list of those specially appointed under the Lunacy Acts Amendment Act to act for the County of London, in order to fix a time with him for the consideration of the "petition." He refused to have anything to do with it, and referred her to the Marylebone Police Court. She, having to attend our Committee Meeting here the next morning, sent her daughter to the Court with the petition, and the latter was of course told that the petitioner must attend in person. She was given a list of four names

of Justices in Marylebone, and the mother proceeded to call on these *seriatim*. Three of the four were away, and the fourth said he could sign but did not care to, and that the Stipendiary Magistrate was the proper person. Finally, a Justice in Lambeth was applied to, and signed the "order" on July 11th, seven different authorities having been applied to before this end was arrived at.

I think it cannot be too widely known by medical men and the public generally what trouble the Lunacy Act of 1890 has thrown upon the relatives of patients. Here was a perfectly straightforward case of acute mania admitted as an urgent case, and the petition, statement, and certificate all in order, and yet the relatives are bandied about from a Justice to the Police Court, from the Police Court to four Justices, from one of these again (three of them being unavailable) to the Stipendiary Magistrate, till finally the order is signed by a Justice. It may be said that all this time the patient was in safety, but surely it is little short of cruelty to those who have just had the care of a dangerous lunatic in a private house, with all the attendant anxiety and nervous strain, to add this additional worry.

The Act says:—"In making such appointments (that is, of Justices to exercise the powers conferred by this Act), the Justices of every County shall have regard to the convenience of the inhabitants of each Petty Sessional Division thereof." Yet in this case, in one Petty Sessional Division of the County of London, three out of the four Justices are not available, and the fourth refuses to sign, and one might say that absolutely no regard was paid to the convenience of this particular petitioner. In other cases, I have known of hard-working and struggling business-men having to spend two or three days rushing after Magistrates and Justices, while their business or trade was going to ruin, in order to satisfy the requirements of this irritating Act. The Lord Chancellor has the power, in the event of inability or refusal of a Justice to act, to appoint another, but if constant changes of this sort are to take place, there seems to be little use in a published list of Justices specially appointed. It is practically useless for the petitioner ever to apply to a Police Court or County Court for a reception order, as the officials usually say (as the Act gives them power to do) that the consideration of the petition interferes with the exercise of their ordinary jurisdiction, and if the Justices of the Peace "boycott" the Act, as many of them seem inclined to do, the relatives of lunatics will be in a sad plight. One might enter at length into the imperfect way in which the Justices examine the petitions and certificates presented to them, and how, consequently, patients are brought for admission with reception orders signed, although there are important omissions in the petition or in the statement, or even in the reception order itself; but my object was not so much to show how the work of Medical Superintendents is increased by their having to supervise the work of the very men who are supposed to be appointed to prevent mistakes in the admission of patients, as to give an instance of the hard working of this injudicious

Act, which seems to have been specially framed to strain to the utmost the already neurotic relations of lunatics, and to drive Superintendents of Asylums and Hospitals to madness. Unfortunately, no representations as to the mischievous working of this Act are likely to receive much notice from its framers, who showed but scant courtesy to those familiar with lunacy work while the Bill was in progress; but, at least, it might be claimed that the Magistrates and Justices should properly perform their part of the work. It does not seem to be generally understood that a Justice of the Peace in one division of the County of London may still sign a reception order, though the patient happens to have been removed to another division, and perhaps already admitted to a hospital or asylum under an urgency order. Apologizing for trespassing at such length on your valuable space,

I am, etc.,

R. PERCY SMITH.

Bethlem Royal Hospital.

Obituary.

DR. JOHN S. BUTLER

Was Superintendent of the Retreat for the Insane, Hartford, Connecticut, during nearly thirty years. He was born in Hartford, but his parents, when he was quite young, removed to Northampton, Massachusetts, where he passed the years of his boyhood.

Dr. Butler graduated from Yale College with the degree of B.A., in 1825, and immediately entered on the study of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. He took the degree of M.D. in 1828, and soon afterwards began the general practice of medicine in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, where he remained ten years. It was during this period that the Massachusetts Lunatic Hospital was erected at Worcester, and opened for patients under the superintendency of Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, who afterwards became the first President of the Association of Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane. Dr. Butler here formed the acquaintance of Dr. Woodward, and also became greatly interested in his methods of treatment and care of the insane, and it was due to the influence of Dr. Woodward, at least in some measure, that Dr. Butler left the general practice of medicine in Worcester, and went to Boston, where he afterwards became the Superintendent of the Boston Lunatic Hospital. He, however, retained this position only about two years.

In 1843 Dr. Butler was appointed Superintendent of the Retreat at Hartford. He succeeded in this position Dr. Amariah Brigham, who left the Retreat to become Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Utica, New York, which was then in process of erection.

As already intimated, it was at the Retreat that Dr. Butler passed the larger portion of his active professional life. It was during his superintendency that the buildings which now comprise the fourth and fifth halls were erected.

During 1868 and 1869 the series of improvements, consisting in the remodelling of the second, first, third, and parlour halls, both north and south, were consummated. He also raised funds by solicitation of subscriptions, mainly in Hartford, for grading and rearranging the grounds of the Retreat, whereby the present lawn, which is celebrated for its attractions, became possible.