

Recorder of Plymouth on a case stated by him. The question in dispute was whether a female pauper lunatic was settled in the appellants' union. The lunatic was born at Plymouth, but had gained no settlement of her own; her mother, a single woman, was born in the defendants' union, and had acquired no settlement.

Although the mother probably had a derivative settlement from her father, the Recorder decided that this could not be inquired into, and that the settlement of the lunatic was in the appellant's union in which she was born.

• Lord Herschel gave judgment in support of this decision. He expressed the opinion that the limitation of inquiry into derivative settlements was intended by the Act to prevent the undue expenditure which such inquiries led to.

The righteousness of the decision is shown, for the cost of a disputed inquiry into the settlement of the grandparent of a lunatic might easily amount to more than the cost of the maintenance of the lunatic for many years. Decisions such as this, which limit the possibilities of litigation, are to be hailed with satisfaction by all interested in the true economy of poor law administration.

Lunacy Certificates.

Are two medical certificates necessary for a "not a pauper," lunacy case? The *Lancet* (July 30th, 1898) draws attention to a statement made by a correspondent that "the justices of his district are in the habit of signing removal orders for lunatics of the working and artisan class on one medical certificate only."

This action can only be taken under section 18 of the Lunacy Act, and on that portion of it which justifies the signing of an order on the ground that the person is "in such circumstances as to require relief for his proper care."

Section 13, clause 2, however, provides that in the case of lunatics not under proper control two medical certificates shall be obtained.

The question would appear to rest on the manner in which the justice is to determine whether the lunatic is "in such circumstances as to require relief for his proper care;" but in regard to the decision of this no guidance is given.

Justice demands that the presumably "not a pauper" lunatic should have the benefit of the doubt, and the advantage accruing from double certification would seem to be

very desirable in all cases removed directly to the asylum. Recent cases before the courts seem to render this advantage of tangible value.

The law's uncertainty in this matter ought assuredly to be set at rest. This might be done by a case brought before a court of law; or the Commissioners in Lunacy, having their attention directed to such occurrences, might reject or confirm the procedure. Many such admissions have evidently occurred, and have been accepted as valid; so that the question may be asked whether these do not act as precedents confirmatory of the practice.

The Act, however, evidently intended, in the 13th clause, that there should be the safeguard of the double certificates in these cases, and it is to be regretted that this should be abrogated by a clause referring to another category of lunatics.

Hypnotism and Will-making.

The recent will case, in which the possibility of undue influence by means of hypnotism was raised, is concluded, and the questions in relation to this possibility can now be considered apart from any reference to that particular case.

These questions would appear to be (α) whether a will could be obtained in an hypnotic condition; (β) whether a suggestion made in an hypnotic state could lead to the subsequent execution of a will; and (γ) whether repeated hypnotism can induce in the person hypnotised a feeling towards the hypnotiser of fear or affection which could fairly be considered "undue influence."

That a person in the hypnotic state might be induced to sign a document purporting to be a will is probable, but that a lawyer, acting in good faith, would draw a will for a person in such a state is most improbable, and the same improbability applies to the second proposition of will-making by suggestion.

"Undue influence" may be exerted over weak-minded persons quite apart from hypnotism, but there can be no doubt that persons who have been frequently hypnotised by the same physician often conceive a great liking for, or have an excessive belief in the powers of, that physician. It is therefore much more probable that such a person would be more susceptible to "undue influence" on the part of the hypnotiser. This is probably a result of the mental deteriora-