

a good constitution to stand the fatigue, and much tact and firmness in dealing with inspectors of poor and parish doctors. He may be regarded, too, as the State paid peripatetic educator of those officials in regard to lunacy and its proper treatment. His work is undoubtedly important, unique, and interesting; but his position is, in many respects, anomalous, and the promotion to the higher dignity, more secure position, less unsettled and more responsible duties of Commissioner, is a reward which any man who is otherwise qualified and has done his duty well, as Dr. Sibbald has done, is fairly entitled to expect.

Dr. Sibbald graduated at Edinburgh University in 1854, and after three years residence in general and special hospitals, was for several years Assistant Physician to the Royal Edinburgh Asylum at Morningside under Dr. Skae, whence he went to take medical charge of the Argyll Asylum. He acted with Dr. Maudsley as editor of this journal, for two years 1870-72, but was obliged by the impossibility of efficiently performing the duties, both of Editor and Deputy-Commissioner at the same time, to relinquish that office. He was Morison Lecturer on Insanity to the College of Physicians, Edinburgh, for 1877.

#### THE LATE DR. THOMAS HOWDEN.

This most amiable young physician has been cut off in his prime. He was the non-resident Medical Superintendent of the Haddington District Asylum, to the duties of which office he devoted much time and thought. It is in all respects, as we can testify from personal inspection, most creditable to its officers, and demonstrates most certainly that a small institution of that kind for an agricultural county can be well and cheaply managed, without a resident medical officer. So small an institution could not possibly have afforded to secure the entire services of a man like Dr. Thomas Howden. His practice was a most extensive one; he worked incessantly, he was greatly beloved and trusted in, and he died suddenly in harness at the post of duty, his end being hastened by over-work. He was a gentle, silent, retiring, loveable man, who did his duty, and who will be greatly missed.

#### THE LAW OF THE FUTURE IN REGARD TO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INSANE.

The following is an extract from the new Criminal Code Bill:—"No act shall be an offence if the person who does it is at the time when it is done prevented, either by defective mental power or by any disease affecting his mind (a) from knowing the nature of his act; or (b) from knowing either that the act is forbidden by law, or that it is morally wrong; or (c) if such person was at the time when the act was done, by reason of any such cause as aforesaid, in such a state that he would not have been prevented from doing that act by knowing that if he did do it the greatest punishment permitted by law for such an offence would be instantly inflicted upon him, provided that this provision shall not apply to any person in whom such a state of mind has been produced by his own default. An act may be an offence although the mind of the person who does it is affected by disease or is deficient in power, if such disease or deficiency does not in fact produce one or other of the effects above mentioned in reference to that act."

#### WITHDRAWAL OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BILL.

This Bill has been abandoned by the Government for this session. It was anything but satisfactory to County Asylum officials. Every effort should be made by every asylum official who can educate or influence his local M.P. to point out the hardships and injustice of its provisions, and the disastrous effect some of them will be likely to have on the welfare of the insane if they are carried into law.