

" TRYING " MENTAL CASES BY JURY.

AN encouraging instance of changing attitudes for the better with regard to the problem of mental diseases is observed in a statement made by a prominent jurist, Supreme Court Justice Humphrey J. Lynch, of White Plains, New York, at a meeting of the Orange County Bar Association, held in Newburgh, New York, on May 26. Speaking in opposition to suggestions that Grand Juries and trials of civil and criminal cases by juries be abolished, Judge Lynch declared emphatically that an exception must be made in connection with procedures attending the commitment of mentally sick persons.

" The only exception which I would make," he said, " is to reform our present judicial system to provide that in cases where mental competency is the issue, trial by jury should be abolished. Determination of mental conditions is one of the most difficult, complicated and technical problems with which the human mind has to grapple. The question of the sanity or insanity of an individual ought not to be determined by laymen, however sincere and well-meaning, but without technical knowledge of mental disorders. Such cases should be determined by Judges in the light of careful examination and testimony by mental experts who are called, not as witnesses for or against a given defendant, but as experts in the field of mental medicine, and qualified to testify as to mental abnormalities in the same way that physicians testify about physical health, engineers about technical engineering problems or architects about architectural issues. A man with a mental disease is not a criminal, but a sick man, and his case should be decided accordingly. The unfortunate victims of mental disease are not committed to prisons in these days, except where they have been proved guilty of criminal acts, but are sent to State or private hospitals for the protection of themselves, their financial interests or the protection of the community."

It is to be hoped that both the bench and the bar will universally adopt this enlightened point of view.—*Mental Hygiene Bulletin*, June, 1927.

THE STATUS AND REGISTRATION OF MENTAL NURSES.

At the XIIIth Annual Conference of the National Asylum Workers' Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on July 6, 1927, the following resolutions regarding the status and registration of mental nurses were adopted:

" That pressure be brought to bear upon the General Nursing Council to accept holders of the Medico-Psychological Certificate on payment of a registration fee."

" That in the opinion of this Conference the only real and effective method of raising the status of mental nurses is by the introduction of an Educational Examination embodying a national syllabus for all new entrants to the Mental Hospital Nursing Service, and we hereby instruct our representatives on the J.C.C. to press forward this question at the earliest opportunity."

A resolution in favour of advising nurses to obtain the State Mental Nursing Certificate irrespective of obtaining the Medico-Psychological Nursing Certificate was lost.

HONOURS.

Prof. G. M. ROBERTSON, M.D., F.R.C.P.Edin., to be Hon. F.R.C.S.Edin.  
Dr. M. J. NOLAN to be J.P. for County Down.

OBITUARY.

Il Senatore LEONARDO BIANCHI, M.D., April 13, 1927.  
Sir HORATIO BRYAN DONKIN, M.D.Oxon., F.R.C.P., July 26, 1927.