

recover without medical treatment. As the admissions (say those under a year's residence) are possibly only a fourth of the total number of patients, and as they are the patients who receive by far the most treatment—a healthy dement not requiring it—this four per cent. of the total may represent 12 per cent. of the admissions. As the admissions are treated as they come in and their health brought up to the normal, it may be that, although only 12 per cent. are treated at one time, in the course of a year all may be treated medicinally. This, of course, is merely arguing as Mr. B. Carter argues. As a matter of fact, in the asylum in which I reside, and in other places, almost all the admissions are treated by “constructive” medicine on admission, for a month or longer. The Report is so offensive that the exposure of an error of this kind may do good. The crudeness of the evidence given is really astonishing.

June 17th.

Yours, etc.,
R.

Obituary.

**SAMUEL GRIERSON, M.R.C.S., SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
ROXBURGH DISTRICT ASYLUM.**

Samuel Grierson died at Edinburgh on the 19th April, 1890, the day before his birthday which would have made him sixty-two years of age. His father was a farmer in Kirkcudbrightshire. He worked his way slowly towards the medical profession, and for about five years was assistant to Dr. Hoffman at Margate, after which he went to study in Edinburgh. Here he found a former friend, Thomas Aitken, another Galloway man, the esteemed Superintendent of the Inverness Asylum. They read and worked together, and kept through life a lasting friendship. After taking the diploma of M.R.C.S. in London, Grierson became assistant in the Southern Counties Asylum in Dumfries for about seven years. Of Dr. Gilchrist, the physician of the Crichton Institution, he always talked in the highest terms. In 1867 Dr. Grierson was appointed Superintendent of the District Asylum for Roxburgh, Berwick, and Selkirkshire. At that time patients were lodged in the buildings connected with Millholme House in Musselburgh; but in 1872 they were shifted to the handsome asylum at Melrose, which was built under Dr. Grierson's direction. One might say that Dr. Grierson's character was a fine blend. He was calm and self-reliant, but sympathetic and very kind-hearted. In manner he was stately, courteous, and somewhat retiring. Though he frequently went to Medical Societies, he scarcely ever spoke, and in company he was always willing to let the rest do the talking. It was only when one or two friends were with him that he would take his share in the conversation. Though habitually grave, he had a fine sense of the ludicrous, and when fairly overcome, his laugh was pleasant to hear. To his patients he was always kindly, attentive, and affable; he would pass hours with them, listening patiently, trying to soothe them, or attend to their little requests. He knew all their cases by heart, which, perhaps, was one of the reasons he disliked taking written notes. He often spoke to them in their own Doric—no one knew better the homely force of the Scottish tongue.

Dr. Grierson's main thought was to comfort and relieve his patients. He never looked approvingly upon attempts to do without locked doors, and was never ashamed to use restraint when he thought his patients' safety and welfare really required it. No one who watched his daily life could fail to see that he was the best and kindest of superintendents; but of self-praise, self-assertion, or affectation of any sort, one would detect no trace. Well-read and skilful in general medicine, Grierson was very skilful in the treatment of the insane, and

his prognosis was to be trusted. I once said to him:—"I wonder that you who have seen so much do not write anything for the Psychological Association." His reply was characteristic—

"Well, what do I know that has not been already published again and again?"

"If everyone had your scruples," I said, "we should have few papers."

"That may be," he replied, with a quiet smile.

He was a shrewd observer of character, and his remarks were often very penetrating. Speaking of false, hypocritical men, his scorn came with a flash, and then passed away, as if he hated the subject.

To those under him he was ever considerate; to his medical assistants kind and courteous. During the recess he would find a place for a poor or deserving student as clinical assistant. He was always willing to do his utmost to help anyone who needed it. Dr. Grierson's fondness for smoking was so pronounced that one cannot miss it out in a descriptive sketch. It suited his reflective character. About six years ago the first symptoms of phthisis appeared. The malady went on slowly. In the autumn of 1885 he had inflammation of the elbow-joint of the left arm, which had to be amputated. He spent the winter in Egypt, and on his return in the spring of 1886 he resigned his post of Superintendent, remaining consulting physician to the asylum. He was allowed at first an income of £500 a year; but two years ago the District Lunacy Board, tiring of their liberality, cut off £200 from the annuity, though it was not difficult to see that he could not enjoy it long. Last winter his strength was evidently declining, and he suffered much from weakness and breathlessness; but he remained till the end the same calm, genial, sympathetic man, taking a kindly interest in others, and never complaining about himself. Dr. Grierson was a member of the Episcopal Church; he was a Conservative in politics, but perfectly liberal and tolerant towards the views of others. He leaves a widow, one son, and three daughters.

W. W. IRELAND.

DR. BUTLER, HARTFORD, CON., U.S.A.

The death of this well-known and greatly respected alienist is announced. In our next issue we shall give a memoir of this distinguished physician.

AMERICAN CONGRESS OF MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

A circular has been issued by the Medico-Legal Society of New York announcing a second International Congress of Medical Jurisprudence to be held in New York in 1892. The first was held in 1889.

Two prizes have been offered by the same Society, value 150 dollars each, for the best Essay on a subject connected with Medical Jurisprudence. The papers must be sent in before the 1st of April, 1891, to the President of the Society, 57, Broadway, New York. Competitors must enrol themselves as members of the Medico-Legal Society of New York.