

and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland shall each appoint twelve medical and twelve chemical assessors, to act within their respective jurisdictions.

5. Every assessor shall receive notice in writing of his appointment, and every such appointment shall be for the period of three years from and after the date of such notice.

6. (i.) At any time before or during the trial of any civil cause or criminal prosecution, any judge may require the registrar to summon to his assistance not less than three medical or chemical assessors.

(ii.) Every assessor so summoned shall be bound to attend at the trial and assist the judge in the manner hereinafter provided, and for every wilful disobedience to such summons shall be liable at the discretion of the judge to a penalty not exceeding five pounds, and shall receive for his services a fee, fixed by the judge after the trial, of not less than five guineas a day or for any part of a day, together with such an allowance for travelling and incidental expenses as the judge may direct.

(iii.) The said fee and allowance shall be payable out of the county rates.

7. It shall be the duty of every assessor summoned to and attending any trial as aforesaid to assist the judge by answering any questions, and by expressing in open court his opinion with reference to any medico-legal issue that may arise or may have arisen therein. But the judge, or in cases tried with a jury, the jury, shall not be bound to follow the opinion of any, or of a majority, of the assessors, unless he or they concurs or concur in it.

8. Nothing in this Act contained shall affect, or in any way prejudice, the right of any party to any civil cause or criminal prosecution to support his case, as hitherto, by the evidence of medical or chemical experts.

9. This Act shall commence and take effect from and after the first day of January, 1839.

10. Section fifty-six of the Judicature Act, 1873, from and including the words "other than" down to and including the word "crown" is hereby repealed.

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### Obituary.

#### DR. J. N. RAMAER.

Psychological Medicine in Holland received a severe blow on the 2nd of November, 1887, by the decease of Dr. J. M. Ramaer.

He was born on the 20th of April, 1817, at Bois le Duc, and attended the grammar school at that place. His schoolfellows say that he was one of the best scholars, and that he displayed a great aptness in mastering difficulties. He afterwards studied medicine at Utrecht, where he was a pupil of Professor Schroeder van der Kolk. His medical degree was taken at Groningen, to which place his parents moved after a few years. The degree of M.D. was conferred upon him after his writing and defending a dissertation: "*De Æthiopica generis humani varietate.*"

After leaving the University of Groningen he set out on a tour to the schools of Vienna, Munich, and Paris, previously to his settling as a physician at Rotterdam in 1840.

The lessons of Professor van der Kolk caused him to make nervous and mental diseases his favourite study, and it was at the recommendation of this great anatomist and neurologist that Ramaer was appointed medical superintendent to the lunatic asylum at Zutphen. He was appointed in 1841 and entered upon his duties on 18th January, 1842.

It was in 1841 that the first law was passed in the Netherlands which greatly improved the lot of the insane, and it shows the great trust which Van der Kolk, the *auctor intellectualis* of the law, put in Ramaer, then only 24 years old. His subsequent career showed that the trust was well deserved. He devoted his energy and powers to the Zutphen Asylum till 1863, when he was appointed medical superintendent of the asylum at Delft. He stayed at Delft six years, and on the 1st of July, 1869, he moved to the Hague, where he settled as

physician for nervous and mental diseases. The Board of Governors of the Delft Asylum, wishing to profit by his experience and learning, appointed him consulting physician to their asylum. This honourable post he resigned in 1872, having obtained a call from the Home Office to be inspector of lunatic asylums.

It is only natural that a law, however excellent, should have many deficiencies which are only discovered after such a law has been in existence for some time. And so it was with the law passed in 1841. When Ramaer came into authority he kept urging the necessity that the old law should be recalled, and another and better one be substituted. His endeavours were successful, and on the 1st of October, 1884, he had the satisfaction of seeing the present law of lunacy issued.

It was during his stay at Zutphen that he started the plan of uniting the different medical associations of different places into one general medical society, and it is in a great part owing to his increasing endeavours and unflinching energy that he saw his favourite plan improve, and when the general medical association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, Ramaer had the great satisfaction of delivering the presidential address.

Another medical society gratefully recognizes him as its founder, viz., the Psychological Society, of which he resigned the chair when appointed to be Inspector of Lunacy.

The King decorated him with the Order of the Lion, and its device, "Virtus nobilitat," was well placed on his noble breast.

He was an honorary member of several learned societies, one of which was the Medico-Psychological Association of England. He was the author of several papers relating to our branch of medicine.

If it may be said that he tasted the sweets of life, still he suffered from bereavements. He lost an only daughter, a son (a promising young barrister), and a well beloved wife. An indefatigable worker in his asylum and his study, he was a kind father and cheerful friend, and those who enjoyed his friendship and hospitality all agree in their praises of his conversational powers and the vast amount of his general information.

He encouraged work, and stimulated young physicians to search the vast field before them.

His death was occasioned by a comparatively trifling cause. While cutting a corn his knife slipped, and he received a small wound, which caused him little, if any pain. Unfortunately he neglected this small scratch, and continued walking. Very soon after an abscess formed, and, notwithstanding the best nursing and the most stringent antiseptic treatment, sloughing set in, and in a few weeks caused his death.

A good and a noble man has departed this life; well may his family weep for him, but let those he left behind, find consolation in the consciousness that the deceased bore a name which was honoured and respected throughout the land.

F. M. COWAN, M.D.

Dordrecht.

[We add our lively regrets to those of Dr. Cowan at the loss of this able and genial physician, who became an Honorary Member of the Association a year ago. He took an active part in the Congress of Mental Medicine held at Antwerp in 1885, and at the recent inauguration of Guislain's statue at Ghent. He was present as the representative of Dutch Psychology, and he delivered an able and feeling speech at the banquet. We trust that as impartial and experienced an Inspector of asylums will be appointed his successor. He certainly will not be more so.]