

first week of November, on "The Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous Mechanism of the Viscera."

In the first lecture he described the hardening and staining methods employed in the histological study of the peripheral nervous system, and described the nature of the nerve-endings at the secreting cell, at the unstriated muscle fibre, and at the blood-vessel especially in excretory organs. In the second lecture he demonstrated the peripheral nerve-mechanisms of the spleen, kidneys, adrenals, and other viscera, and traced the connections of the terminal ganglia of the sympathetic with the nerve-endings in the viscera on the one hand and with the fine fibres of the cerebro-spinal axis on the other. The third lecture was mainly concerned with the physiology of the subject, the innervation of the heart by the vagus and the sympathetic.

The lectures were most interesting, and were profusely illustrated by lantern slides and microscopes. Next year Dr. Morison purposes dealing with the nervous mechanism of the viscera in relation to pathology and clinical medicine.

RECENT MEDICO-LEGAL CASES.

REPORTED BY DR. MÉRCIER.

[The Editors request that members will oblige by sending full newspaper reports of all cases of interest as published by the local press at the time of the assizes.]

Reg. v. Marriotini.

Prisoner stabbed his wife in twenty-five places, and about two hours afterwards threw himself into the Thames. While in the water he discharged a revolver four times. He was rescued, and then said, "I have killed my wife by stabbing her with a large knife. She worried me so much that I told her she would make me murder her." Subsequently he said, "I had a quarrel with my wife. I have been unhappy for twenty years. I have had a miserable life." It was proved that three years before there had been an explosion at the café kept by the prisoner, and that he received such injuries that he was in hospital for five months. When he returned home he was greatly changed, became very irritable, and complained of pains in the head. For ten days before the murder he suffered very much from sleeplessness, and used to wander about the house at night talking to himself.

Dr. Bastian, who had examined the prisoner at the request of the Treasury, and Dr. Scott, medical officer to Holloway Gaol, were called for the defence, and stated that they were of opinion that the prisoner was insane on the date of the murder, and was not responsible for his actions.

The jury found the prisoner "Guilty, but insane."—Central Criminal Court, September 15, 1897 (Mr. Justice Bruce).—*Times*, September 16.

The prisoner's own confession showed that he knew what he was doing and alleged a motive for the crime. The medical witnesses were allowed the freest license, and answered the very questions that had to be put to the jury.

Commissioners v. Shaw.

In November, 1896, Dr. Maudsley was ordered by the Lord Chancellor, at the instance of the Commissioners in Lunacy, to visit and report upon two persons who were residing with Mrs. Shaw in an unlicensed house at Elstree, and who were reported to be insane. Dr. Maudsley visited them accordingly, and reported that one of the persons (J. F.) was an imbecile, probably from birth, and was certifiable as a person of unsound mind; and that the other (D. V. S.) was suffering from chronic insanity, with hallucinations of hearing and delusions, and was certifiably insane. Dr.

Maudsley further reported that the bedrooms occupied by these two patients were ill-furnished, not clean, in need of painting and papering; and that the wet had soaked through the roof and caused a considerable fall of plaster, which left the laths exposed.

Upon this report the Commissioners, on the advice of the Solicitor to the Treasury, instituted proceedings; and Mrs. Shaw was summoned before the justices at the Barnet Petty Sessions for receiving and detaining in a home, not being an institution for lunatics or a workhouse, two lunatics; for taking charge, for payment, of J. F.; and for a like offence with respect to D. V. S. The justices are reported to have dismissed the second and third charges, on the ground that they were satisfied that neither of the alleged lunatics was a lunatic within the meaning of the Lunacy Act, 1890; and they declined, on a similar ground, to commit the defendant for trial on the first charge.

This case is another example of the lenity with which alleged offences against the Lunacy Act are regarded by the public, so long as the allegations are not made against medical men. If it were alleged that in any licensed house the bedrooms occupied by patients were ill-furnished, not clean, and had the plaster dropping off the walls from damp, we can imagine the howl of execration that would be raised by the halfpenny journals, and the clamour for the instant abolition of "private asylums." But so long as the persons charged are responsible to no one, are exempt from all supervision, are unlicensed, and, above all, have no pretensions to medical knowledge or skill, they can do as they please, and the county Shallows will not interfere.

Friendly Societies and Insanity.

William M'Rorie, a member of the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, became insane, and was removed to the Perth District Asylum, and Mr. D. T. Clement, solicitor, Crieff, was appointed *curator bonis* on his estate. The patient was kept there at the expense of the Parochial Board of the parish of Crieff till August, 1896. At that date the patient succeeded to some property by the death of his father, and the Parochial Board intimated a claim for the patient's board and lodging from the date of his father's death, and further that he must be transferred to a private asylum. The claim was paid by the curator, and the patient was removed to Murray's Royal Asylum. By the rules of the society of which the patient was a member members are entitled to relief in sickness and when unable to follow their usual employment, or when in distressed circumstances; but if a member becomes chargeable to a Parochial Board no relief is allowed unless the member has some one dependent upon him, which was not so in this case. Consequently the society were not entitled to pay sick benefit up to August, 1896. Mr. Clement, having paid his ward's board and lodging from that date, intimated to the society a claim for sick benefit in respect that his ward was being kept in the asylum at his own expense. The society refused payment of the claim under their general rule 63, viz., "If any member afflicted with insanity, permanent debility, or loss of sight be provided for in some place of refuge, the Lodge officers shall have power to detain the sick pay for his benefit." Against this decision an appeal was intimated, in terms of the society's rules, to the Lodge Arbitration Committee on behalf of the *curator bonis*, but the Arbitration Committee refused to sustain the appeal on the same grounds as the Lodge had done. A further appeal was intimated to the Arbitration Committee of the District of the Order. After a lengthy discussion, this committee sustained the appeal, and found (1) that as the ward had been in the asylum since August 28, 1896, at his own expense, the society were bound to pay the sick benefit claimed; (2) that the deposit of 10s. made in terms of the rules of the society by the appellant be returned; and (3) that the society pay the expenses incurred in hearing the complaint.

The Law and Insane Murderers.

The legal procedure in cases of homicide by certified lunatics seems to be now clearly established in Scotland. Two murders occurred in two Scottish asylums last summer. The patients were dealt with in the same way. On intimation to the Procurator-Fiscal they were brought before the Sheriff, who, being assured of their mental unsoundness, remitted them to the higher courts. On their appearance there the advocate for the Crown intimated that they were insane, and led evidence to that effect by calling expert witnesses. The judge immediately ordered the lunatics to be removed to the Lunatics' Department of the Perth Prison and there confined during her Majesty's pleasure.

THE ENLARGEMENT OF RAINHILL ASYLUM.

We regret to observe that the Lancashire Asylums Board have decided to provide additional "temporary" accommodation at Rainhill for 200 patients. It is to be hoped that these buildings will be really temporary, and that the Board will remove them as soon as possible. The evils of these overgrown institutions have been so often the subject of unfavourable comment that we refrain from further remarks at present, except to express sympathy with Dr. Wigglesworth in having this unwelcome addition thrust upon him. We certainly cannot agree with Mr. Turner in his reported remarks to the effect that, as in a very short time the lunacy requirements of the county would be such as to occupy all the permanent provision that the Board anticipated making, as many of the asylums as could should make temporary accommodation. If the requirements transcend the possibilities under the arrangements now completed, it seems to us high time that the question of further permanent provision should be faced.

EDINBURGH DISTRICT LUNACY BOARD.

An important report upon asylums on the Continent and in England has been prepared by a committee of the Edinburgh District Lunacy Board, in view of the proposed new asylum for Edinburgh. It is a document of special interest to those interested in the provision of accommodation for the insane, and especially to us as an expression of opinion in regard to recent methods of asylum construction set forth by a body of gentlemen who approach the subject with open minds. The deputation returned impressed with the conviction that the asylum at Alt Scherbitz was the best they had seen, and that Edinburgh should adopt that system. The estate of Wester Bangour, near Uphall, extending to 861 acres, has been purchased for £13,000; and the District Board have resolved to construct their institution on the villa system, at an expense of some £150,000. We understand that the plans will be open to a limited competition, and we shall watch the development of this important hospital with great interest.

"THE GROWTH OF INSANITY IN SCOTLAND."

An article under this heading, "contributed" to *The Scotsman* of 8 December, 1897, draws attention to the existence of "crazy" areas in Scotland.

Thus, while the ratio of the insane in Scotland generally for the 1895 quinquenniad was 27.1 per 10,000, this is described as rising to 90 per 10,000 in the parishes in Argyllshire, but the writer does not draw attention to the fact that in the twenty-five remaining parishes the ratio must, on his own showing, fall below the average.