

his stomach he will sink. He was therefore to be fed in the old orthodox manner. He was seized by two or three keepers as they were called, his mouth was wrenched open with an iron spoon or blunt chisel, frequently to the damage of several of his teeth, his nose was held tight, and the fluid poured down the throat of the half suffocated patient, who not understanding the necessity for these extreme attentions would only become more alarmed, suspicious, and determined in his opposition.

Even when the stomach pump was used as it would be when professional aid was sought, the same difficulty existed as to the opening the mouth, and to keep it open a gag was used, which was secured by strings tied behind the head. Usually, however, the feeding process was trusted to the attendants, and it was not an unusual occurrence for patients to leave an asylum minus a few teeth.

To obviate these barbarities the late Dr. Balmanno invented his nasal apparatus. It was regularly used by him, and his successor Dr. Hutcheson, and has since been adopted in some of the English asylums. I am not certain whether it is used in the general hospitals of this country; but in certain cases of tetanus, and in stricture of the œsophagus it might be useful. Mr. Marshall, the medical superintendent of female patients at Colney Hatch, has found it answer all the purposes it is intended for, and I believe it has been tried at the Northampton General Lunatic Hospital.

I have known patients kept alive for weeks, and ultimately saved by means of this instrument, and in one instance a gentleman who had obstinately refused all nourishment and medicine for a protracted time until he was upon the point of sinking, submitted quietly for several days to the introduction of the tube, sitting up in bed voluntarily, and requiring no holding of the hands or head. He had made a vow to starve himself, and kept it rigidly until a few doses of medicine set his brain right, and a short argument, in addition to a sharp appetite, convinced him of the folly of his proceedings. As a general rule however, I have found that in cases of refusal of food, where perversity and sullenness of temper are exhibited, the introduction of the tube once or twice is sufficient. The patient finding himself baffled in his determination, at once succumbs, disliking the inconvenience he is putting himself to. In other cases where there are physical causes to account for the anorexia, medicine may be administered by this instrument, for which purpose a small elastic india rubber bag is provided sufficiently capacious to hold a good sized draught. This is supplied in the case, and fits the tubes tightly.

Mr. Wilkes' paper reminded me of Dr. Balmanno, and of his being the physician who first invented and used the nasal apparatus among the insane, and it occurred to me that many who may have employed it were not aware of this fact. Dr. Balmanno did much in his day to improve the condition of the lunatic, and no one had he lived would have taken a warmer interest in the great progress that has since his time been made in this department of medicine than he would have done. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS PRICHARD, M.D.
Abington Abbey, Northampton.

Medical Certificates.

Dear Sir,—I believe every medical practitioner who has been called upon to fill up a certificate according to the form 16 and 18 Vic., c. 96, has felt the difficulty of doing so correctly. For my own part I have never yet seen one which did not require amendment. The trouble thus occasioned would be removed if the letters of reference, a, b, c, d, e, were less microscopic; and if the directions were marginal, and printed in red ink.

The Commissioners generally return imperfect certificates for correction: but it seems this is not invariably done: but surely the doctrine that the Commissioners are not responsible for the correctness of certificates under which insane persons are confined, [see Commissioners Circular, Feb. 14th, 1855,] and that the responsibility, when they make no objection, still rests with the "Superintendents and others" is unsound. At all events, it is both inconvenient and dangerous.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours truly,
A SUPERINTENDENT.

To the Editor of the Asylum Journal.

Dear Sir,—Allow me call the attention of superintendents to an India rubber chamber utensil, which Messrs. Macintosh of Manchester have made at my suggestion, and which I think will be very useful for violent and excited patients, who could not be trusted with those made of metal or earthenware.

One of the multifarious uses to which gutta percha has been applied has been the manufacture of these articles, but practically we find, that besides the difficulty of keeping them sweet, from the impossibility of using hot water to them, they are easily broken when made of the ordinary strength, and if made heavier they become serious weapons in the hands of excited patients.

The India rubber utensils seem to be calculated to meet all these objections, for while of sufficient strength to resist the ordinary rough usage of an asylum, they are useless as offensive weapons, and boiling water may be employed to cleanse them.

The price charged at present is rather high, but Messrs. Macintosh consider that they shall be enabled to offer them at a lower rate if there is any demand for them.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES WILKES.
Stafford County Lunatic Asylum.

Trial and Conviction of a Husband for the ill-treatment of his Lunatic Wife.

At the Devon Spring Assizes on the 17th ult., before Mr. Justice Crowder, John Rundle was charged with abusing, ill-treating, and wilfully neglecting, Amelia Rundle, his wife, a lunatic.

Mr. Stock stated that the prosecution was instituted by the Commissioners in Lunacy; and that they were fully determined to prosecute in all cases of a similar

nature which might come under their notice, in order that the helpless lunatic might receive every protection which the law would afford. He called the following witnesses.

Ann Hill stated that the prisoner's wife, who was now dead, was her daughter. She had been married to the prisoner eleven years. Some time previous to the 7th of October, the day upon which she was admitted into the lunatic asylum, she met her in Devonport, and she showed her her arms, which were much scratched. They went together to the prisoner's house in St. Aubyn street, and witness told the prisoner that he ought to be ashamed of himself to ill-treat her, upon which he ordered her out of his house. The prisoner struck his wife with a hearth brush, and said he would make no more of killing her than he would of killing a rabbit. He afterwards removed to Monument street. On one occasion he refused his wife and her (witness) admittance, and they went away. The prisoner's wife had had no rest the previous night, and on returning to the house she fell down through weakness. At that time witness observed that her daughter's mind was disturbed.

Ann King, the wife of deceased lunatic's brother, remembered the period when the prisoner lived in Monument street. She had some conversation with his wife on one occasion, and afterwards took her to her mother's house. A short time afterwards the witness saw the prisoner and asked him where his wife was, when he made use of a disgusting expression, and said he hoped she would rot in prison or be transported. On another occasion when she went to the prisoner's house, the prisoner's wife came down stairs with her stays outside her dress, and looking very wild. She said "Jaak" had beaten her, upon which the prisoner laughed. She then showed the bruises on her shoulders and breast, and said to the prisoner "you know you did it:" to which he replied "you were going to throw coals at me." He at first denied having struck her, but he subsequently admitted that he struck her with a brush.

Jane Butcher, a widow, residing in St. Aubyn-street, recollected when the prisoner lived next door to her. On one occasion she heard a violent "screeching" in the prisoner's house, and she ran in and found his wife crouched down in a corner: she said "the brute has kicked me with his boots." Witness had often heard him talk of the state of his wife's mind, and she remonstrated with him: she told him he ought to have a person to take care of her as she was incapable of doing anything herself, but he replied that it was no more harm to kill her than it was to kill a rabbit. Witness had noticed the alterations in the wife's mind some months previously; sometimes she took things from witness's house which did not belong to her. In reference to these occurrences the prisoner had told witness he could not be responsible for her acts in the state of mind she was in.

Mr. Tripe, surgeon, of Devonport, stated that he had examined the prisoner's wife. He told her she would be taken to a place where her mental and bodily health would be taken care of: she replied that she knew she was not in a sound state of mind, and would be glad to go to a place where she would be

safe from the attacks of her husband: she bared her left arm and shoulder, and showed some bruises, and, pointing to her husband, said "he did it." Witness was of opinion that the bruises were produced by a blunt instrument. He found several bruises on the abdomen and thighs, the hips, the left arm, and the buttocks, the latter he thought might have been inflicted by a kick: a magistrate was present at the time, and a sort of charge was made against the prisoner, upon which he denied it, and took up a brush which he said she might have ran against when he was defending himself from her attacks. Witness was of opinion it was a confirmed case of lunacy.

Dr. Bucknill stated that he was the medical superintendent of the Devon County Lunatic Asylum. He examined Amelia Bunde on the 8th of October, the day after her admission, and he observed the bruises which Mr. Tripe had described. He thought that the bruises could not have been self inflicted. The condition of the patient as to her mind was decay of the faculties. In his opinion she had been in a state of unsound mind for a year or more. She had suffered an attack of apoplexy and was paralysed. On the 12th of December she was delivered of a still born child; and on the 12th of January she died. About the end of November the prisoner called at the Asylum, and witness sent for him to his office, and said "Your wife has told me that the injuries from which she suffered when she was brought here were inflicted by your violence. If that was the case, your conduct was brutal and unmanly." Prisoner replied that it was true, and that he was sorry for it.

The defendant, in addressing the jury, said his wife was in the habit of falling down the stairs which caused the bruises; and he asked why the case was not brought before the magistrates when she was alive? He admitted striking her on the shoulder: and stated that she had thrown him into great expences, and on one occasion she had put poison into his tea-pot.

A verdict of Guilty having been found, The Judge said that he should reserve the point of law as to whether the prisoner could be deemed, in the words of the statute, to have the care and charge of his wife. For this purpose he sentenced the prisoner to six months' imprisonment with hard labour; and he divided the term, passing sentence for five months and a fortnight for the common assault, and the remaining fortnight for the offence charged under the lunacy statute.

Asylums for Criminal Lunatics.

In the House of Lords on the 9th ultimo, Lord St. Leonards rose to ask, whether Her Majesty's Government had any intention to erect asylums for criminal lunatics? Under the existing system a prison frequently became what it was never intended to be—an asylum for lunatics; and he considered, that as it was improper to convert a prison into an asylum, so it was improper to make an asylum a prison, for the rules and regulations of the one and the other were altogether different.

He was aware that he might be met by a statement