

gladly accept any well-grounded advice offered them by a responsible committee of our body with the sanction of an annual meeting. Justice also compels us to own that the blame for any shortcomings in scientific information which appears now in the Blue Book lies more at our door than theirs, and the excuse on our part would be the same as they are entitled to offer, *vis.*, the intolerable pressure of other routine duties. One little improvement I would suggest to them on my own responsibility is that each table should have at the head or foot a reference to the corresponding table of the preceding Report. To those who seek solid information it is somewhat embarrassing to follow the changes in order, which have necessarily to be made from time to time.

I hardly like to ask further space from you, gentlemen, but a word about the reviews of the Scottish and Irish reports seems justifiable.

It is a word, indeed, as to Scotland, for to my mind that review is cast in absolutely correct form. It points out the value in the volume rather than the value of the reviewer.

As to Ireland there is plentiful hammering of the Report, but the tone is jovially direct. There is distinct humour in the suggestion that the Blue Book should be exalted to a mission of earnest exhortation, warning, and advice as to what a man should do (eat and drink?) to save himself and his kin from the scourge of insanity. Were Dr. Courtenay to fall to the temptation I am sure that no one would more enjoy the task of cutting the manifesto into ribbons than your delegate. Why, gentlemen, there is only one man in England—or to be more correct, in the United Kingdom—who could preach this thing roundly and effectively. And when Ezekiel had prophesied could he teach a stronger lesson to the people than is daily taught to them by the removal to the asylum from their midst of those who, to their knowledge, have neglected the duties of life of morality and sobriety? The man in the street and the man in the cowshed alike know the road there as well as any one can teach it to them.

A suggestion, made by way of humour apparently, to include birth as a cause has some real scientific value, for I remember to have seen somewhere in the JOURNAL not long ago some statistics about injury to the head in cases of instrumental delivery. But it is a wonder that the suggestion did not go farther back—some 280 days. If it were possible to obtain and digest accurate facts as to parental state at the time of conception—poverty or wealth, disease or health, vice or virtue, worry or happiness, fear or resignation—we should go some way further towards solving vital problems.

With many apologies for so lengthy an intrusion,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

RESARTOR.

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM CHARLES HILLS.

We regret to announce the death of Dr. Hills, which occurred on January 18th last from cardiac failure, shortly after retiring to rest at his house in the Chantry, Norwich. He had been in indifferent health for some eighteen months past, but the end came suddenly and unexpectedly. Dr. Hills was the second son of Mr. Monson Hills the elder, Resident Apothecary and Cupper of Guy's Hospital, and was born within its precincts on February 25th, 1828. He was therefore nearly seventy-four at the time of his decease. On leaving Merchant Taylors' School he commenced his medical training at Guy's Hospital, where he was intimately known to Sir W. W. Gull, Mr. Bryant, Sir Samuel Wilks, and many others. Upon obtaining the diplomas of M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. in 1850, he was elected House Surgeon at the Surrey Dispensary, and subsequently, in 1854, Assistant Medical Officer at the Kent County Asylum at Barming, under Dr. James Huxley, who is still living, the brother of the late Professor Huxley. In 1859 he graduated as M.D. Aberd., and in 1861 was promoted to the Medical Superintendency of the Norfolk County Asylum at Thorpe, near Norwich. He succeeded a lay superintendent, and many troubles and difficulties beset him at the outset, but his tact and sympathy, combined with firmness, carried him safely

through these to the lasting benefit of the patients and institution. He quickly gained the entire confidence of the committee of county magistrates who controlled the asylum, and retained it to the full until his retirement in January, 1887, when he was granted a pension of £600 a year. The remaining fifteen years of his life were employed in consulting practice in mental diseases, and in gratuitous medical work amongst the poor of Thorpe. He was laid to rest on January 22nd in the picturesque churchyard of Postwick, beside his second wife and only son, whose death at Charterhouse School in 1886 was a grievous blow to his parents. He leaves one daughter, Mrs. Aubrey A. Blake, to mourn his loss. The funeral was largely attended by medical friends, including Messrs. Wm. Cadge, Charles Williams, Charles Muriel, Thomas H. Morse, Dr. Ernest White, and Dr. Law, the Acting Superintendent of the County Asylum in the absence of Dr. Thomson through ill-health. Chief Attendant Fox and several of the older members of the staff of the institution were also present as a mark of respect for their old superintendent.

SAMUEL ALEXANDER KENNY STRAHAN.

Many members of our Association will hear with regret of Dr. Strahan's untimely death, which took place on February 21st in London.

Born in Belfast in August, 1853, the second son of John Strahan, Esq., of that city, he was educated privately and at Queen's College, Belfast, where he had a distinguished career. He gained distinction also in his clinical work, being awarded the Malcolm Exhibition at the Belfast Royal Hospital, and the Gold Medal at the Belfast Hospital for Children. He graduated in medicine and surgery in 1879. He began practice at Callington, in Cornwall, in 1880, but not liking general practice he abandoned it for the appointment of Assistant Medical Officer at the East Riding Asylum, Beverley. In 1881 he obtained a similar post in Northampton County Asylum, where he remained until November, 1897, when he resigned, having the previous year been admitted a barrister of the Middle Temple.

In 1898, owing to poor health, he went for a tour round the world with Dr. Perry Patterson of Canterbury, returning to England the following year. After this he divided his time between living in the Middle Temple and travelling until the outbreak of the war in South Africa, when he offered to go to the front as surgeon, but on account of his age was not successful. Subsequently he made several voyages to Natal, where he frequently assisted in the military hospital at Durban and up country. His last visit was in 1901, when he had a very severe attack of dysentery, and after his return home he lived chiefly at Brighton in order to recuperate. While on a short visit to town he died suddenly from heart failure on the date mentioned.

From the beginning of his professional career Dr. Strahan devoted much of his energy to literary work. His first contribution was in 1890 to the *Lancet*, and his last in October of last year to the *Humanitarian*. Most of his writings were on professional subjects, especially dealing with questions relating to mental diseases. Besides his numerous articles on these subjects in our own JOURNAL, the *Lancet*, *British Medical Journal*, *Westminster Review*, etc., he published works on *Marriage and Disease* and *Suicide and Insanity*. These had a wide circulation.

In 1891 he read a paper before the British Association on "Instinctive Criminality," which was the subject of a long and bitter controversy in the Press. Dr. Strahan did not confine his literary activity to professional subjects, but contributed a good deal of fiction to magazines and published two short novels; all of these were published anonymously.

Dr. Strahan was a man of brilliant abilities and wide sympathies, kind-hearted to a fault, and was as an assistant loyal to the backbone. Politically he held extreme views, but had a great respect for his opponents. For many years he was a member of the Savage Club in London, and its members cancelled the Saturday night house dinner on the occasion of his death.

He never married. He leaves two brothers, James Andrew Strahan, barrister-at-law, Assistant Reader of the Law of Property, Lincoln's Inn; and George William Strahan, a solicitor and partner in the firm of Biggar and Strahan, Belfast. His only sister is the wife of Dr. McKee, of Belfast.