

PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT.

It is with extreme regret that we record the death of Mr. John Forster, one of the Honorary Commissioners in Lunacy. For many years he acted as one of the Visiting Commissioners, fulfilling the duties of his office in the most able manner, and winning the esteem and respect of all those who were fortunate enough to know him intimately.

A few years ago he resigned, in consequence of failing health, the post of Visiting Commissioner, and continued to devote his energies to the less arduous duties of Honorary Commissioner; this enabled him to employ his spare time in literary pursuits, and his two last works, the "Life of Charles Dickens" and the "Life of Dean Swift," will of themselves show what a loss the literary world has sustained in his death, and they will remain as standard English works on biography.

We announce with great satisfaction the appointment of Dr. Crichton Browne to the office of Lord Chancellor's Visitor of Lunatics, vacated by Dr. Bucknill in consequence of illness.

Dr. Crichton Browne is the son of Dr. Browne, of Crindan, Dumfries, formerly one of the Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland, and one of our greatest living authorities in lunacy. For many years he superintended most efficiently the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield, Yorkshire, and inaugurated the "West Riding Asylum Reports," which, under his editorial bâton, has become an important work on insanity in England.

All those who have had an opportunity of studying under his careful tuition in the clinical wards of the asylum, or in the *post-mortem* room, bear testimony to the great benefit they have derived from his valuable assistance. By his resignation of the post of Superintendent, the patients lose a kind and skilful physician, and the students a friend whom it will not be easy to replace. His valuable contributions to psychological science are too well known to require comment; and those who know him can bear ample testimony to that combination of courtesy and business talent which eminently qualify him for the responsibilities of his new office.

SUICIDE OF A CIVIL ENGINEER.—Mr. Bedford held an inquest, at Charing Cross Hospital, on the body of Mr. Thomas Biddle Lloyd, aged 48, a civil engineer, of 6 Cecil Street, Strand, who was found in Northumberland Street, Strand, lying in the roadway, shot through the head. Mr.

Jenkins, solicitor, watched the case on the part of the family of the deceased. Mr. Henry John Lloyd, of Pontrilas, Hereford, said that the deceased was his brother, whom he last saw alive some time ago. Deceased had enjoyed good health until three years since, when he contracted a dangerous fever in Spain, from which he had never thoroughly recovered, his brain having become seriously affected thereby. He had not shown any actual signs of insanity, and it was never contemplated that he would raise his hand against his own life. Mr. John Marshall, of 10 Savile Row, W., professor of surgery at the University College Hospital, said that he had known deceased for very many years past, and had seen no decided symptoms of insanity. The serious effects of the fever caught in Spain caused his friends such alarm that witness, Mr. Dallas, and other gentlemen had made arrangements for deceased to proceed to the South of France, accompanied by a thoroughly qualified medical student, and the party were to have started to-day. Witness had no doubt whatever that the mind of deceased had become affected by ill-health, which had driven him to take his own life. By the Coroner: Had seen deceased whilst he lay in the hospital, when, in answer to inquiries why he shot himself, he replied "I could not help it." Dr. Canton, senior surgeon at the Charing Cross Hospital, said that the deceased had died from blood poisoning consequent upon the wound. He had made a *post-mortem* examination, and found the bullet firmly fixed in the bone of the skull. Mr. Marshall, recalled, said that the deceased had been connected with a mining company in Newfoundland, and his troubles with that company alone would be sufficient to drive him out of his mind. He need not say more, for it was useless dragging private matters before the public. The Coroner having summed up, the Jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst of unsound mind.

Too many persons suffering from mental depression are recommended to travel with students just fledged from an hospital. We are here told that arrangements had been made for the deceased to travel with a fully qualified student; this implies doubtless a fourth year's student, one just completing his curriculum, and probably ignorant of the rudiments of insanity. It would have been far better to have placed the lunatic under proper supervision and treatment—especially as, from the evidence given, he required it—rather than to allow him to become another victim to suicidal insanity, induced by the inability of his friends and acquaintances to realise his proper mental state.

ROMANTIC SUICIDE OF A PARSEE.—Mr. J. B. Edge, the district coroner, held an inquest at Halliwell, near Bolton, on the body of Mr. Dorabjee Hormusjee Dashai, a native of Bombay, who was found drowned in Brine Hey reservoir, Halliwell. The deceased, who was 21 years of age, and had been residing in Bolton about nine months for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of cotton spinning machinery, left the house of the gentleman with whom he resided, a few days previous to the suicide, having for the previous few days been apparently unwell. As he did not return, however, his friends became anxious, and inquiries were instituted on all hands, but without success, until, as already intimated, his body was found in the reservoir, and by its appearance it had evidently been in the water some days. From information which has subsequently come to light, it seems that on the day following that on which he left home he went to Southport on a visit to a relative, and stayed there until Sunday, the 26th ult., when he wrote the subjoined letter to a young lady in Bolton to whom he had become attached:—

“September 26, 1875.

“My dear Nalie,—I hope you will excuse me for taking liberty for writing to you, but really I cannot help it, because I love you so much, and you must truly believe me that I never came across a young lady more lovely and more affectionate, like you, and I cannot forget you, and in my remembrance, I have sent you a little present, that you must except it, and Nalie do remember me after I dead and gone. You have longer time to live yet, but my time is very short, the reason is I was so full of thought about you that it drove me to this because I could not get a chance to speak to you, and I inquired about you privately, that it was impossible for me to have a chance, and therefore I could not rest, and it drove my mind away altogether, and I could not help it, but I meet you there if I don't see you here again. I hope you will be happy, but don't forget me, because I sacrifice my heart to you, dear. I always dreamed about you; I don't think you hardly believed it, that how I loved you, my dear; but I am at last disappointed. But never mind, it cannot be helped; but don't forget me, because you are the only I loved. I don't think you care much about me, but I did. Remember me, my dear, remember me. I hope you will be happy.—Yours truly,

“DORAB. DASHAI.”

On the back was written, “Please don't show it to anybody.” He returned to Bolton the same evening, after writing the above, and was in the company of friends until half-past ten o'clock at night, and from that time, with the exception of being noticed on the Monday forenoon going in the direction of the reservoir, he was not seen alive. So determined was he to put an end to himself, that he had fastened his hands behind him with his handkerchief. The Jury returned a verdict of Temporary Insanity.

The evidence in this case appears most unsatisfactory, no medical witnesses being called to testify as to his previous mental condition. It is desirable in all cases of suicide where doubt appears to exist as to the mental state of the deceased, that conclusive medical evidence should be produced, proving in some way or other the condition of the person.

SUICIDE OF A TURKISH BONDHOLDER.—Dr. Hardwicke, coroner for Central Middlesex, held an inquest at the Angel Hotel, Islington, as to the death of Mr. John Henry Miller, aged 69, a single gentleman, of 49A Pentonville Road, who is stated to have committed suicide in consequence of losses he has sustained as a Turkish bondholder. Miss Elizabeth Miller said she was niece to the deceased, who was by profession an engraver, but he had not followed it for some years, having property in the Funds and otherwise. He had been ailing and in a desponding state for some time, but more especially lately, on account of the repudiation of its liabilities by Turkey, as he was a considerable holder of Turkish bonds. On Sunday morning she was informed he had committed suicide. Mr. Philip King Weston, surgeon, of 39 City Road, stated that he was sent for about half-past ten o'clock on Sunday morning, and found deceased dead in bed. A handkerchief was tied round his neck, and it had been twisted from right to left by means of a razor strop acting as a lever, and inserted inside between the handkerchief and the neck, with such force as not only to produce strangulation, but to force blood from the nostrils. He was quite dead, and he had no doubt committed the act himself. He had attended the deceased from the 12th to the 23rd October, for debility, despondency, and sleeplessness. He did not see him after the latter date, but believed he had a suicidal tendency, and therefore warned his friends not to have him left alone. He had committed the act under the bedclothes. The landlord of

the house said deceased had resided with him 16 years. He had been very much cast down of late, and especially since the recent news as to the affairs of Turkey. During the last twelve months he had said he had more troubles upon him than he could bear, and wished himself out of the world. On Sunday, as he did not ring his bell as usual, witness's wife first went up, and on knocking at his door and receiving no answer, he (the landlord) went up and entered the bedroom, and seeing deceased dead, ran out and at once sent for the doctor. The Jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased committed suicide whilst in an unsound state of mind.

We here read of another lamentable suicide caused by the friends—though warned by their medical attendant—refusing to use the proper precautions. The evidence of the insanity is conclusive, and we cannot exonerate his immediate acquaintances from a grave responsibility in this case.

DISTRESSING SUICIDE.—Dr. Hardwicke, coroner for Central Middlesex, held an inquest at the Duke of Hamilton Tavern, New End, Hampstead, on the body of Mr. Cecil Ashton Henry Beecheno, aged 18, son of an estate agent, of 77 Belmont Street, Camden Town, whose body was found in the large pond in the Vale of Health, Hampstead Heath, on Sunday morning last. Deceased had been missing since the 27th of January last. He was a well-conducted young man, of a religious turn of mind, and was in the service of Messrs. Hachette, French publishers, of 18 King William Street, Strand, as a clerk or librarian, but had been anxious to enter the church. He was a constant attendant at St. Saviour's, South Hampstead, and was well acquainted with the Rev. J. C. Hose, the curate. When he left his office on the evening he was missed, it was observed that he wished one boy good night in a peculiar way, though he spoke to the other clerks in his usual manner. Amongst the things found in the possession of the deceased when his body was recovered was a letter addressed to the Rev. J. C. Hose, bearing written directions that it was to be opened by no one but that gentleman. That letter was produced in evidence, but not read to the Jury. The Coroner, however, stated that in it deceased intimated his intention of committing suicide, and desired certain things to be sent as mementoes to various clergymen. Mr. Hose said that some of these clergymen were almost perfect strangers to deceased. He (Mr. Hose) had received the letter, and it showed that the mind of deceased was unhinged. Mr. Beecheno said that in the letter his son accused himself of having been unkind to his youngest brother, whereas he was one of the kindest of brothers. Deceased was peculiar in regard to his food, and subsisted principally on bread and butter. The Jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst suffering from temporary insanity.

At Marylebone, a respectable-looking youth appeared before Mr. D'Eyncourt and asked him to make an order for his admission to a good lunatic asylum, as he had been going out of his mind for some time past. His parents had brought him home from school last Christmas, and since then he had broken some articles. Mr. D'Eyncourt asked him what he had broken, and if he had done it wilfully. He replied that he had broken a china teapot and a mousetrap, but had not done it on purpose. He could not hold anything, and he was not right in his mind. He had been going mad for some time. He had been working hard at school, and he was not able to bear it. He had tried to study, but could not, so he was in the habit of staring about the schoolroom instead of attending to his lessons. He could not get on, and he was punished in consequence. He had been

at school at Ashby, in Leicestershire. Mr. D'Eyncourt asked him how old he was, and he said 21. This caused some astonishment, as he appeared to be about 15 or 16. In answer to further questions he told the magistrate his father was Richard Thompson, of Nottingham Place, Marylebone, and although he was living with his father, he had not told him of his intention to make this application. He had overworked himself at school, and should be glad if he could be sent to a comfortable lunatic asylum, as he did not wish to go back to his studies. Mr. D'Eyncourt desired Mr. Stanley, the chief usher, to take the young man to his father's house and make inquiries. Later in the day Mr. Stanley said that he had taken the young man to the address he had given. His father said that his son did not wish to go back to school, and his applying to the magistrate was a *ruse*. He made some curious statements, and told his father that he wanted to be taken care of. Mr. D'Eyncourt made no comment, and the matter then dropped.

The result of the above inquiry appears to us very unsatisfactory. The boy doubtless feeling unwell, had informed his father of his symptoms but with no effect, and as a dernier ressort he had sought the aid of a magistrate. It would have been advisable for the magistrate to have insisted upon a proper mental examination of the boy instead of simply taking the father's evidence as to his son's condition, who was quite unfit to form a proper opinion. From a careful perusal of all points of this case, we think that further and more indirect evidence should have been taken. We do not go so far as to say the boy was a lunatic, but there was no conclusive evidence to the contrary, and in a case of such importance the greatest care should be bestowed in demanding an examination from a qualified and efficient specialist.

Among the things which they do *not* "manage better in France," lunatic asylums figure conspicuously. A few days ago a case was tried before the Correctional Police which in England would have created a storm of indignation throughout the length and breadth of the land, but has passed here without attracting notice. A more atrocious instance of unpunished murder it would be hard to find in the whole record of *causes célèbres*, and, indeed, it is difficult to say which is most scandalous, the sentence passed by the judges, the defence offered in behalf of the culprits by Dr. Legrand du Saule, the superintendent of the asylum, or the crime itself. The murdered man had been for a couple of years an inmate of the Bicêtre Asylum, and had grown from a harmless imbecile into a raving maniac, and it may be surmised that this was due to the treatment he received. In August last this unfortunate creature had a severe fit in his cell, and kept making a noise at night. His three keepers rushed into the cell, and as he was violent threw him down, knelt on his chest, and trampled upon him. After this process the patient was "more quiet," and the keepers were able to put a strait waistcoat upon him. In this strait waistcoat he was found dead next morning. A *post-mortem* examination disclosed the fact that *thirteen* of his ribs were broken, and the lungs perforated. Well, the case was reported to the authorities, and it was determined to prosecute them; but strangely enough it was decided not to try them before a jury for murder or manslaughter, but before the Court of Correctional Police for a "contravention," that is, a breach of the regulations. Dr. Legrand du Saule gave evidence in favour of his *employés*. This evidence is sufficiently remarkable to be noticed in some detail. These men, he said, were very hard worked, and they only received ten sous (i.e.,

fivepence) a day for their arduous work. There was a regulation, no doubt, that the keepers should not go into the cell of a violent lunatic, but then there was danger in doing so, and they could not resist *that* temptation. If they had—"ils n'auraient pas été Français." There might have been some little violence (thirteen ribs broken!), but it was very difficult to deal with such cases, and the accused were men for whose general character he had the highest respect. The Court adopted M. Legrand du Saule's view of the case, and let off these exemplary Frenchmen with 100*f.* fine. Dr. Decaisne, in the *Univers Illustré*, commenting on this atrocious case, points out that the character of watchers, keepers, and attendants at lunatic asylums is as bad as can be. But it is not to be wondered at, when you look at their scale of pay. Superintendents, male and female, get 360*f.* a year—less than tenpence a day; deputy superintendents 250*f.* (10*l.*) a year, and *infirmiers*, i.e. the attendants, 300*f.* (12*l.*) a year; women in the same capacity only get 10*l.* The chief vice is drunkenness, and I am credibly informed that they are so eclectic as to their liquor that they even make free with the alcohol used for anatomical preparations. It is evident that abuses are going on in these establishments which would not be endured in England for a single day after such an exposure as that of the crime at Bicêtre described above.

It is disgraceful that in a civilised land like France the authorities should allow the murder of a lunatic to be perpetrated by two attendants, by the fracture of thirteen ribs, under the penalty of a fine of four pounds. The above description, taken from the *Standard*, admirably describes the case, and we quote it as an instance of what goes on at the present day in the public institutions in France, and with a nominal penalty.

HORRIBLE TRAGEDY AT MONTPELIER, SOUTH AFRICA.—Montpelier, yesterday morning, became the scene of a horrible tragedy, when, at about 8 o'clock, Mr. Auguste Titren, a well-known colonist residing at Montpelier, went into the kitchen where his wife was preparing breakfast, and shot her in the back. It appears that on entering the kitchen he told his wife (Mrs. Titren) that he was going for a walk. Mrs. Titren requested him not to do so until he had partaken of some breakfast. Titren then is said to have fetched a loaded gun, and entering the kitchen a second time, shot Mrs. Titren in the back; she immediately fell down. Mrs. Smith, the mother of Mrs. Titren, hearing the report of the gun, at once ran into the kitchen, and finding her daughter on the floor, with blood running from the wound, screamed for assistance, shouted murder, &c.; and although there was an adjoining house in which some people resided, yet no assistance came. She was endeavouring, as well as she could, to assist her daughter, and was stooping over her, when Titren again returned in an excited state. Mrs. Smith endeavoured to prevent him coming into the kitchen, but her efforts were of no avail. Succeeding in making his way into the kitchen he fired at Mrs. Titren again, and killed her. While Mrs. Smith was stooping down he also fired at her, and wounded her in the spine. By this time Mr. Sydney Turner and Mr. Hoffmann, junr., arrived, and entering the house intended to secure Titren, who immediately pointed his gun at them, when Hoffmann ran away; but Mr. Turner, who brought a revolver with him, had, in self-defence, to fire at Titren, who, in consequence, fell down mortally wounded, and died shortly afterwards. These are all the particulars that have been ascertained up to the present time. It is a most shocking affair, it being, however, supposed that Titren committed the act in a temporary fit of insanity. Mrs. Smith is to be brought to Durban for medical attendance, and hopes are

fortunately entertained of her recovery. Mr. Turner's intention was simply to disarm the deceased, and he had a narrow escape from being killed himself.

We have been favoured by a correspondent in Natal with the above particulars. We quote it, as it will show the frightful atrocities which a lunatic not under proper control and supervision may be capable of.

HOMICIDAL INSANITY IN AMERICA.—A horrible domestic tragedy is reported from the interior of the State of New York. Harrison Andrews, a man of 50, and of violent and ungovernable temper, who lived at Venice, near Auburn, early on the morning of September 12, went to the apartment where his son, aged 19, was sleeping, and as he lay in bed gave him two murderous blows on the head with a hatchet, crushing his skull and probably injuring the brain. Andrews then aroused his two daughters, and shot one of them through the abdomen, inflicting a severe wound. The girls escaped from the house and alarmed the neighbours, and in the meantime Andrews poured oil on the carpet, set fire to the house, and closed his terrible work by shooting himself through the head. The neighbours came and extinguished the fire before much damage was done, and the wounded son and daughter were cared for. The former can scarcely recover. The motive for the deed is unknown; it seems to have been an insane freak.

This is another instance of the murderous propensities of lunatics.

THE SHAKERS.—EXTRAORDINARY SCENE.—An extraordinary scene, amounting almost to a riot, took place at a meeting of the New Forest Shakers, at Exeter. Mrs. Girling was accompanied by eight young women and four men, and whilst she was in the midst of her address, one of the girls commenced to dance. This caused some excitement, as the dancing was prolonged, and was pronounced by Mrs. Girling to be due to religious influences. One of the audience got up and denounced the whole thing as a blasphemous farce. This expression was loudly cheered. Mrs. Girling invited anyone who wished to speak to come on the platform, and at last one gentleman went there. At the same moment another girl commenced to dance, and the excitement increased. The audience moved in a body to the platform, and a large number scaled it. Indescribable confusion followed, in the midst of which attempts were made to stop the girls, but they resisted, one of them shouting, "I will rejoice," and "Touch not the Lord's anointed." The male members of the community were remonstrated with for permitting such an exhibition, but they expressed themselves powerless to stop the dancing. The girls were at last forcibly stopped. Some one threatened to give one of the male Shakers a thrashing, upon which he commenced to dance, and the disturbance was only ended by the whole body of Shakers being forcibly ejected from the platform.

We think it quite time that some interference should be made by Government upon this infatuated community, and deal promptly with them. If these are delusions, let the victims of them be placed in asylums; if, on the other hand, the Shakers do this with intent of making a disturbance, let them be dealt with by law; but that such proceedings should be allowed in the nineteenth century unchecked appears to us to be disgraceful.

"It may seem strange to hear from me that a patient in this asylum has been subject to continuous mechanical restraint since April last, yet such is the case; and I think it right to bring the circumstance under which this has occurred prominently forward in my present report; the more so, as only in two instances since I have been here, now more than twenty-one years, have I had occasion to resort to restraint, and then only for a short time, on account of the homicidal propensities of a patient. The man whose case I now especially notice had been here but a few days when he made an attack on me during one of my visits to the wards, rushing at me from behind with an implement he had prepared for the purpose, the handle of a large iron spoon which he had converted into a kind of dagger, swearing he would take my life, and assigning as a reason 'that I had kept patients in the asylum for more than twenty years and had parted man and wife.' This man had previously been in the Middlesex County Asylum at Colney-Hatch, and it appears from his own confession that he had meditated an attack on the superintendent of that institution, had prepared for it, and had intended to carry it out the very day he was unexpectedly removed to Knowle. Now here were two deliberate plans arranged to take life, and in one instance the attempt was made. That the man knew what he was about was very evident from his own expressions, which were, 'I will kill you; I will bathe my garments in your blood; I am not mad, but being in an asylum I can do what I like, and not be responsible for it'; quoting as a precedent the instance of McKave, who murdered a Commissioner in Lunacy about two years previously. I may mention that McKave's trial was stopped by the judge on the ground of the prisoner's insanity. This homicidal propensity has existed ever since, and still continues, and I may add that in my opinion the patient is quite as dangerous to others as to myself. To prevent his making such another attempt, his arms are confined to his sides by a waist-belt and armlets, so that his arms cannot be raised above his head to strike a heavy blow. Some persons would call this man's conduct 'uncontrollable'; I call it 'uncontrolled.' But, at all events, whilst he is so dangerous I see no good reason why the lives of those about him should be risked from a sentimental objection to the use of restraint, and, until I see very good reason to the contrary, I shall continue to prefer the safety of others to the freedom of limb of a would-be assassin."

We are indebted to Dr. Manley for the above description contained in the Hampshire County Asylum Report. He deserves great praise for the management of the case. Restraint should be used in all similar cases where *any* homicidal tendencies exist; and we hope the publication of the above particulars will draw the attention of superintendents of asylums to similar cases. We have not only to protect the lunatic himself from harm, but those with whom he must come in contact.

CASE OF TIERNEY.

Tierney, who was sentenced to death, but who was afterwards reprieved on the plea of insanity, and whose case caused considerable discussion some short time ago, is still an inmate of an asylum, thus confirming the opinion expressed by Dr. Winslow at the time of the trial as to his mental state.