NEW ENGLAND ALIENISTS OF THE LAST HALF-CENTURY.*

BY T. W. FISHER, M. D.,
Superintendent Boston Lunatic Hospital, Boston, Mass.

On this first semi-centennial of our Association the duty has been assigned me of making appropriate reference to our deceased members from New England. It has been thought fit to call the society together in the place of its birth to review its history and to award to each fellow his place in the *Ruhmeshalle* of our specialty. To state "concisely and appreciatively" the life-work of twenty-seven men so accomplished in twenty minutes would entitle the writer himself to a seat in Walhalla!

The faithful worker in the field of modern psychiatry must be at once a scientist, a humanitarian, and a man of affairs. Until our recent very satisfactory change of name and organization, membership in this society implied the management of some hospital for the treatment of insanity. Like the United States, we began with thirteen members, of which seven were from New England. With our numbers augmented by the increase of hospitals, and the admission of assistant physicians and other alienists, New England still holds numerically a high position. Of two hundred and eighty-one members in 1893, she had forty-eight. The society, as well as the States, has prospered; yet if the original thirteen sat down with unbroken ranks to dinner in Jones' Hotel, the death of Vice-President White within the year was "confirmation strong as death" of the old superstition.

And what a long death-roll of noted men has followed. Of the twenty-seven from New England, I have known eighteen, most of them intimately. In reviewing this list of pioneers in American psychiatry, the name of Ray, to my mind, like that of Abou Ben Adhem, leads all the rest. Not that "he loved his fellow-men" more than all the others, but because of a certain intellectual pre-eminence. To have called him, as I did when we last met, the Nestor of his department of medicine, was a feeble compliment. We all too soon become, by reason of age, in some respects distinguished above our *confreres*. In him were combined fullness of

* Read at the annual meeting of the American Medico-Psychological Association, held at Philadelphia, Pa., May 15-18, 1894.

years and ripeness of intellect. And his intellect was naturally of a high order.

Doctor Curwen says of him, "No one who ever enjoyed these opportunities of hearing him pour forth the richness of a mind well stored with the treasures of literature in general, and of insanity in particular, will ever forget the instruction he then received. His sound judgment and matured views always gave him a commanding influence."

He was educated at Bowdoin and Harvard. In 1841 he was appointed superintendent of the Augusta Hospital, and of the Butler Hospital in 1845. He spent a part of this year in Europe, and devoted the next two to the building of the hospital. He remained in charge twenty-two years. He published a work on the jurisprudence of insanity of seven hundred pages, which at once gave him a wide celebrity. It was the first and, for many years, the only important contribution to the scientific study of insanity in this country. It is still a standard authority at home and in Europe, and a monument of wisdom, learning, sound judgment, and large experience. It is destined to hold a high place in the literature of insanity in spite of the great advances of the last ten years. His books on "Mental Hygiene" and "Mental Pathology" are of equal importance.

Doctor Woodward, our first president, must have been a remarkable man in many ways. Doctor Curwen gives an interesting account of the formation of our society as the result of a conference between him and Doctor Stribling of West Virginia. He, with Doctor Todd, was active in raising funds for and establishing the Hartford Retreat in 1823. He was first superintendent of the Worcester Hospital, opened in 1832.

His printed works are confined to reports, but these were widely circulated, the usual edition being three thousand, and making for fourteen years a volume of six hundred pages. I have before me a presentation copy of the first four reports bound. It contains Doctor Woodward's autograph, and was presented to Edward Everett, then governor. Horace Mann was chairman of the building committee. There is a lithograph of the hospital, with a stage-coach driving up, and the present fine grove of elms dwindled to currant bushes.

The floor plan shows a hospital for two hundred and forty patients, all in single rooms. The corners show the present cages, or verandas, as they were called. Each ward opened on a square

room with two sides of unglazed iron sash, making a fine airing-room for all weathers. Aside from their suggestion of a menagerie when in use, these verandas would be desirable adjuncts to any hospital.

Doctor Woodward showed in his reports ideas quite up to the present concerning insanity and its treatment. In 1833 he recommended small detached homes for convalescents. "They should form a large family and not one should be idle. . . . They would require but little restraint, and might ride or range the grounds at pleasure." He also advocates separate buildings for quiet and chronic cases. Also detached lodges for the noisy and violent. This was essentially the cottage system, though Doctor Spurzheim had already advocated it.

In his third report he considers labor as a remedial agent, and advises the erection of workshops and a chapel. In his fourth, besides fifteen tables of statistics, he gives a detailed account of the results of treatment in ten cases. He describes the great improvement in numerous cases from prisons and almshouses, where they had been subjected to neglect and hardship. In an appendix he discusses the moral insanity of Pritchard and Pinel, with several cases. He also wrote a series of articles on asylums for inebriates.

Doctor Bell was also one of the original seven. He was a son of Governor Bell of New Hampshire, and his social and intellectual qualities were of a high order. He was educated at Bowdoin and Dartmouth, and continued his medical studies in Europe. He was active in founding the Concord Hospital, and was superintendent of the McLean Asylum for twenty years. In 1845 he went to Europe for the purpose of studying hospitals there. The results of his observations were embodied in the plans for the Butler Hospital.

He was for two years president of the Massachusetts Medical Society. At the breaking out of the rebellion he was appointed surgeon of the Eleventh Massachusetts Volunteers. He was soon promoted to be brigade-surgeon of General Hooker's division. He died suddenly in camp of endocarditis in 1862. His writings on subjects relating to general medicine, as well as to insanity, were numerous and important. He is best known for his description of that form of acute mania called Bell's disease.

In 1839 the Boston Lunatic Hospital was opened to relieve the Worcester Hospital of its city cases. Doctor Butler was its first superintendent. He was, like Doctor Woodward, a man of modern ideas with reference to insanity and its treatment. He

regarded employment, amusement, and moral management as essentials, and discouraged the use of restraint. He found a number of the worst cases at the neighboring almshouse permanently confined in wooden cages. As a specially humane feature of their treatment, these cages were put on wheels, and in fine weather were drawn out of doors. Doctor Butler released all these poor creatures, and he often told me of one woman, especially dangerous, and maniacal, whom he won by presenting her a dandelion. She was soon restored to comparative sanity and good conduct.

In 1887 I had the pleasure of introducing him to one of his original patients, who for forty-eight years continuously had resided in the same hospital in comfort and contentment. Doctor Butler was appointed superintendent of the Hartford Retreat in 1843, and served thirty years. He converted the dreary, cold, dark and forbidding walls, the narrow passage-ways, and the comfortless rooms and dormitories of 1843, into an institution well nigh perfect in its appointments. He had a hobby, which we might all ride to advantage, in the individualized treatment of the insane.

Doctor Stedman was the second superintendent and served nine years. He was educated at Yale and Harvard, and for ten years was surgeon to the Marine Hospital. After 1851 he was surgeon at the City Hospital. He first introduced the use of associated dormitories for the insane. The addition to the hospital in 1846 for one hundred and twenty beds was all in dormitories. During his term of service severe epidemics of cholera, ship-fever, and malignant dysentery occurred, but he was well fitted by experience and education to cope with them. Doctor Curwen says: "Few men had greater opportunities for observing disease than he, and he improved them with great earnestness. He educated many students before the days of medical schools in Boston."

Doctor Earle was educated at Leicester and the Friends' School, Providence, of which he became principal. He took his medical degree in Philadelphia, and spent a year in Paris visiting hospitals for the insane. He was four years physician to the Friends' Asylum, Frankford. In 1844 he was appointed superintendent of the Bloomingdale Asylum. In 1849 he visited thirty-four hospitals for the insane in Europe. In 1864 he succeeded Doctor Prince, superintendent of the Northampton Hospital, remaining twenty-one years. The financial result of his administration was the purchase of land worth \$25,000, and an increase of the plant to the amount of \$173,000; also increase of cash assets to the value of \$43,000.

Doctor Earle's three visits to Europe were followed by papers giving the results of his extensive observation of foreign hospitals. He also became acquainted with many famous philanthropists in England, and he was a member of several foreign medical societies. He lectured on insanity in New York in 1853, and in Pittsfield in 1863. His most important recent article was on the "Curability of Insanity." It was a useful study of an important subject, but in my opinion was not such an "epoch-making work" as one of his reviewers claimed it to be. The opinion that from 75 to 90 per cent of cases of insanity could be cured was never entertained by any reputable authority. Some sanguine superintendents may have claimed for very recent cases a high rate of recovery. Doctor Woodward says "that as many such cases will recover as from any other acute disease of equal severity." He gives in his report for 1834, 55 per cent of all cases discharged as recovered; 20 per cent of old cases, and 82 per cent of new. This method of calculating recoveries on discharges instead of on admissions, as at present, may have misled some writers. Reckoned in this way, Doctor Woodward only discharged 24 per cent recovered in 1834. According to Wilkins, in 1870 the percentage of recoveries in the United States was thirty-three. This has been gradually reduced by reason of the custom of sending large numbers of mild chronic cases to the hospital, until in this State it is about twenty-five. Recoveries on readmissions alone would not reduce the rate in any year more than 1 per cent.

Doctor Brigham, in 1844, was superintendent of the Utica Hospital, but previously for two years had charge of the Hartford Retreat. He was distinguished as a physician, as well as an alienist, and published many works on general medicine. He was professor of anatomy and surgery in New York, and was the first editor of the JOURNAL OF INSANITY.

Doctor Cutter was almost an original member, attending the second meeting. For many years he was superintendent of a private institution at Pepperell. He died in 1859, having labored forty years for the insane.

Doctor Chandler, successor to Doctor Woodward, also joined the association in 1845. He resigned his position in 1855, and resumed the practice of medicine in Worcester.

Doctors Bates, McFarland, and Rockwell also joined in 1845. Doctor Bates left the Augusta Hospital in 1851. Doctor McFarland removed from Concord to Jacksonville, Ill., in 1852, where he was

fifteen years superintendent. Doctor Rockwell was the first superintendent at Brattleboro, a position he retained thirty-five years. By careful management he built up a fine institution from a small bequest of ten thousand dollars in 1835. Until recently all the State patients were boarded in this private hospital. From a central building, and one wing with nineteen patients, the Vermont Asylum in fifty years had grown to a capacity for four hundred and fifty patients, and a plant worth half a million dollars. Doctor Rockwell was not only a good manager, but a skillful physician. He had been an assistant with Doctor Woodward at Hartford, and shared his advanced views concerning insanity.

Doctor Jarvis, as early as 1836, took insane patients into his family, and for many years had a private hospital in Dorchester. He was more than an alienist, as he had a strong bent for statistical research. He achieved a European reputation in this difficult field. He was a member of many foreign societies, and had a library unsurpassed in this country in this specialty.

I well remember the kind advice, the numerous letters and commissions the doctor gave me on my first visit to Europe; also, the huge box of pamphlets I sent him. He had a most insatiable appetite for the driest sort of mental pabulum. His love of figures was but one expression of his ardent love for the exact truth. He was a member of a commission in 1854 to ascertain the number of idiots and insane in the State, and the hospital accommodation they would require. He was for years a trustee of the Worcester Hospital and the School for Feeble-Minded Youth.

Doctor Harlow was superintendent of the Augusta Hospital from 1850 to 1883, a period of thirty-three years. He rebuilt the hospital after the fire. He was a man of sound judgment, a model superintendent, a good physician, and a most kind and sympathetic friend of all his patients. He was often called as expert in his own State, and was president of the Maine Medical Society.

Doctors Tyler and Walker are closely associated in my mind. They were classmates at Dartmouth, and were warm friends for a lifetime. They, for many years, had charge of hospitals near Boston, and were connected by many social and professional ties. Doctor Tyler was five years at Concord, and fourteen at the McLean Asylum. A memorial by Doctor Bancroft is an eloquent tribute from another lifelong friend to Doctor Tyler's remarkable qualities. My acquaintance with him began, as he often used to remind me, on the day of my birth. Although I knew him quite well, I feel with

Doctor Bancroft, "that it is not an easy thing to form and express in words a true and just estimate of a human life," especially such a life as Doctor Tyler's. He was intellectual, cultivated, learned in his profession, a good administrator, a firm friend, kind-hearted, social, and witty, it is true; but saying this tells little to a stranger of the real individual. The personality escapes continually in these descriptions.

He had a vein of humor which bubbled over even into his little business notes, and which made his society attractive to the younger men of his staff. His lectures, which he gave at Harvard, were rendered more popular by the same happy way of putting things. His only predecessor in this field was Doctor Rush, early in the century. Doctor Tyler took a medical degree at Philadelphia, as well as at Harvard, and made two trips of observation to Europe.

Doctor Walker took his degree in medicine at Harvard. He then became an assistant at the South Boston city institutions. In 1847 and 1849, when cholera and ship-fever prevailed, he volunteered with Doctor Upham to assist in the "fever sheds" at Deer Island. He was appointed superintendent of the Boston Lunatic Hospital in 1851, and retained the position thirty years.

He at once gave up the use of stone cells for excited cases, diminished restraint, and improved the hospital in many ways. After many years of effort the city government bought a site for a new hospital. Plans were made and money appropriated, but the project was unexpectedly killed by the mayor's veto. Dr. Edward Everett Hale said of him, after his death, in 1883, "He was the personal friend of all his patients, and brought to the miracle of cure the only power which can effect it — the loving sympathy of the physician. He fairly commanded his broken patients by what we choose to call the magnetic power of his personal care. Behind all the resources of medicine, he had this requisite for victory — that he made them believe they would get well."

The recent deaths of two of my immediate predecessors in the chair of the New England Psychological Society have given that office painful associations for me. I saw Doctor Bancroft, as he was speaking, grow pale and drop into his seat, entirely hemiplegic. He was conscious and finished his remarks, and put the motion to adjourn. He remained conscious and calmly gave directions about his removal, and requested that his sickness be kept out of the papers, lest his wife be suddenly informed of it. He died a year afterward, and maintained that thoughtful considera-

tion of others, so characteristic of him, to the last. He had nearly reached the limit of his years, and his seizure at the post of duty was a fate to be envied and not dreaded.

He was educated at Dartmouth, taking also a medical degree in New York. He had a large general practice for twelve years, and was chosen superintendent at Concord in 1857. During the thirty-two years of his incumbency he modernized and enlarged the hospital, adding, not long before his death, a beautiful detached ward for private patients, called the "Bancroft Building," which will be a very appropriate monument to his memory.

Doctor Draper took cold while presiding at the same society, and died of pneumonia. He was in the prime of life, and also fell at the post of duty. His monument is to be found in the "Annals of the Vermont Asylum," a book of three hundred pages, and covering a term of fifty years. This history of the growth of a large hospital from small beginnings I have read carefully to the end, and found it as entertaining as a novel. Goethe says: "Grasp anywhere into the thick of human affairs, and you will always find them interesting." This is true even of life among the insane, especially when depicted with skill, as in this case. There is characteristic modesty, too, and nothing but a change in the superintendent's name shows that in 1873 Doctor Draper took up the work of his predecessor and carried it steadily on till his death in 1892.

Two more names are naturally associated by reason of their connection with the same hospital and their untimely or tragic ends. Doctor Sawyer died as the soldier dies, by accident, in the meridian of life and in his line of duty. He was seized by the throat by a maniac, causing fatal laryngitis. This risk we all share, though daily exposure, year by year, makes us indifferent to it. The danger is a real and ever-present one, as the lengthening list of martyrs in the cause of humanity shows. We all have known a sinking at heart at the threat of the paranoiac, especially when at large and full of his imaginary grievances.

Doctor Sawyer was a classmate of mine at Harvard, and went immediately to the Butler Hospital in 1859, on graduation, as an assistant. For nineteen years before his death in 1886, he was superintendent, and carried on the work of Doctor Ray with great success. "His personal qualities were such as endeared him to all his patients and friends. His manners were gentle and winning, and his character marked by a singular modesty, united with great firmness of purpose."

His successor, Doctor Goldsmith, died after two years' service of pneumonia at thirty-four. He had previously been superintendent of the Danvers Hospital for five years. His was another of those all too rare characters, singularly fitted for the service in which he engaged. He graduated at Amherst, and took his medical degree in New York. He was an assistant at Bloomingdale, and also with Doctor Clouston at Edinboro, and Doctor Major of West Riding. In 1883 he passed a second year in Europe, studying with Westphal and Krafft-Ebing, and visiting foreign hospitals.

A small memorial volume is before me with a portrait of Doctor Goldsmith. It is a face full of intellectual beauty, of high character, with an expression serious and gentle, fit exponent of his life. The book contains tributes of respect and affection from Doctors Gorton, Folsom, Nichols, Chapin, Cowles, Hack-Tuke, Miss Phelps, and Whittier. Who could wish more appreciative biographers?

"And what more shall I say? for time would fail me to speak of Brown, and Knight, of Booth, and Whittemore, and Shew. They also have obtained a good report." Like St. Paul, "They have fought a good fight; they have finished their course; they have kept the faith." The first two were active members for many years, and engaged in a work akin to ours—the care of the feeble-minded. Booth and Whittemore, after serving most faithfully for many years as assistant physicians, each had charge of the McLean Asylum for a year. They were both men of high character and marked ability, and died in middle life in the midst of their usefulness.

Doctor Shew took his medical degree at Jefferson. He was post-surgeon at Hilton Head during the war. In 1866 he was chosen superintendent at Middletown, and served twenty years, his death resulting from an accidental fall. He was of a cheerful and hopeful temperament, and of large executive ability. He was a skillful physician, and a sympathetic and appreciative friend, so that many of his patients became greatly attached to him.

Of living New England alienists it is not my province to speak. They are all young men, or of middle age, and belong to the new era of psychiatry. They work under the inspiration and by the light of the new psychology; they are all working to perfect their hospitals, public or private; to build new ones, or to improve their methods of treatment. May it be long before any of them needs a biographer. Outside the hospitals, but interested either in the practical or theoretical side of our specialty, are such men as Hall,

Donaldson, Hodge, Bowditch, Councilman, James, Royce, Münsterberg, Folsom, Jelly, Prince, Putnam, and Knapp.

The new school is less absorbed in hospital routine, is broader and more scientific than the old. As proof of this proposition, I would cite the fact that clinical and didactic instruction on insanity are given in all our New England medical colleges, and have been made requisites for graduation at Harvard. Laboratories for experimental psychology have been established at Harvard and Clarke Universities. As further evidence, take the four training schools for nurses of the insane, first established at the McLean Asylum; also the pathological laboratory there, and the work of Doctor Gannett at the Boston Lunatic Hospital. Also the fact that in Massachusetts there are now in process of erection a chronic asylum for the State, a municipal hospital for Boston, and a private hospital for the McLean Asylum. These are all on the segregate plan, and it is believed each will be the best of its kind in this country at least.

Another proof of the scientific spirit is the fact that the Boston Medico-Psychological Society not only includes nearly all the alienists of New England, but all the neurologists as well. It is a large and flourishing society, with monthly meetings for the reading of papers, and subscribes for a long list of special journals in several languages. It also invites distinguished specialists from distant cities to read before it, and to meet the physicians and surgeons connected with our hospitals and colleges socially. The last reader was the superintendent of the Johns-Hopkins Hospital, your honored secretary.

The same spirit of progress has happily infected our larger society, once limited to superintendents alone, and naturally most interested in the practical side of hospital management. Now any physician sufficiently qualified and interested may be elected to our number. Any unqualified superintendent may be kept out, being no longer a member *ex-officio*. Two-thirds of our fellows are already assistant physicians, so that young blood and new ideas ought hereafter to visibly affect our transactions. As we take our new departure, let us lay one wreath of immortelles on the altar of the past.