

should be suckled by herself alone, that when in her absence a strange nurse had done so, she was never quiet till she had made the infant vomit it up? What an example to the present race of mothers. Cato, it is said, would make his servants' children suck upon his wife's breast because by that means they would love him and his the better. If there is anything in these opinions of the ancients, and the children imbibe with the mother's milk a greater love for the parent, it may be an inducement to many mothers, if it were known, to suckle their own offspring; and if feeding, as is done in the present day and has been done for the last twenty years to many of the rising generation, on cow's milk gives to the infant the attributes of its foster mother, we need not go very far to seek for the origin of the "masher," though we may deplore the fact that so many calves have been robbed of their due quantum of nourishment to aid in bringing him to his present state of perfection.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

NATHANIEL EDWARD DAVIES.

Sherborne, August 24th, 1884.

THE ANCOATS MURDER: CASE OF J. J. DONNELLY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read Dr. Hughes Bennett's letter in your issue of to-day with interest, yet also with surprise and regret. Dr. Bennett is to be admired for his warm sympathy with the unfortunate, but there is something else required: a true man is just as well as generous. As was so well said in your article of the 9th inst. on the above subject—"Science knows nothing of sentiment, and we cannot afford to strain points for the sake of humanity." How can we expect judges, juries, or the public to treat us with respect if we allow our feelings or prejudices to warp our judgment—if, instead of giving evidence or expressing opinions in strict accordance with facts, we act as partisans? Is there anything more humiliating than to see or to read of medical men in a court of justice ranging themselves on opposite sides? It is the duty of a medical witness to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; he has nothing to do with the consequences—those must be left to the judge and jury.

Dr. Bennett intimates that if he had been called as a witness in Donnelly's case, "he could have strongly advocated his irresponsibility." We are further told that "no one acquainted with the mental condition of the prisoner, and reading the public reports of his trial, could have the slightest doubts of his irresponsibility in the crime he committed." Dr. Bennett is dominated by the notion that Donnelly, on the night when he committed the crime for which he was sentenced to be hung, was suffering from epileptic furor. But there is no evidence to support such a view—at least, I cannot find any in the published reports. The deputy coroner, who is a barrister, went very carefully into this matter; he elicited from the prisoner's father that he had not had a fit that night; neither had he the premonitions or accompaniments or consequents of a fit. The father, after more than twenty years' experience, would know well the symptoms indicating a seizure. Both father and brother described these, but, with the exception of turbulence, Donnelly showed no signs of an attack; the family knew too well the true cause of his misbehaviour. Donnelly, unfortunately, was addicted to drink.

A consideration of the whole of the facts will, I think, show that Donnelly, from the time he came home at half-past nine on Sunday night up to that of his capture, knew not only what he was doing, but the probable consequences of his acts. After the father took up the poker and threatened to strike the young man with it, the latter checked his turbulence; and when finding himself locked out, it burst forth again. Instead of venting his anger on his father, who he knew had shut him out, he rushed to his own room out of his father's way. When subsequently his father somewhat cruelly refused him water, he again repressed any manifestation of rage. After having committed the murderous assault on two defenceless women, he precipitately made his escape and tried to conceal himself. Now, an epileptic suffering from maniacal excitement is as devoid of craft as he is blind to danger. Opposition renders him furious and reckless; neither poker nor pistol has any terrors. It is true that Donnelly attacked his sister in a paroxysm of anger, but it is certain that if his father had been in the room

armed with the poker he would again have restrained his rage. Had Donnelly's father had any reason to believe that his son was threatened with a fit, instead of thwarting him he would have tried to calm and soothe the young man; but the family knew well that what Donnelly was suffering from was the effect of drink.

In summing up, the deputy coroner told the jury that "there was no evidence that the man was out of his mind at the time he committed the act, and if he was the worse for drink, that was no excuse, but rather an aggravation." The jury which tried Donnelly at the Assizes, having all the facts before them, came to the conclusion that Donnelly was sane when he committed the murder, and therefore found him guilty. The law blunderingly fails to discriminate between a deliberate cold-blooded murder and one committed in a sudden outburst of anger; it barbarously decrees death in both cases. The jury which tried Donnelly marked their sense of the difference, and therefore recommended him to mercy; but, so far from having deserved censure, the jury deserve the utmost credit for having discharged an onerous and very painful duty in a thoroughly conscientious and intelligent manner.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Manchester, Aug. 16th, 1884.

R. MARTIN.

"OUR MONSTER COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUMS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your article on the above, in the issue of August 23rd, is well-timed, and cannot fail to draw attention to the subject. It is now pretty generally recognised that asylums containing more than 800 patients are difficult of management, if not unwieldy and less economical than smaller institutions. You, however, allude to cases in which "from 1500 to 2000 insane individuals, supposed to be patients, are under the care and control of one medical man." Surely you should have added "aided by one, two, or more assistant medical officers." Otherwise the statement is misleading. In these days of scientific advancement, and the development of the healing art, the word "asylum" ought to be almost an anachronism. Patients struck down with mental disease should without delay be placed under the most skilled treatment possible in "hospitals for the insane," institutions in which the main object is to combat the disease in its earliest stage, and to restore the individual to the community with *mens sana in corpore sano*. Such hospitals would require a highly qualified medical staff with clinical assistants and all the necessary means of treatment, and should not contain more than from 100 to 150 beds. Cases after a fixed time deemed incurable should be transferred to the "asylums," the "homes for incurables requiring no special medical treatment." The "hospital for the insane" would be costly at the outset, but in the end would prove the more economical, the more humane, and the more creditable to civilisation. Heretofore the lunacy laws have been framed on the score of humanity solely. Surely the day is not far distant when the advancement of psychological science and the increased facilities for cure will demand consideration at the hands of our legislators. At the present time the medical staff of the county asylums do their utmost for the treatment with view to cure of the patients under their charge, but, from the ever-increasing numbers of the insane, "an enormous mass of material annually passes under their eyes which is almost wholly unutilised." Moreover, the four shillings per week Government capitation grant for the insane poor has of late years flooded the pauper asylum with idiots, imbeciles, and aged demented, because their transfer rids the unions of troublesome cases which, with this pecuniary aid, can be maintained as cheaply, if not more economically, in the county asylums.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ERNEST W. WHITE, M.B. Lond., &c.

Kent Lunatic Asylum, Chartham, August 23rd, 1884.

* * Our statement relative to the number of patients under one medical man is in no way invalidated by the presence of assistant medical officers. The treatment of every patient in an asylum devolves virtually upon the Superintendent, and upon him alone the responsibility in the matter rests.—ED. L.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE ROYAL VISIT.

THE Royal week and visit have come to an end, and from what I hear and see on all sides I think we may fairly say they began and ended well. The general arrangements were complete and satisfactory, while the order maintained by the vast concourse during the visit, occupying several days, was remarkable indeed. The police report states that there were fewer cases of intemperance and disorderly conduct than during an ordinary week. The Mayor has scored a great success, and he deserves the special thanks of his fellow citizens, as he has already received those of Royalty. Where all have worked so well, it is no harm to mention the special and useful services of the Ambulance Corps rendered on the day of the procession. Owing to the extreme heat prevailing and the pressure of the crowd, as many as eight or nine people dropped down exhausted at one of our street corners. They were immediately attended to and removed to the tents of the corps, and not allowed to depart until fully restored. As might be expected, during the following days a very large number of minor accidents were admitted into the infirmary, and were duly attended to, but there was a remarkable absence of anything serious.

NEWCASTLE INFIRMARY.

At the last quarterly meeting the House Committee was charged with the nomination of a special committee for the consideration of the pressing need for a larger infirmary, and of the ways and means by which either the present building can be enlarged or a new one erected. Our *Daily Chronicle* points out, in reference to the above resolution, that the site of the building, although a good one in 1750, is not a desirable one now; and that while during the last quarter of a century the augmentation of the city and surrounding district, as regards population, has been enormous, the increased accommodation provided since the opening of the new wing in 1854 has been very small; that the great changes which recent years have developed in our social system render it very desirable that the old plan of admission by subscribers' tickets should be abolished; and that the institution should be converted into a free hospital. The *Chronicle* also points out that, although the present building possesses two undeniable advantages—namely, its central position and its open frontage to the south,—its drawbacks are serious, and more than counterbalance these benefits. A line of railway, on which busy traffic is conducted day and night, runs along the whole length of the main front, and two sides of the building are surrounded by the cattle and sheep markets of the city. The noise and bustle arising from their contiguity are seriously detrimental to the purposes of the infirmary. It was further pointed out at the meeting that, although the house has accommodation for 200 beds, there has often been 230 in use; and that in times of pressure female patients have to be sent to the lock ward—a procedure, to say the least of it, very undesirable.

SANITARY DEFECTS AT ALNWICK.

A recent coroner's inquest on a case of English cholera at Alnwick has brought to light what is described as "a scandalous state of affairs" as regards sanitary matters in the ducal town. From the evidence of Mr. J. H. Davidson, it would appear that there is no registration of lodging-houses in the town, and that he has frequently drawn the attention of the Local Board to these defects, yet no action has been taken. Mr. Davidson has seen as many as twenty people crowded into two small rooms in a very filthy condition. The verdict of the jury was in accordance with the evidence—namely, "Death from English cholera." The coroner, in opening the inquiry, stated he considered it to be his duty as much to inquire into the death of a person from preventable causes as from accident.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, August 26th, 1884.

AMERICAN EXHIBITION.—An exhibition of the arts, manufactures, products and resources of the United States of America will be opened in London on May 1st, 1886.

IRELAND.

(From our own Correspondent.)

CASES OF ALLEGED CHOLERA IN KILMATHOMAS WORKHOUSE.

A MAN named Kennedy, a native of Glasgow, who had stowed himself on board a Liverpool vessel, and was landed at Kinsale, was admitted on the 20th inst. to Kilmathomas Workhouse. On the following morning he complained of being attacked with vomiting and purging, and a couple of hours afterwards was seen by Dr. Walsh, medical officer of the union. Dr. Martin of Portlaw also saw the patient, and he and Dr. Wynne considered it an undoubted case of Asiatic cholera. Kennedy became worse, and died at nine o'clock the same evening. Dr. Walsh is doubtful of the case, and he considers it an open question whether the disease was Asiatic or English cholera. The Local Government Board having been communicated with, sent down Dr. Brodie to inquire into the matter, but so far the result has not been made known. I may add that since Kennedy's death a female of weak mind, resident in the workhouse, presented choleraic symptoms and died on the following day. So far all sanitary precautions have been taken by Dr. Walsh; the patient's clothes have been burned, as well as the clothes worn by the male nurse and attendants, and the casual ward and room in the Fever Hospital have been disinfected and closed.

THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY.

Plans for altering the University buildings and for adding a new wing have been approved, and will be commenced immediately, at an estimated cost of £25,000. A chemical laboratory 120 ft. by 30 ft. will form a portion of the wing, and adjoining this will be smaller laboratories, and an apartment for the study of histology 58 ft. by 16 ft. The physical laboratory will be 90 ft. by 30 ft., and close to this will be the physiological museum, 57 ft. by 30 ft. Behind these apartments will be the dissecting room, 120 ft. by 30 ft., and in connexion with it a smoking room for students, lavatories, and retiring rooms. At the centre of the building there will be placed a tower, at an elevation of 90 ft., which will be utilised as a ventilating shaft, in connexion with which the different apartments will communicate. The works will probably occupy two years.

THE DUBLIN HOSPITALS.

From the twenty-sixth report of the Board of Superintendence of the Dublin Hospitals which receive grants from Parliament, it appears that there are nine of these institutions, two being lying-in, two ophthalmic, two fever, one lock, and three general hospitals. On the 1st April, 1883, there remained 815 patients in these hospitals, while the number admitted during the year was 9560, making a total under treatment of 10,375, of whom 9226 were discharged cured or relieved. The deaths amounted to 433, or a mortality of 4.69 per cent. on the cases treated to a termination. The average annual cost per bed for maintenance and for establishment charges ranged from £26 18s. 2d. in the Hospital for Incurables, to £72 4s. in Cork-street Fever Hospital, and £85 14s. 6d. in the Coombe Lying-in Hospital.

The post of lecturer in Operative Surgery in the Medical School of Trinity College, which has been resigned by Mr. Butcher, will not, it is stated, be filled up.

A good many children in the North Dublin Union have recently been suffering from ophthalmia, which, owing to overcrowding, assumed the proportions of an epidemic. The medical officer has recommended that these cases should be sent to the new buildings at Cabra.

The Local Government Board have threatened to dissolve the Midleton Board of Guardians should they persist in neglecting to procure a proper water-supply for the inhabitants.

Dublin, August 26th, 1884.

BELFAST.

(From our own Correspondent.)

QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

FROM the report of the President of Queen's College, Belfast, for the session 1883-4, which has just been issued, I gather that the total number of students enrolled during