

Medico-Legal

MENTAL PATIENTS ON LICENCE

A distressing case, heard by Mr. Justice Finlay at Lancaster Assizes on October 21st, suggested some of the shortcomings of the present system of allowing mental patients out on licence.

A male patient of 28 pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of a middle-aged married lady who had befriended him. He had called at her house and asked for a cup of tea, and had then struck her on the head with a piece of wood, inflicting very severe wounds from which she nearly died. He was a high-grade feeble-minded case who had been sent to a mental institution in 1927 for robbery with violence, and had escaped from another institution for a short time last year. The medical superintendent of the institution from which he had been released on licence last June described him at the trial as a mental defective under the category of a moral defective, a person of violent and dangerous propensities on whom punishment had no effect and who was subject to uncontrolled impulses and should not be at liberty. The judge remarked that it was unfortunate the patient was let out, and the medical superintendent replied that he was not responsible for the granting of this licence, and that any two managers of the institution could sit down and write an order of release irrespective of any advice they got from the medical staff. The judge expressed the opinion that the medical staff should be consulted, and that their advice should be followed in all but quite exceptional cases. He ordered the prisoner to be detained at another institution.

It would not be proper to draw inferences from the short report of the case, for which we are indebted to the *Manchester Guardian* of October 22nd, except to observe that the present system allows tragedies of this kind to happen, and that in all probability if the judge's advice were strictly carried out they would be practically unknown.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

LORD NUFFIELD'S GIFT

Lord Nuffield's munificent gift of £1,250,000 to the University of Oxford for medical research was announced in the *Journals* of October 17th (p. 770) and of October 24th (p. 822). A decree giving legislative effect to the donor's wishes has been published in the *University Gazette*, and will come before Congregation on November 24th, when the Chancellor, Lord Halifax, is expected to preside and the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol, will introduce the preamble to the decree. Lord Nuffield's offer to the University is an annual payment of £192,307 14s., payable half-yearly for six and a half years. The decree prescribes the method of appointment of trustees to administer the trust fund, the constitution and duties of a committee to prepare and submit a scheme to the trustees before January 1st, 1937, and the appointment of staff. For the purposes of the scheme the following Nuffield chairs are to be created: a professorship of clinical medicine; a professorship of surgery; a professorship of obstetrics and gynaecology; and a professorship of anaesthetics. Further eponymous professors or readers may be appointed later. The four professors to be appointed as soon as practicable are to receive each a salary of £2,000 a year out of the income of the trust fund, which will also pay their superannuation contributions; but the University may increase a salary by statute. No professor shall retain office after the age of 60 unless the Visitation Board grants an extension of not more than five years. He must not engage in private practice, except that he may receive fees from patients attended at the hospitals associated with the Oxford School of Medicine. Under the scheme which the committee is to draw up for the development of the school, facilities are to be provided for training post-graduates in methods of research and for similar instruction of students reading for the B.M. degree.

The electors to the George Eastman Visiting Professorship have appointed Dr. Simon Flexner, director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York, as visiting professor for the academic year 1937-8.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Regius Professor of Physic has, with the approval of the General Board, appointed J. F. Brock, M.A., of Trinity Hall, to be Assistant Director of Research in Medicine for five years from October 1st, 1936.

J. S. Baxter, M.B., B.Ch.Belf., has been appointed University Demonstrator in the Department of Anatomy for three years from October 1st, 1936.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Appointments

The Senate has appointed Viscount Dawson of Penn to be a Governor of the London School of Economics, and Sir William Collins to be a Member of the Royal Sanitary Institute and Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Joint Board.

Mr. Charles Horace Gray has been appointed to the Graham Scholarship in Pathology for two years from September 1st, in the place of Mr. J. C. Thomas, resigned.

Lectures

A course of three lectures on "The Ovarian Hormones" will be given by Dr. George W. Corner, professor of anatomy in the University of Rochester, U.S.A., at Guy's Hospital Medical School on December 7th, 8th, and 9th, at 5.30 p.m. At the first lecture the chair will be taken by Professor E. C. Dodds.

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

Part-time Course in Mental Deficiency

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, in co-operation with the Central Association for Mental Welfare, will hold a part-time course in mental deficiency in February and March, 1937. The course will last four weeks, and both lectures and practical demonstrations will be held in the afternoons. A limited number of places will be available for assistant school medical officers employed by local authorities. The course, the fee for which is £6 6s., is designed to enable medical practitioners to qualify for recognition as certifying officers, so far as elementary school children are concerned, under the Mental Deficiency Acts.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

The following candidate has been approved at the examination indicated:

DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC HEALTH.—*Part II*: Edith A. Longson.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

Lectures

The Bradshaw Lecture on "The Early Diagnosis and the Treatment of Renal Tuberculosis" will be delivered by Mr. Hugh Lett in the theatre of the College on Thursday, December 3rd, at 5 p.m., and the Thomas Vicary Lecture on "Salernitan Surgery in the Twelfth Century" by Dr. George W. Corner, professor of anatomy in the University of Rochester, U.S.A., on Thursday, December 10th, at 5 p.m. Fellows and Members of the College are invited to attend both lectures. Students and others who are not Fellows or Members of the College will be admitted on presenting their private visiting cards.

ROYAL FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

At the annual meeting of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, held on November 2nd, the following officers were elected: *President*, Professor Archibald Young; *Visitor*, Dr. John Henderson; *Honorary Treasurer*, Mr. J. H. MacDonald; *Honorary Librarian*, Dr. W. R. Snodgrass; *Representative on the General Medical Council*, Mr. G. H. Edington. Examiners were appointed for the Fellowship and for the Licence.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

At the monthly business meeting of the College, held on November 6th, the following candidates, who had passed the Final Professional Examination under the conjoint scheme with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, were duly admitted Licentiate in Medicine and Midwifery of the College:

Annie G. G. Rea-Clarke, Victoria P. McCall-Coffey, J. B. Duffy, C. A. Erskine, W. D. Eustace, J. A. Farrell, Rebecca I. Keith, P. G. Kennedy, A. M. Kinsella, H. L. Laing, I. F. S. Mackay, I. I. Magee, F. J. Manning, J. G. Mathews, E. G. Morris, W. O'Dwyer, Mary A. B. Robinson.

Medical News

The Honorary Fellowship of the American College of Surgeons has been conferred on Sir James Walton, surgeon to the London Hospital, and Professor William Fletcher Shaw of Manchester.

A Chadwick Public Lecture, entitled "The Doctor's Mandate in Parliament," will be delivered by Sir Francis Fremantle in the Great Hall of British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C., on Tuesday, November 24th, at 5.15 p.m., with Sir James Crichton-Browne, F.R.S., in the chair.

Dr. Edward Mellanby, F.R.S., will deliver a lecture on "Recent Advances in the Treatment of Disease," at the Royal Institution, 21, Albemarle Street, W., on Friday, November 27th, at 9 p.m.

A dinner will take place at the Hyde Park Hotel, Knightsbridge, S.W., on November 24th, at 8 p.m., when the president of the British Science Guild, Lord Melchett, will preside. A presentation will be made to Sir Richard Gregory, Bt., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., chairman of the Council of Management, in recognition of his eminent services to science generally and to the British Science Guild in particular.

The annual dinner of King's College Hospital Past and Present Students was held at the May Fair Hotel on October 24th. Mr. H. A. T. Fairbank, F.R.C.S., was in the chair, and proposed the health of "The Hospital and Medical School," which was responded to by the dean, Dr. J. A. Drake. "The Chairman's Health" was proposed by Dr. G. F. Still.

A sessional meeting of the Royal Sanitary Institute will be held at the Winter Gardens, Margate, on Friday, November 27th, at 5 p.m., when there will be discussions on "The Role of the Health Department on Carrying Out the Air Raid Precautions Regulations," to be opened by Major H. S. Blackmore of the Air Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office, and on "The Accredited Milk Scheme in Kent," to be opened by Mr. G. H. Garrad.

A meeting of the Royal Microscopical Society will be held at B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, W.C., on Wednesday, November 18th, at 5.30 p.m., when Mr. J. E. Barnard, F.R.S., and Mr. F. V. Welch will read a paper on "Microscopy with Ultra-violet Light: A Simplification of Method."

A meeting of the Society of Radiotherapists of Great Britain and Ireland will be held at 11, Chandos Street, W., on Friday, December 4th, at 4.30 p.m., when there will be a discussion on "The Intensity Factor in Radiation," to be opened by Drs. Spear, Mayneord, McWhirter, and Fulton, and Mr. Stanford Cade and Professor Russ.

A meeting of the Medico-Legal Society will be held at 26, Portland Place, W., on Thursday, November 26th, at 8.30 p.m., when a paper will be read by Dr. W. G. Barnard on "The Medico-Legal Institute."

At a meeting of the French Academy of Medicine on October 27th grave concern was expressed with regard to the future supply of "crin de Florence" from Spain. Hitherto this material for sutures and ligatures has been obtained solely from Spain, and only from a limited area where the peasants cultivate silkworms of a special breed. The silk thus obtained is prepared locally. At present none of it is coming into France, and the supply for 1937 is already seriously compromised. It is anticipated that it will be difficult to obtain such silk in France in another five or six months.

At the meeting of the Central Midwives Board for England and Wales on November 5th the draft of the annual report on the work of the Board for the year ended March 31st, 1936, was considered and approved, and the secretary was instructed to send a copy to the Minister of Health.

A severe epidemic of bubonic plague has recently broken out in the Tucuman Province of the Argentine, the principal focus being Mache.

The new x-ray clinic attached to the Margaret Street Hospital for Diseases of the Chest was officially opened by the Marchioness of Titchfield on November 4th. Before the ceremony Dr. F. Hernaman-Johnson, radiologist in charge of the clinic, described the work to be carried out there and referred to the arrangements for private patients. An inspection of the hospital concluded the proceedings.

Letters, Notes, and Answers

All communications in regard to editorial business should be addressed to **The EDITOR, British Medical Journal, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1.**

ORIGINAL ARTICLES and LETTERS forwarded for publication are understood to be offered to the *British Medical Journal* alone, unless the contrary be stated. Correspondents who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names, not necessarily for publication.

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All communications with reference to ADVERTISEMENTS, as well as orders for copies of the *Journal*, should be addressed to the Financial Secretary and Business Manager.

The TELEPHONE NUMBER of the British Medical Association and the *British Medical Journal* is EUSTON 2111.

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The address of the B.M.A. Scottish Office is 7, Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh (telegrams: Associate, Edinburgh; telephone: 24361 Edinburgh), and of the Office of the Irish Free State Medical Union (I.M.A. and B.M.A.), 18, Kildare Street, Dublin (telegrams: Bacillus, Dublin; telephone: 62550 Dublin).

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Resection of Ileo-caecal Valve

"B. Q." writes: Fifteen years ago, as a result of appendix abscess, a portion of gut was resected, including the ileo-caecal valve. Persistent diarrhoea has been the result ever since. Apart from the inconvenience, it results in burning discomfort in the large bowel when contents of small bowel are hurried into it, with a sensation of spasm (x-rays show this). More or less frequent periods of extreme prostration with dyspnoea and irregular heart beat due to toxæmia are the most troublesome feature. I have never heard of, or met with, a case of resection of ileo-caecal valve. Any observations or suggestions from colleagues would be welcome.

Nocturnal Cramp

"T. P." writes: Referring to "Alpha's" communication in the *Journal* of October 24th (p. 850), might the "error" suggested be an Fe deficiency? There seems to be a relation between the iron intake and protein digestion, whether gastric or pancreatic, according to some of my observations, where this deficiency has been noted in several members of a family, though with different consequences. The aggravation caused by excessive carbohydrates may be occasioned by a functional hepatic insufficiency. Where hexamine or acetylsalicylic acid may act as a corrective Crookes's "ferrofax" seems to be an easily assimilable preparation in these cases.

"74" writes: If the cause of cramp in "Alpha" is the same as mine he will get immediate relief from the muscular spasm by emptying his bladder, no matter how small the contents of it may be.

Income Tax

Obsolescence of Car

"J. H. A.'s" transactions have been as follows:

1920 bought car A for £575
1926 sold A for £5 and bought car B for £375
1932 sold B for £10 and bought car C for £188
1936 sold C for £40 and bought car D for £220

Depreciation has not been claimed, but an "obsolescence" allowance of £188 was made in 1932. The cars have been of similar grade and power.

** The obsolescence allowance due in respect of car C in 1936 is £198 - £40 = £158. The 1932 allowance was apparently calculated on a "renewal" basis. The "obsolescence" allowance in respect of car B due in 1932 would