

that such superficial assertions should be made, and that thus fallacies, which have been again and again exposed, should be widely circulated and more or less credited in consequence. The writer touches upon the advantages arising out of not appointing men to be medical superintendents who have been already trained in asylums as assistant medical officers. The case of Dr. Conolly is adduced in support of this opinion. We do not think this is really to the point. Conolly states distinctly that he acquired his ideas of non-restraint from the Lincoln Asylum before he went to Hanwell, and carried them out on a larger scale than previously. But were it otherwise, we do not consider that the argument has any force at the present day, when there are a vastly greater number of assistant medical officers thoroughly suitable for promotion than was the case in the days of Conolly. There are exceptions to every rule, and we admit that in some instances good has been done by the treatment of the insane being undertaken by those who have "brought a fresh mind to the work." All we say is, that other things equal, the preference should be given to those who have previously had experience in the treatment of lunatics.—EDS.

#### LUNACY STATISTICS.

*To the Editor of "THE TIMES."*

SIR,—In your issue of the 16th inst., commenting on the recent report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, it is stated to be "unquestionably true" that insanity is upon the increase. Allow me to say that this popular notion *has* been called in question. Moreover, it is "unquestionably true" that the official statistics of lunacy do not support this opinion. They simply show that a larger number of cases are cared for and treated now than formerly—say in 1859. The confusion arises from failing to distinguish between the *existing* and the *occurring* cases of lunacy, in proportion to the population. It is, of course, open to anyone to allow himself to be guided by his own impressions in regard to the increase of mental disorders, but he cannot quote statistics in proof of this position. The Commissioners in Lunacy have themselves stated that their statistical tables do not warrant any such inference.

The same source of fallacy vitiates the conclusion that more women than men become insane. In your article a reason is advanced in order to explain this supposed greater liability of the female sex. It is unnecessary to seek for a reason to explain that which does not exist. The fact that at the beginning of the year the male lunatics were one to every 370 of the male population, while the female lunatics were one to every 326 of the female population, is absolutely worthless as proving the relative liability of women to insanity. There are other points in your article which tempt me to offer adverse criticism, and on which the great body of alienists in this country hold opposite opinions, but I prefer to restrict my remarks to the fallacy which has led to conclusions which, whether correct or not, derive no support from the statistics in the Blue Books of the Lunacy Commissioners.

I am, etc.,  
D. HACK TUKE, M.D.

63, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, W.  
August 25th.

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#### ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICERS OF IRISH ASYLUMS.

The following letter was received by the General Secretary in reply to one addressed to His Excellency, the Viceroy of Ireland, enclosing the resolution in support of the claims to preferment of the Assistant Medical Officers of Irish Asylums, passed at a recent meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association:—

Vice-Regal Lodge, Dublin,

25th May, 1888.

SIR,—I am directed by His Excellency to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst. together with a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland. I am to state that His Excellency concurs with the opinion expressed in the resolution as to the advisability of appointing, when possible, gentlemen who have had a special training to the offices of Medical Superintendents to the Asylums. This may be seen from His Excellency's recent action in appointing Dr. W. Z. Nyles, Senior Assistant Medical Superintendent, Richmond Asylum, to the post of Medical Resident Superintendent to Kilkenny Asylum.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

ADOLPHUS VANE TEMPEST.

Henry Rayner, Esq., M.D., etc.

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*Obituary.*

JOHN ALFRED LUSH, M.D., F.R.C.P. LOND.

The decease of Dr. Lush was not unexpected, as he had been the subject of cardiac disease for some years, and found it necessary to be extremely careful in regard to his health.

He was born in 1815, and was the eldest son of John Lush, Esq., of Berwick St. John, Wilts. His mother was the daughter of James Killoway, Esq., of the same county. He was the cousin of the late Mr. Justice Lush. In 1853 he married the daughter of the late Dr. W. C. Finch, of Fisherton House Asylum, Salisbury.

He commenced practice as a surgeon at East Knowle, Wilts, but after about four years removed to Salisbury, where he successfully carried on his profession until 1862, when he joined his cousin and brother-in-law, Dr. Finch, in the management of the above private asylum.

He sat as member of Parliament for Salisbury, on the Liberal side, from 1868 to 1880, when he retired in consequence of ill-health and came to reside in London, retaining a keen interest in politics and his loyalty to the ex-Premier. Had his health allowed of it, he would have remained M.P. for Salisbury, as there is no doubt the constituency would have re-elected him.

During his Parliamentary career, Dr. Lush took an active part in questions brought forward in the House of Commons affecting the medical profession, and more especially those employed in the care and treatment of the insane. In 1877-78 he was a member of the Select Committee to inquire into the alleged abuses existing in asylums in England and the adequacy of the law to prevent them. He was an active member of the Parliamentary Committee of the Medico-Psychological Association, and was present at its last meeting. He was President of the Association in 1879.

He died August 4th, 1888.

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JOHN BARRON, M.D.

We record with regret the untimely death of Dr. John Barron, late Assistant Medical Officer in the Berks County Asylum. Dr. Barron was educated in Aberdeen, at the Grammar School and the University, where he took the degrees of A.M. 1872, M.B. and C.M. 1875, and M.D. in 1877. Thereafter he proceeded to Paris, where he continued his medical studies for some months. He served for a short period in the P. and O. Company's vessels, and in 1877 was appointed to his post in the Berks County Asylum under the late Dr. Gilland, where he continued until 1885 when he had to resign on account of ill-health. The Committee again secured his services during the period that intervened