

but of unsound mind"—such a finding being understood to carry with it a mitigation at least, in all cases, of the extreme penalty of the law. After this, let a subsequent decision be come to by the judge, or by some other tribunal, as to the modified punishment proper to the degree of guilt, so far as it can be ascertained under the peculiar circumstances of the case; and, if necessary, let the decision be open to further appeal if, after a period of confinement in expiation of sentence, further evidence arises tending to bring into question the essential justice of any part of the punishment. In this way, and in no other, Professor Gairdner believes, will the real and most important services to criminal administration be secured, without the manifold extravagances and contradictions which at present seem to render them a mockery and a delusion.

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OBITUARY.

THE LATE DR. THURNAM.

By the sudden death of this able and highly respected physician, on September 24th last, the Wilts County Asylum sustained a loss which will not be easily replaced.

Dr. Thurnam was born at Lingerroft, near York, on December 28th, 1810. As his parents belonged to the Society of Friends, his education was of a private character; but to the excellency of it, it may in justice be said, the pupil was a living testimony.

After passing through the required course of medical study, he became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1834. In the same year he was appointed the Resident Medical Officer of the Westminster Hospital, which office he held till 1838, when he was chosen as the Superintendent of the Retreat near York. In 1843 he became an L.R.C.P., and in 1846 M.D. of King's College, Aberdeen. That during the above periods he distinguished himself by the zeal and ability with which he cultivated various branches of medical science, there is ample proof. Amongst others may be cited the various published memoirs which he contributed on different pathological subjects, more especially those on partial and spontaneous aneurism of the heart, to the great merits of which all writers on cardiac diseases of that period, whether in this country or on the Continent, have borne testimony.

During his residence at the Retreat, he published in 1841 the "Statistics of the Retreat," and in 1843, "Observations on the Statistics and Treatment of Insanity." Of this latter work it was stated, at the time of its publication, that in its application of the numerical method to the subject of insanity, "we may appeal to Dr. Thurnam's work as an example of the interesting and novel results which may thus be deduced, and which, though they might be suggested by ordinary individual experience, are only capable of being established as facts by calculations founded on a large number of observations. Those only who, like ourselves, have been somewhat extensively engaged in statistical researches, will be able fully to appreciate the amount of labour and care which is required to insure the accuracy which throughout characterises Dr. Thurnam's work." Before referring further to the chief scene of his labours, we think it will not be out of place here to remark that, though he evinced so much assiduity in the pursuit of strictly medical subjects, it was by no means to the exclusion of other branches of scientific research. As a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Dr. Thurnam, by his joint editorship of "Crania Britannica," his "Observations on British and Gaulish Skulls," and by various contributions to the different journals on allied subjects—by all these he had earned for himself no mean degree in the domain of archæology and antiquarian lore. In the Wilts Archæological Society, as a member of the council, he had in different ways rendered valuable service. In the annual excursions of the Society he was not unfrequently looked to as an expositor of the objects of interest which were being visited.

In 1849 he was selected by the magistrates of the County of Wilts as a suitable and proper person to whom to entrust the management of first establishing and afterwards superintending their asylum, which was opened for the reception of

patients in 1851. The ability manifested and the success which attended his labours in this important undertaking may be considered as having fully justified their choice. What evidence of painstaking diligence and high conscientiousness he had shown in the pursuit of medical science were the more manifestly developed in the discharge of the duties which he had thus undertaken. It is hardly doubtful whether in this aspect of his varied labours he did not belong to the "countless numbers" referred to by the Premier at the last meeting of the Medical Association, who "are true martyrs of humanity, exhausting themselves in a ceaseless unnoted anxiety for those whose sufferings they seek to alleviate." It is well known to the writer that not only was Dr. Thurnam much respected as well as beloved by the poor patients in the midst of whom he spent so large a portion of his life, but in the difficult duty of governance his patience and tact in settling disputes which from time to time might occur won for him the title of the "peace-maker," or, as one of his *employés* recently expressed himself on the same subject, "he ought to have been a judge." His practice on such occasions was such as might well be followed by others under similar circumstances. He would allow each to state his case, and then appoint a time a few hours later, on that or the following day, when he would hear them more fully, and decide the point in hand, thus allowing time for the passions of each to subside. By these means, we have understood, he uniformly succeeded.

For some time previous to his death he had complained of headache and drowsiness, but which he hoped that change and rest would prove adequate to remove. Not having been able to effect his purpose, but expecting to do so shortly, he remained at his post to the last; and even on the morning on which he died he had been into the Asylum to attend to some sudden call of duty. Even his last words evinced the perfect possession of his faculties immediately previous to an apoplectic seizure which soon terminated his existence.

Dr. Thurnam has left a widow and three sons, with whom we know a large number of friends, both lay and professional, deeply sympathise. Of him it might be truly said that he died beloved and lamented. All those who worked with him and the patients (*i.e.*, those of the latter who were in a condition to comprehend what had occurred) evinced most sincere grief at their unexpected loss.—*Medical Times and Gazette*.

We have only to add to this brief memoir that Dr. Thurnam was twice President of the Medico-Psychological Association—once in 1841, and again in 1855; that he always took an active interest in its proceedings; and that to him, as a member of the Committee on Asylum Statistics, we are mainly indebted for the statistical tables which are now adopted in nearly every county asylum. In the *Journal of Mental Science* for April, 1866, will be found an important paper by him on "The Weight of the Human Brain, and on the Circumstances affecting it."

#### Appointments.

BURMAN, J. WILKIE, M.D., Deputy Medical Director, West Riding Asylum, Wakefield, has been appointed Medical Superintendent of the Wilts County Asylum, Devizes, *vice* Dr. Thurnam, deceased.

DODSWORTH, G. H., M.R.C.S.E., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer at the Bucks County Lunatic Asylum, Stoke, near Aylesbury.

HAGGART, J., M.B., C.M., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer to the Inverness District Lunatic Asylum, *vice* Pearson, resigned.

LEVINGE, E. G., A.B., M.B., L.R.C.S.I., has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer to the Borough Lunatic Asylum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *vice* Butler, resigned.

MACKENZIE, G. H., M.B., C.M., has been appointed Assistant-Physician to the Fife and Kinross District Lunatic Asylum Cupar, N.B.