

## ASSAULT ON DR. MERSON.

We regret to record an assault on Dr. Merson by a patient who had been regarded as harmless. The assault was committed with a cricket bat, after the conclusion of a cricket match, on the ground adjoining the asylum, near the village of Willerby.

Dr. Merson was rendered unconscious by the blow, and is still incapacitated from his duties. He is, however, we are glad to report, steadily improving.

## THE LIBRARY.

The Library Committee beg to acknowledge the contribution of a large collection of plans of asylums, etc., etc., of interest in relation to the early history of the Association, from Dr. Brushfield.

## OBITUARY.

SIR JOHN CHARLES BUCKNILL, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.,

*Citizen-Soldier and Psychologist.*

Through the death of Sir John Charles Bucknill, a man of "light and leading" has been lost to the profession generally and to the specialty in particular. As a pioneer member of our Association, he actively promoted the study of Psychological Medicine, and was assiduous in the diffusion and application of the knowledge thus gained.

It is now upwards of forty-three years since he was appointed the first Editor of our *Journal*, in which capacity, as well as in that of a valued and voluminous contributor to its pages, he has been largely instrumental in improving the status of alienist physicians and in ameliorating the condition of the insane. The task of filling the place left vacant in our ranks by the death of this distinguished man will be one of considerable difficulty.

John Charles Bucknill was born at Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire (on the 25th December, 1817), where his father, Mr. John Bucknill, practised as a surgeon. There was a younger brother (Alfred), who obtained a commission in one of the Sepoy regiments of the East India Company, and died after a few years' service from post-nasal hæmorrhage. His decease was quite unexpected, and a source of great grief to his brother John. He had also two sisters, Louisa and Amelia, and a half-sister, Julia (by his father's second wife), who survives, and who spent many months with Sir John at Bourne-mouth during his long illness.

Dr. Bucknill was educated at the Grammar School in his native town and at Rugby under the great Dr. Arnold. The charm of that "prophet among schoolmasters," as the Bishop of Hereford calls Arnold, does not appear to have possessed young Bucknill, as he did not complete his course at the famous school.

In 1835 he was entered as a student at University College, London, and five years later took the degree of Bachelor of Medicine at London University, obtaining high honours in both medicine and surgery. Subsequently he became house-surgeon, under Liston, at University College Hospital, where Sir John Eric Erichsen and Sir Richard Quain were among his contemporaries.

In 1842 Dr. Bucknill married Mary Anne, only child of Mr. Thomas Townsend, of Hillmorton Manor, Warwickshire, by whom he had three sons—Colonel Bucknill, late of the Royal Engineers; Mr. T. T. Bucknill, Q.C.,

M.P. for the Epsom Division of Mid-Surrey; and Charles Bucknill, now dead. Mrs. Bucknill died in 1889.

After leaving University College Hospital, Dr. Bucknill carried on a practice in Chelsea until his health broke down and he was ordered to a warmer climate (Madeira, Devonshire, or Cornwall). This no doubt determined his application for the Devon County Asylum.

Dr. Bucknill was appointed the first medical superintendent of the then recently built County Asylum at Exminster, Devon, in 1844, and held that position for eighteen years. Unhampered by tradition, and allowed a somewhat free hand by the authorities, Dr. Bucknill was able to organise the asylum *more suo*, with the result that he merited and received the approval of both his own Committee and of the Commissioners in Lunacy. The new line struck out by him, in providing *extra-mural* residences for the treatment of certain of his asylum patients, was spoken of by the Commissioners in their thirteenth annual report in the following eulogistic terms: "There were also seven other female patients, who were boarding and lodging, under the charge of the medical superintendent and the committee, in cottages beyond the precincts of the asylum. The condition of these women was reported to be very satisfactory, and we should be glad if the example thus set were followed by the visitors in other counties." It must be remembered that these words were written in 1859.

In 1852, whilst at Exminster, Dr. Bucknill took his M.D.Lond., and shortly afterwards became a Fellow of University College, of which body he was also a Member of Council for some years.

Suggestions of the publication of a journal to represent the Association of Asylum Medical Officers were first "made in Germany" by Dr. Damerow, of Halle, in 1844, and were supported by Dr. Bucknill and others, but the scheme was not carried out until 1852. In that year was started *The Asylum Journal of Mental Science*, with Bucknill as its first editor.

The first number of the new journal was published November 15th, 1853, and for the first two years of its existence appeared every six weeks, after which it was made into a quarterly journal and its style and get-up improved.

Dr. Bucknill continued to edit the *Journal* with uniform success until he was appointed Lord Chancellor's Visitor in 1862, when the duties of his new office compelled him to resign its conduct into other hands.

Dr. Bucknill's term of editorship was marked by the most painstaking assiduity, and he spared neither himself nor others in providing for the due and regular appearance of the *Journal*. On this subject Mr. T. T. Bucknill feelingly writes: "I well remember the early days of *The Journal of Mental Science*, and how I used to ride on my half-wild Exmoor pony backwards and forwards between Exminster Asylum and Pollard's, the printer's, in Exeter, with proofs for the press. It mattered not what was the weather or the hour; I had to do it, and do it quickly."

A pamphlet on the law and theory of insanity was written by Dr. Bucknill in this year (1852), and was devoted, as were all his publications prior to 1855, to the legal relations of insanity.

With all this professional work in hand, it might have been thought that Dr. Bucknill would have no time for anything else. On the contrary, however, it was just at this time that he occupied himself with the question of National Defence. His exertions and enthusiasm were actively engaged in obtaining the sanction of the War Office to the enrolment of a corps of citizen soldiers, under the name of the Exeter and South Devon Volunteers, and with the help of Earl Fortescue he effected his purpose. The new corps, which was officially styled the 1st Exeter and Devonshire Rifle Volunteers, proved highly successful, and formed the nucleus of our present huge and efficient citizen army.

Bucknill entered heart and soul into the new movement, and devoted himself in his spare moments to the organisation, drilling, and various other duties connected with the regiment, carrying them out in such a manner as to earn

the admiration and thanks of all concerned. He was the first recruit sworn in, and stuck to the ranks all through his connection with the regiment, although frequently pressed to become a commissioned officer.

On leaving Exminster Dr. Bucknill took the corner house in Cleveland Square, W., where Lord Playfair used to live. In the library of this house there was a chair which was said to have been frequently used by the late Prince Consort when consulting with Dr. Lyon Playfair, and which was much valued by Dr. Bucknill. After a few years' residence in this charming house he moved to a larger one in Wimpole Street, and from that to Hillmorton on the death of Mr. Thomas Townsend. At Hillmorton Dr. Bucknill tried his hand at farming a considerable acreage, and took a great interest in it, but probably found it a pursuit of more pleasure than gain.

In 1855 he contributed an article to *The British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, on "The Pathology of Insanity," and in 1857 was awarded the Sugden Prize for his thesis on "Unsoundness of Mind in its relation to Criminal Actions." These were followed, in 1858, by his greatest work, entitled *A Manual of Psychological Medicine*. This book was written in collaboration with the late Dr. D. Hack Tuke, and has gone through four editions. The two authors wrote separately, Dr. Hack Tuke writing the first half of the volume, comprising the chapters on Lunacy Law, Classification, Causation, and the various forms of insanity; whilst Dr. Bucknill contributed the chapters dealing with Diagnosis, Pathology, and Treatment. The work was for years the standard book on psychological medicine, and now, though somewhat out of date, remains a monument for all time testifying to the knowledge and labours of its distinguished authors.

In 1859 Bucknill was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and subsequently filled the posts of Censor (1879-81) and Lumleian Lecturer (1877) in that corporation. Dr. Bucknill in this year (1859) took an excursion into general literature, and wrote an able work on *The Psychology of Shakespeare*, followed in 1860 by *The Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare*. Both books are good examples of Bucknill's literary style and critical acumen.

1860 saw Dr. Bucknill President of the Association his labours had done so much to foster and develop.

Dr. Bucknill, having been appointed Lord Chancellor's Visitor of Lunatics, in 1862 had to resign the superintendency of the Devon County Asylum and the editorship of *The Journal of Mental Science*, and devote himself to the duties of his new office. He was eminently suited to his new post, where his commanding presence and authoritative manner never failed to impress members of that rather troublesome class of patients, and his appreciative, though essentially non-committal, ejaculation, AH!! given, as it invariably was, *cre rotundo*, after listening patiently to the end of some irrelevant incoherency of complaint or delusion, was a thing to hear and enjoy.

All psychological questions possessed the greatest fascination for Dr. Bucknill. One of the problems which exercised him was—whether the apparitions which occur to insane patients suffering from hallucinations of sight, and which are real, solid facts to such patients, are or are not transparent, or whether they are as solid visually as they are mentally to them? Bucknill was inclined to think that they were solid to the patient, and was anxious that the writer of this notice should take up the consideration of the subject. This, unfortunately, was never done.

In 1876 Dr. Bucknill resigned his office under the Lord Chancellor, and commenced private consulting practice in his special department, but, nevertheless, continued to interest himself in asylum matters. In 1877 he delivered the presidential address before the Psychological Section at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association at Manchester, exhibiting therein a breadth of view and grasp of detail in matters medical outside his own special department which called attention to the extent of his general professional knowledge.

In 1875 Dr. Bucknill paid a visit to the United States, with a view of

studying the question of inebriety and its treatment in that country. The record of his observations made there, and their special bearing on proposed legislation for inebriates in this country, are contained in his book, *Habitual Drunkenness and Insane Drunkards*, published in 1878. Several papers on American asylums for the insane were also the outcome of this visit. About this time, in conjunction with Sir James Crichton-Browne, Dr. Ferrier, and Dr. Hughlings Jackson, he brought out and edited the neurological journal *Brain*.

Dr. Bucknill's later writings have chiefly concerned themselves with the care of the insane and their legal control, and the relation of madness to crime.

Sir John Bucknill's views did not always commend themselves to his medical confrères—e.g. his strictures on private asylums—but his opinions were always honest and outspoken, and he possessed the courage of them. He was essentially a fighting debater, and loved "the clash of arms" and "din of battle," but nevertheless did not despise a "quiet round" with a Bishop at the Metaphysical Society.

He was a member of several London clubs, the Athenæum and Garrick amongst others. He was also a member of the Casual Club, a "smoky talky" literary scientific club, meeting every Thursday evening, for six months in the year, in Nell Gwynn's old drawing-room in a house adjoining Pall Mall. To this club the writer had the pleasure of proposing both Bucknill and his collaborator, Hack Tuke; and very good "Casuals" they both made. It was an open secret that Sir John Bucknill did not believe Dr. Hack Tuke would ever live to complete his *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*. He must have been much astonished at its early publication.

Sir John Bucknill was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Justice of the Peace for the County of Warwick, a visitor of the Warwick County Asylum, and a Governor of Bethlem Hospital.

He was a keen sportsman, fond of all kinds of outdoor sports—shooting in Caithness and North Wales, fishing in Canada and Norway, foxhunting in Warwickshire, and whilst a Volunteer a good rifle shot.

On the æsthetic side he showed a fondness for music and pictures. In company with Mrs. Bucknill he paid visits to Italy and Flanders, and from the former country returned laden with photographs and some full-sized copies of pictures in the Roman galleries.

Sir John was a man of most reserved habits, and to his own people most uncommunicative about himself. His wife, some years ago, asked him to record some of the chief events of his life for the sake of his family, and he promised her to do so, but he never did. Colonel Bucknill says that his father was "demonstrative in wrath; but it was not so evident when he was pleased. He was a difficult man to understand." The writer was, however, impressed with the depth of his affection for his children from experience of his anxious solicitude shown during the severe illness of Colonel Bucknill when living at Surbiton. During that anxious time parental affection peeped out very strongly.

In his early life Sir John Bucknill was a Palmerstonian in politics, but after leaving Devonshire gradually became a Moderate Conservative.

Sir John was a man of fine physique, and, standing as he did an inch and a half over six feet in height, and being correspondingly proportioned, he must have presented a noble appearance in his regimentals.

Bucknill was knighted in 1894, the honour being conferred not only as a recognition of his services in the matter of National Defence, but also as a mark of the distinguished place he held in his own profession.

Sir John Bucknill died at his Bournemouth residence on July 20th, 1897, and was buried at Clifton-on-Dunsmore, near Rugby, on July 22nd.

As to the cause of his death, Dr. Barnard Scott, who made the autopsy, writes to Colonel Bucknill: "Septic inflammation from catheterism—brain healthy as yours—all his symptoms due to septic absorption—we have not found anything wrong, except in the kidneys and bladder."

1897.]

*Notes and News.*

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A detailed biography of Sir John Bucknill, it will be learnt with great satisfaction, is in course of preparation at the hands of his eldest son.

CROCHLEY CLAPHAM.

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DR. HOWDEN.

The death of this well-known and highly esteemed member of our specialty, which occurred on August 17th, at his residence at Sunnyside, Montrose, will be a source of regret to all those members of our specialty who had the pleasure of his personal acquaintance.

His retirement last year from active work, in consequence of failing health, following an attack of paralysis some three years since, renders his death less a matter of surprise to those who knew of this previous illness.

Dr. Howden, after acting for some time as medical assistant in the Edinburgh Asylum, was appointed medical superintendent of the Montrose Asylum in 1857, being then only twenty-seven years of age. His service at his retirement in June last was close upon forty years, and the high esteem in which he was held was evidenced by a retiring allowance of £575 and an additional £105 per annum for services as consulting physician.

Dr. Howden had been a member of our Association since 1863, and he took a very active interest in the local institutions and affairs of Montrose. He had, therefore, a very wide circle of friends who deplore his loss.

We propose in our next issue to give a detailed account of Dr. Howden and his life's work.

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R. J. STEPHENS, M.R.C.S.

On the 11th August, in consequence of a bicycle accident at Preston, Richard John Stephens, M.R.C.S.Eng., L.S.A.Lond., Assistant Medical Officer, County Asylum, Whittingham, Lancashire, the second son of Mrs. Dickson, Wellesbourne House, Blackheath, in his 34th year.

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RESIGNATIONS.

DR. ADAMS.

The resignation of Dr. Adams, superintendent of the Cornwall Asylum, at Bodmin, removes from the list of superintendents one of the early members of the Association, which he joined in 1857. We are informed that his valuable and lengthened period of service (forty years) has been recognised by a superannuation of £567 per annum, practically the highest possible amount under the pension scale adopted in Cornwall.

DR. BYWATER WARD.

We have to record the retirement of Dr. Bywater Ward from the post of medical superintendent of the Warneford Asylum, Oxford, after twenty-five years' service. The governors of this institution have recognised the value of Dr. Ward's services by granting him a pension of £400 per annum.

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BOUNDARIES OF THE ENGLISH DIVISIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

*South-Western* includes Berks, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucester, Hants, Hereford, Oxford, Somerset, Wilts, Worcester, and South Wales.

*South-Eastern* includes Bucks, Cambridge, Essex, Herts, Kent, London, Middlesex, Norfolk, Northampton, Suffolk, Surrey, and Sussex.