In the house where they lived there was a cabaret, and it is here he thinks that his wife has her rendezvous; he is convinced of it, he has heard the proprietor of the cabaret say to another person, "you will this evening bring to me the wife of the calico printer. But, said the other, what will the husband say? Bah! her husband, said the man of the cabaret, is an idiot." Besch becomes exasperated, he frequently rushes into the cabaret to see if his wife is there; and it is remarkable, said he, "that I never have been able to catch her in the very act." He is, however, thoroughly convinced that they deceive him; they make insulting signs to him in the street. In his despair he leaves to go to St. Quentin; in the wagon a man of importance with a red beard speaks of him by name, and says "Besch of Nancy is a cuckold." This quite upsets him, he has scarcely arrived at St. Quentin beforehe returns to Nancy, enters his house like a madman, and attempts to tear out his wife's eyes. His wife remarked with great justice of expression, "that he saw and heard all that he thought." It is impossible to express more clearly that he had hallucinations; he believed himself outraged and dishonoured, and he rested this belief upon the most false, ridiculous, and unjust grounds. He constructed an absurd system, and believed in all his delusions with all the force of conviction which numerous hallucinations could give. It is only wonderful that during the eighteen months he has been tormented by such delusions he has not actually accomplished the death of his wife.

J. C. B.

Recent Changes in the Commission of Lunacy.

In consequence of the resignation of Dr. Turner a vacancy has recently occurred among the Medical Commissioners of Lunacy. It has been filled up by the appointment of Dr. Wilkes, the able and experienced medical superintendent of the Staffordshire county asylum. The selection of Dr. Wilkes for this honourable and important office is known to have been due to the noble Chairman of the Board, who has for many years been well acquainted with his steady and intelligent devotion to the duties of his position, and with his successful exertions in establishing the Coton Hill Asylum, for the insane of the higher and middle classes. The appointment of Dr. Wilkes is justly gratifying to the class of professional men to whom he belongs, indicating, as it does, the paramount importance attached by the highest authorities to an intimate practical acquaintance with the management of asylums and the treatment of the insane.

Dr. Turner retires from the Commission full of years and honors; and all who have the pleasure of knowing this thoroughly kind-hearted and accomplished physician will unite in heartily wishing him the enjoyment of many years of health and well earned repose. Dr. Turner's

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2.16.253 Published online by Cambridge University Press

visits of inspection to asylums were always agreeable incidents to superintendents, and were often instructive. His demeanour on such occasions was gentlemanly and considerate. He was influenced by no narrow or one-sided views of his duty; and was ever prepared, not only to defend the interests and to promote the well-being of the patients, but also to acknowledge the just claims and to appreciate the difficulties of those who had charge of them. Dr. Turner was for a long series of years the physician to St. Thomas Hospital. He was a distinguished member of the Royal College of Physicians, and he is the treasurer to that corporation. At the present time not one of the Commissioners of Lunacy is a physician.

The Commission has also lost the services of one of its most able members by the decease of Mr. Mylne, an event which every one interested in the administration of the lunacy statutes and in the welfare of the insane must deeply deplore. Mr. Mylne brought to the service of the Commission an intellect of the highest order, and an amount of legal erudition and practical wisdom, which promised the highest prizes in his profession, had the state of his health permitted him to pursue his career at the bar. As a commissioner his conduct was ever guided by the most enlightened opinions and by a truly humane disposition. His loss at the Board cannot fail to be severely felt.

Mr. Lutwidge, who has for so long and so ably occupied the post of Secretary to the Commission, has been announced as the successor of Mr. Mylne. This appointment, which has now taken place, must give universal and well founded satisfaction. It will be remembered that this promotion of Mr. Lutwidge is specifically provided for by the statute. But irrespective of what must be considered an expression of the will of the legislature on this point, it will be admitted on all hands that the promotion of this meritorious officer must conduce to the interest of the public service, by providing a new legal Commissioner of great experience in the administration of the lunacy statutes.

The law provides that the legal commissioners must be barristers of seven years' standing, and that the medical commissioners must be physicians or surgeons. But the barristers may never have held a brief or seen a lunatic, and the surgeons may be veterinary surgeons for aught that the law says to the contrary. But the character and even the stability of the Commission depends upon the appointment of Commissioners who thoroughly understand their subject and the nature

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2.16.253 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of their duties, and whose opinion will be respected by the intelligent and highly educated men over whose conduct and practice they exercise official control. Should the Commission ever be so unfortunate as to sink beneath the level of professional knowledge existing in asylums, its influence will wane with its reputation.

The appointment of a Secretary in the place of Mr. Lutwidge, is a matter deeply interesting to all who have charge of the insane. Upon it depends whether the numerous communications between the Board and the officials of asylums will continue to be conducted in a spirit of dignified courtesy. In a small and permanent Board the secretaryship is of much less importance than in a numerous and fluctuating one; but in all cases the influence of the ever present officer gives uniformity and consistency to the proceedings, and the difference between a special pleading, hair splitting, crochety secretary, and one of sound and comprehensive judgment would speedily make itself felt. Let us hope that the new secretary will be as like as may be to the old one.

A New County Asylum.

We are informed that the Magistracy of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Huntingdonshire have decided at once to build a joint Asylum, and that the purchase of one hundred and fifty acres of land for a site has been voted. Cambridgeshire will be compelled to build for itself.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2.16.253 Published online by Cambridge University Press