to popular clamour, some change appears to be inevitable and fast approaching, I take it that State control would be the next best arrangement to the present system, and certainly far preferable to control by County Boards and Guardians, in the proportion contemplated. Another, and perhaps the chief advantage of State control would be *one* controlling authority instead of several (often conflicting authorities) as at present. It is most reasonable that Pauper Lunacy at least should be an Imperial question, a National charge. Pauper Lunatic Asylums under State control would mean the removal of existing anomalies and difficulties. This is the question of the immediate future."

The subject, while well worthy of discussion, is not to be hastily decided upon. The money paid out by the "Imperial Exchequer" must, after all, come out of the pockets of the ratepayers. It is also a grave question whether local taxation, combined with local management and control, are not the best checks on extravagance, and the best means of keeping up local interest. However, the question is one on which much may be said on both sides, and ought to be approached in a fair spirit, and altogether apart from the question of agricultural distress and its relief. Superintendents of asylums have nothing to do with this, as such.

FATAL OCCURRENCE AT THE FULBOURN ASYLUM.

[We take from the "Cambridge Independent Press and University Herald," Nov. 26, 1881, all that is important in the evidence given at the Coroner's inquest. No blame whatever attaches to the officers of the Asylum. That such accidents are not of much more frequent occurrence is one of the extraordinary features of asylum life, and redounds to the credit of those in charge. It will be seen that the cause for so sudden a death from a single blow was the rupture of a blood-vessel, and consequent effusion of blood over the base of the brain and into the lateral ventricles, the blood flowing into the fourth ventricle and downwards, compressing the medulla oblongata.—EDS. J. M. S.]

On Sunday morning last an unfortunate occurrence took place at the Cambridgeshire Lunatic Asylum, by which an inmate, named George Taylor, met with a sudden death at the hands of another inmate, named Isaac Warwick. Below will be found the details of the transaction as stated by the authorities and attendants of the Institution, but one circumstance, which there is every reason to believe occurred, did not transpire, viz., the provocation on the part of the deceased which several of the inmates could have sworn to, but that it was not deemed advisable to administer the oath to lunatics. It is said that Taylor struck Warwick a violent blow on the jaw, either on the way from breakfast or in the ward, but this was not seen by any of the attendants.

An inquest was held at the Asylum Nov. 21.

George Mackenzie Bacon, M.D., deposed: I am the medical superintendent of this asylum. I produce the original order on which George Taylor was admitted to this asylum on the 15th of February in this year. He was 46 years old, and had not previously been here. He was described as neither suicidal or dangerous to others. Taylor has been since he has been here in a depressed condition of mind, and had delusions, thinking that the Devil was after him, and he would be burned alive. He exhibited no violence or dangerous tendencies here. I also produce the certificate of admission of Isaac Warwick, who is also at present in the asylum; he was admitted on the 12th of May, 1877, being then 21 years of age: he is described as being dangerous to others. I regarded Warwick as a congenital imbecile, of bad disposition, unable to control himself, and I have found him sly and deceitful, troublesome and mischievous; he also frequently had epileptic fits, and was irritable and excitable. He has more than once assaulted the attendants as well as other patients: for instance, he kicked one of the attendants on the nose, and disfigured him for several weeks, this year. But, as a rule, he was generally tolerably quiet, and was often employed usefully on the land and at simple work. It was not a case that I regarded as necessary for special precautions. Taylor was a slight man, but not a weak one. About half-past eight yesterday morning I was called to see the deceased by Mr. Boyd, the assistant medical officer; when I reached the ward I found the deceased lying on a bed in a single room: he was quite dead.

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Dr. Bacon (by the Foreman): I think a man who is insane is not accountable for his acts. I think Warwick is a person who is not fit to be at large because of his violent tendencies, and that is the reason he was sent here from the Chesterton Workhouse.

By the Coroner: If he had been a person fit to be at large he would not have been detained in the asylum. He was not subject to delusions like the deceased; his is a case of chronic epilepsy.

John Wivell deposed: I am the second attendant of No. 2 ward on the male side of Fulbourn Asylum. Yesterday morning I was in charge of the ward at twenty minutes after eight o'clock; had been in charge since half-past six in the morning. I had seen Warwick and he was orderly as usual till this affair took place, and so was Taylor. Breakfast was at eight o'clock in the dining-room; I remained in the ward whilst they went to breakfast with the patients who did not go down. The deceased and Warwick did go. About twenty minutes past eight the patients returned to the ward; I was in the bathroom attached to and opening into the ward, bathing a patient, and Attendant Ayres called me to know if all the things were on the trolly that had to go back to the kitchen, and as I came outside the door to see, I saw George Taylor standing with his face towards me just outside the door, and Isaac Warwick came slyly up behind him and knocked him on the side of the head with his fist. George Taylor fell insensible to the ground. I at once went to Taylor, who I saw was very much hurt; he seemed as if he was in a fit; Ayres was there, and I left Taylor in charge of him, and went immediately for the doctor.

Robert John Boyd deposed: I am a duly qualified medical man, and the assistant medical officer at this asylum. I was called yesterday morning about half-past eight to see deceased at No. 2 ward on the male side. I found him lying on his back with his shirt collar and tie undone. I examined his pulse and heart, and found that the circulation and the action of the heart had stopped. He was quite dead. I have known Warwick about a year. I have seen him violent at times, and abusive. On one occasion a fit came on suddenly—on the occasion that he kicked Wivell.

George Edward Wherry deposed: I have made a post-mortem examination of the body of the deceased. I found the body of an apparently healthy man, with no evidence of external injury. Further examination revealed some adhesions of the pleura and pericardium of old date. The lungs were congested. The kidneys and liver were healthy. The cause of death was found in the brain. A large blood clot which filled the fourth ventricle surrounded the medulla and pons and extended nearly all over the base of the brain. There was blood in the anterior fissure and in the fissure of the sylvius, also on the surface of the hemisphere. The cause of death was the pressure of blood on the nervous centres. Such a death would be very sudden. Such a blow as has been described would be a probable cause. The vessels of the brain were thin, and would readily give way.

The Coroner informed the jury that the first question they had to consider was the cause of the death of the deceased; secondly, whether any person had done anything to produce his death which would render them responsible to the law; and thirdly, what was the state of mind of the person at the time that he committed this act. The facts left no possible doubt in their minds that Taylor died from the effects of the blow inflicted by Warwick, and he thought the evidence was equally conclusive as to Warwick's state of mind being such at the time when he committed this act as rendered him irresponsible. He said that, so far as he could see, there was no blame attributable to any of the attendants or the authorities for this unfortunate circumstance.

One of the jurymen asked if Warwick could not be called, in order that they might ask him how he came to strike the blow.

The Coroner asked Dr. Bacon whether, if Warwick were called, he could appreciate the caution which it would be his duty to give him, that he was not obliged to answer any questions which might tend to criminate himself.

Dr. Bacon replied in the negative.

The Coroner said he could not allow him to be called.

The jury at once returned a verdict "That the deceased died from the result of a blow administered by Isaac Warwick, who was in an unsound state of mind, and not responsible for his actions."

LEGAL INTELLIGENCE.

IMPORTANT WILL CASE.—DISPUTED TESTAMENTARY CAPACITY.

PROBATE, DIVORCE, AND ADMIRALTY DIVISION.

(Before the Right Hon. the PRESIDENT and a Special Jury, on May the 10th, and six following days.)

Mr. Henry Matthews, Q.C., Mr. Inderwick, Q.C., and Mr. Bargrave Deane, appeared for the plaintiffs; Sir John Holker, Q.C., Mr. Middleton, and Mr. Page, were for the defendants, and the intervener, Charles Rudolph Thompson; Dr. Swabey appeared for Mrs. Garvington, another intervener.

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